



Indian Council  
of World Affairs

# Deciphering Northeast Asia's Complex and Evolving Landscape

## Quest for Regional Stability

*An ICWA Conversation*

INDIAN COUNCIL OF WORLD AFFAIRS

SAPRU HOUSE, NEW DELHI

2024





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## CONCEPT NOTE

The Northeast Asia region, encompassing China, North Korea, South Korea, Japan, Mongolia and Taiwan, is a crucial geopolitical landscape marked by historical tensions, economic interdependence, territorial disputes and growing strategic competition. This panel discussion aims to delve into the key developments shaping the region, the emerging partnerships and responses, as well as the underlying interests driving these strategic shifts.

One of the key focus will be on the evolving trilateral security cooperation between the United States, Japan, and South Korea, analysing its implications for regional stability. Conversely, the panel will also explore the growing strategic and tactical cooperation between Russia, China and North Korea as a counter mechanism, examining its potential impact on the regional security architecture. Additionally, the discussion will analyse the attempts to revive the China-Japan-South Korea trilateral dialogue and assess its future trajectory in the face of shifting regional dynamics.

North Korea's ongoing ballistic missile provocations, nuclear proliferation activities, and advancements in space technology pose a significant challenge to regional security and complicate the prospects for achieving denuclearisation on the Korean Peninsula. The panel will objectively evaluate these developments and their impact on regional stability. Furthermore, the unique position of Mongolia, a landlocked nation situated between two major powers, requires further exploration to understand its strategic balancing act and its potential role in regional stability initiatives.

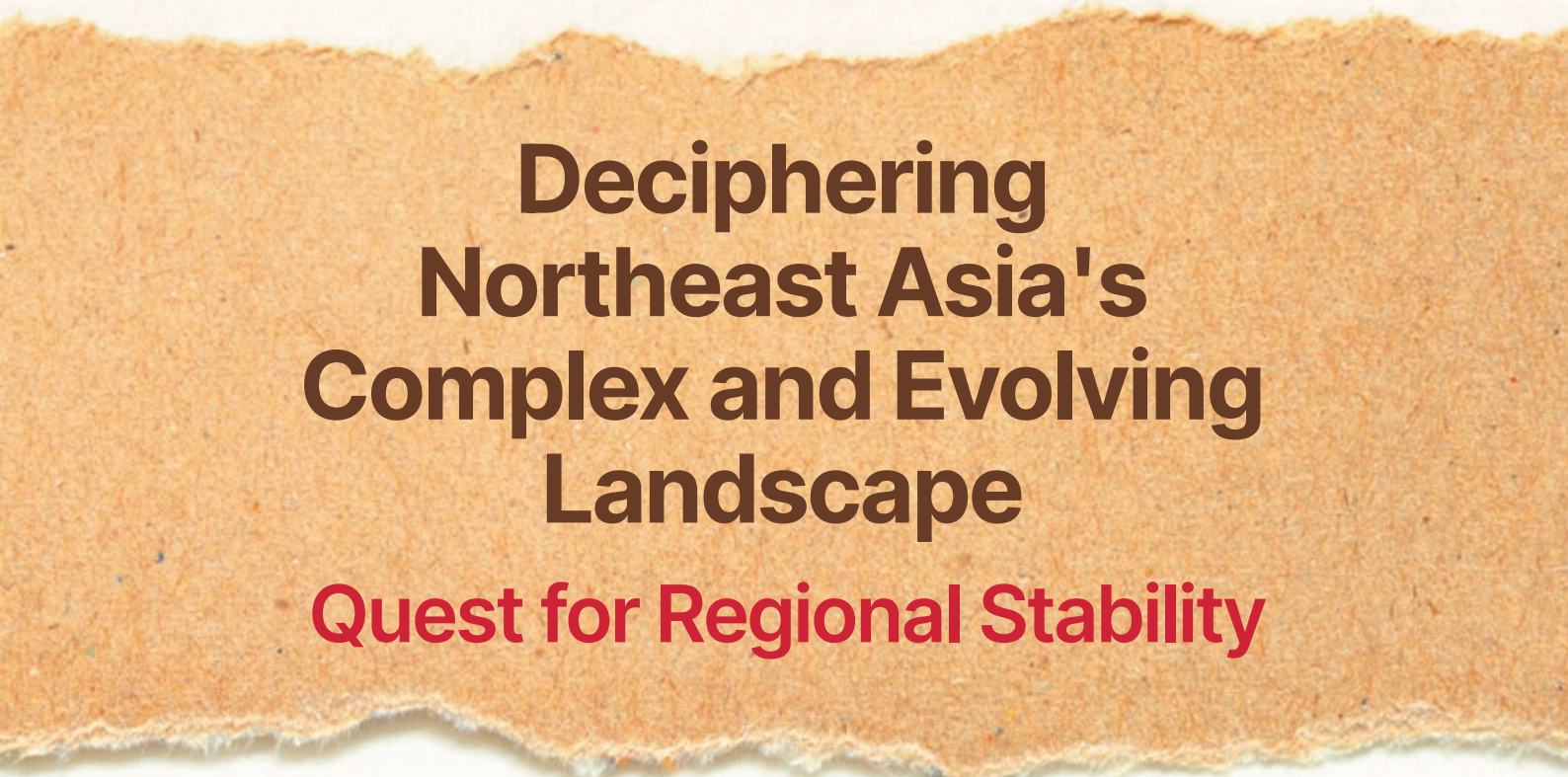
Based on the outcome of the Taiwan General Elections in January 2024, the panel will examine the implications for the broader regional dynamics. By considering the diverse perspectives of all stakeholders, this panel aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the complex and evolving geopolitical landscape of Northeast Asia, highlighting the challenges and opportunities for maintaining peace and security in the region.

Sapru House  
New Delhi

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February 2024







**Deciphering  
Northeast Asia's  
Complex and Evolving  
Landscape**  
**Quest for Regional Stability**

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**Ms. Nutan Kapoor Mahawar**

Welcome to ICWA! ICWA has not held a discussion on North-East Asia for some time though we have always had one or two scholars focussing on the region, tracking it and writing about it. However, we decided to have a conversation on North-East Asia now because of two reasons. One, the strategic competition in this region is growing, and tensions are rising. And tensions are rising because of the provocative and unpredictable behaviour of DPRK, and because of the aggressive behaviour and posturing of China, which as we know is true for all along its periphery. And the second reason why we decided to have this conversation was that India's Indo-Pacific vision has brought this region closer to us. It has brought it closer home. We have strong interests in the peace and security of this region. We have deep engagements with the countries of the region, and any escalation or hostilities in the region will have a cascading effect all across the Indo-Pacific, including India, and on freedom of navigation, and will have an adverse impact on trade.

So, we decided to have this conversation to assess the situation, to assess how the alliances and counter-alliances are playing out in this region, and to chart pathways to peace and security based on dialogue and diplomacy. And before I invite Ambassador Tayal, the Chair, to take over the proceedings, I would just like to express regret on behalf of DG, ICWA Ambassador Vijay Thakur Singh for not being here. She very much wanted to be part of this conversation. She was called for a meeting elsewhere; about which she came to know only yesterday.

So, with that, Ambassador Tayal.

**Ambassador Skand Tayal**

Thank you very much. First, I would like to commend ICWA that they organised this interaction at such a time where everything seems to be in flux. All the old certainties are in a zone of uncertainty. And for the last two, three decades,

there was a certain equilibrium. There was a certain status quo that was being maintained, but everything now seems to be up in the air. And it's very timely that collectively we discuss what is likely to happen. And I must also compliment on this very pithy concept note. It is a big puzzle, but you have identified the main blanks which need to be filled in this puzzle. So, I'll combine my Chairman's remarks with my own remarks and try to pose some issues which this very esteemed panel would like to address.

Now, in the concept note, three or four different sectors have been identified. I will go one by one. First – US-Japan-South Korea. Now, we have all seen that 18 August 2023 Declaration, the spirit of Camp David, which in many ways is a game changer, because United States has been trying for decades, since former President Obama's time to bring its two defence allies Japan and South Korea together and it was not happening. But it has been very bold of both President Yoon and Prime Minister Kishida to come to this level. And that document is worth reading in detail by all of us who are interested in North East Asia. Because it expresses concern over China's "dangerous and aggressive behaviour". In South China Sea, it mentions Taiwan, calls for peaceful resolution across the Taiwan Strait. So, in many ways it expands the area of trilateral cooperation or the budding trilateral cooperation beyond Korean Peninsula and North East Asia to Taiwan Strait and Indo-Pacific, the entire Indo-Pacific and beyond. At one point they say across the Indo-Pacific and beyond.

So that is where United States would like to push Japan and South Korea. How far they will go, that future will tell. But relations between China and South Korea are not good, China and Japan are not good. In a radio program in May 2023, China's Ambassador to South Korea said "frankly speaking, the current relationship between China and South Korea is not good and there is a risk of further

deterioration”. But there are issues. Is this shift in Korea-Japan relations sustainable? President Yoon is pushing in certain direction but there are regular changes in Presidency. Presidents have only one five-year term in South Korea. President Yoon’s approval rating is 34%. Disapproval rating is 59%, 59% disapproval - not even neutral. National Assembly elections are due on 10 April 2024. So, whether this closeness which is really imposed from the top in Japan and South Korea is sustainable, that future will tell.

Then if President Trump comes back, which seems very likely. He always believes in more transactional relationships and we remember in April 2020 when President Trump was pressurizing South Korea to pay \$5 billion for their 28,000 U.S. forces in South Korea and after a lot of negotiations, it was agreed at I think about \$1 billion, but all those issues will come back. So, it was not a very friendly kind of relationship between South Korea and President Trump at that time. So, whether it will resume from there, we have to wait and see.

Then second gap or part of the puzzle, Russia-China-North Korea. There has been a sea change, I think in the last maybe two years, particularly after Ukraine-Russia conflict. During Chairman Kim Jong-Un’s visit to Russia in September 2023, he visited some Cosmodrome also and after that only North Korea launched that satellite which can spy. North Korean Chairman met President Putin, their Deputy Defense Minister was in Russia recently and President Putin’s visit to North Korea is being talked about. It has been reported by South Korean intelligence that contract for one million shells to be provided by North Korea to Russia for use in Ukraine worth \$24.5 billion has been agreed.

Now one thing is sure, whatever is happening between North Korea and Russia has full blessings of China. For a country like North Korea with its size of economy, manufacturing, to have that much of material, composite

materials, to make even shells requires lot of backup technology and supply, where is it coming from? I always feel China somehow is backing that up. Then on the very strong anti-Russia stand taken by both President Yoon and Prime Minister Kishida, President Putin will be very, very upset. Open support for Ukraine and these two participating in the NATO Summits, which had never happened earlier, in Madrid, at Vilnius in 2022 and 2023. So, under their present leadership, Japan and South Korea have taken an open position against Russia and Russia will not forget that.

And then, third part is China-Japan-South Korea trilateral dialogue, that has been going off and on since 2008, but these were the previous days, Xi Jinping was not in the picture. Then Summits have happened since 2008, but then COVID and all of that. My own sense is that the present Yoon Administration is very, very pro-United States. Their former Foreign Minister Park Jin, I knew him personally, he was a member of National Assembly at that time when I was Ambassador in Seoul and he was heading, South Korea-U.S. Friendship Society. And all the close advisors of President Yoon are openly very, very pro-U.S. So, I don't expect this Summit or anything very tangible happening, even if the Summit happens till President Yoon is there. I will be very surprised, if there is any real outcome, even if there is a Trilateral Summit. But all that is being talked about, but I think after the National Assembly election, some say China may consider, but even if it happens, maybe the outcome will be less.

Then the fourth part of the concept paper, is the North Korea's ballistic missile launches and launches of spy satellites such as Malligyong-1 in November 2023 and of course it violates the UN sanctions, but nobody can do anything about it. And recently there was some report, North Korean agency said that this satellite has captured detailed images of White House, Pentagon and U.S.

aircraft carriers. This has led to some more intelligence exchanges, et cetera. among Americans and South Koreans with Japan and there will be real-time sharing of whatever North Korean missile launch data they have. So, in the spirit of Camp David, some part of it, it is already being implemented.

Now it will be fair to say, if we are doing some crystal ball gazing, that denuclearization of North Korea is a fantasy now. People can talk about it if they want to spend time, but the corollary if President Trump comes back is, whether the extended deterrence by the United States is 'ironclad' as was mentioned in the spirit of Camp David. Is it really ironclad? And that question surely some people would be asking both in Tokyo and Seoul and how they cope with it, how they react to it. I always feel that if President Trump is there, he may even encourage Japan to go nuclear. I am not sure about Korea but about Japan. But the Camp David spirit also says that they are committed to re-establish dialogue with the DPRK with no preconditions. So, this is a zone of uncertainty.

Then Taiwan elections have also introduced some more uncertainty in this whole issue and yesterday two Chinese fishermen have died. Of course, Chinese fish in all the waters of different countries, whether it is Japan, whether it is Korea and whether it is, of course, South China Sea all over. But two Chinese fishermen have died when they were chased by the Taiwanese Coast Guard. President Biden has been making some statement that the US has a commitment to save Taiwan, but US Administration says there is no change in US policy on Taiwan.

My own sense is that Taiwan should not try to change the status quo. If they gradually in a creeping manner push towards more independence, China can react very harshly and America is already embroiled in two very important arenas, Ukraine and Gaza. So, Taiwan should not push

China. That is my own sense. Now if we look at all these big puzzles, what are the uncertain zones or uncertain trajectories of different players who are there? One, in my view, Japan-South Korea understanding is, one cannot think, that it is permanent. It can go wrong any time. I think the South Korean court has again said something about compensation for Korean slave labour from Japanese companies – a legacy issue between the two countries since the World Wars.

Second, which way will public support in Republic of Korea and Japan go for their going nuclear? All, public polls say that 70%, 75% of South Koreans want South Korea to go nuclear. Of course, it is different in Japan. But how long will that continue? Taiwan has resolved to challenge China. They encourage the American congressmen to go to Taiwan, more and more cabinet members are also going to Taiwan. Gradually, Taiwan is asserting its de facto independence. But they should be careful because beyond a point China may retaliate very strongly.

Then another uncertain trajectory of course is U.S. Presidential election. President Trump is very unpredictable, so in which theatre, which zone, which area, what he may do nobody knows. But his general predilection will be to overturn whatever President Biden has been doing in a particular area. How far it will apply to Indo-Pacific, to these allies, the future will tell. But if under President Trump, U.S. sort of abandons Ukraine, all signs are that it might, then what would be the fallout for Indo-Pacific? What will US allies think? My own sense is that Japan will strengthen its self-defence in whatever way possible.

And then more predictable trajectories could be that Russia's defence partnership with North Korea is likely to increase. It will include whatever assistance Russia can give for satellite launches and with full Chinese blessings. So more multi-dimensional Russia and North Korea



defence and economic relationship is predictable in my view. Russia's economic and strategic partnership with China is more predictable, only the speed is uncertain. North Korea will continue to enhance its capacities, missile manufacturing, missile launches, underwater, submarine based, all platforms, to keep U.S. totally uncertain of what its real potential is and what its real capabilities are. China's expansionist moves in South China Sea and around Senkaku Islands will continue. And China will also increase its intimidation of Taiwan in different ways, such as air and naval intimidation, etc.

I will conclude with these remarks. We have a very eminent panel of experts. They need no introduction, so I'll not spend time on that. And as per program, first I invite Dr. Sandeep Kumar Mishra, Associate Professor, Centre for East Asian Studies and my former colleague in Delhi University. Sandeep?

**Dr. Sandeep Mishra**

Thank you, sir. I think it's a pleasure to be invited by ICWA and first and foremost I would like to say that the person who conceptualized this idea of roundtable has given a very, very, you can say, deep thought. The title, the concept paper was impeccable, so I want to appreciate that first.

Now coming to deciphering North East Asia complex and evolving landscape, since I specialize on Korea, so I will be talking more about Korea in the later part and in the first part I will just try to locate Korea into this East Asia conundrum.

So, if I look at North East Asia, historically there has been actually, as described by a scholar called Victor Cha, two quasi-alliances. They were the US, Japan, and South Korea on the one hand and North Korea, China and Russia (earlier Soviet Union) on the other hand. Both of these alliances were competing with each other in the Cold War era and things were quite certain in contrast to now when

uncertainties are more prominent. In post-Cold War era, the old certainty was gone and it appeared to be good thing because actually countries from one quasi-alliance started reaching out to other like South Korea established diplomatic relationship with Russia and China. Even Japan tried to connect with North Korea in the early 1990s and there were several rounds of talks to normalize relationship though it did not succeed.

However, in the next phase, the reach out between the countries of two quasi alliances got side-tracked as North Korean nuclear issue became the most contentious issue in the region. In a way at the structural level, existence of two quasi-alliances gave way to a more porous and diluted contests in the region but emergence of North Korean nuclear issue led to a restructuring of the equations in which the old quasi alliances again got prominence.

If we fast forward and look at the contemporary reality of the region, I think the two important trends are quite visible in Northeast Asia. One is the rise of assertive China, in all the domains of exchanges, China is trying to assert its role. In the economic domain already, China have established quite formidable position. China is, if you take on purchasing power parity, China is the biggest economy of the world. China's economy is US\$35 trillion whereas U.S. is US\$28 trillion. In nominal terms, the gap is not much. The size of the US economy is US\$27 trillion and the size of Chinese economy is US\$18 trillion. China is trading partner number one of 120 countries in the world out of the 193 countries which are part of the United Nations. Under Xi Jinping, China has introduced Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), and we know how they have become the most important economic player in this region.

In security domain also, China has been quite assertive. You can see how they have been trying to change the rule of the

game in South China Sea, East China Sea, and even in the Indian Ocean. So, all these things are supporting the first mega trend in the Northeast Asia which is happening in the contemporary period. The second important trend in the region is the U.S. response to deal with the rise of assertive China. The US has been trying bilaterally to contest China. In the last few years, at least from Trump period, a trade war has unfolded between the US and China.

Secondly, the US has also been trying to articulate its allies and friends in the region, like Japan, South Korea, and even some other countries such as Australia and India. And through platforms like Quad also, the US has been trying to deal with China along with its allies and friends. The bilateral contest between the US and China got gradually intense when in 2022 Nancy Pelosi visited Taiwan and when in February 2023, the US shot down Chinese balloons in the US airspace.

But if you look at the latter half of 2023, you can see that U.S. and China have been trying to find out some kind of modus vivendi, somehow to manage their contest. In the context of their broad rivalry, they want to have some kind of operational stability. So, from the mid-2023, the US and China have been trying to have more visits of high officials to each other countries and have talks on contentious issues. In May 2023, the US President Joe Biden and the Chinese President Xi Jinping had a Summit meet at the side-line of G7 Summit in Hiroshima. US Foreign Secretary Blinken visited China in June 2023, US Treasury Secretary visited China in July 2023 and several other high-level contacts happened between the US and China. And then finally, November 2023, Xi Jinping and Biden had Summit meeting of more than four hours at the side-line of APEC meeting. Most recently, in January 2024, the National Security Advisor of the US met the Chinese Foreign Minister in Bangkok.

So, I think that both the countries have been looking for a connect in the last few months. There was a statement saying that the US is ready to have some broad engagement with China, excluding in the arena of technology, advanced microchips and AI technology.

Another important development in the Northeast Asia could be identified as coming of the US, Japan and South Korea closer to one another in a trilateral framework. The three countries had a trilateral Summit meeting at the Camp David and several moves to coordinate their policies have taken place in the recent months. On 15-17 January 2024, the US, Japan and South Korea had a three-day, naval exercise at the coast of South Korea which is considered to be biggest so far as more than nine very large destroyers participated in the naval exercise. So, I think the US, Japan and South Korea have been trying to coordinate and consolidate their positions in the region.

Now I would like to talk about recent happening on the Korean peninsula. After 2018, there was a positive atmosphere as the North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un had three meetings with the US President Donald Trump in 2018 and 2019. Kim Jong-Un also had four meetings with the South Korean President Moon Jae-in. In 2018, there was a Panmunjom Declaration between the two Koreas along with a military agreement which might be called a kind of CBM. It was a good phase in inter-Korea relations at one point of time.

But from 2020 onwards or in a way from the second Summit between the US and North Korea in Hanoi in February 2019, which failed you can see that there has been a downward spiral and North Korea is becoming more and more aggressive. I can give you so many examples, but it would suffice to say that in 2022, North Korea had more than 80 missile tests and in 2023, it had almost 40 missile tests, including five intercontinental ballistic missiles,

including Hwasong-18. So, I think North Korea has been quite belligerent in these last few years. In 2024 also, North Korean provocations have continued and in January 2024, North Korea fired some artilleries across the Northern Limit Line (NLL), which is basically demarcation line between South Korea and North Korea. They also threatened that they will thoroughly annihilate South Korea if provoked. There have been many strong statements from North Korea and South Korea in the recent months.

I will say that, when I look at North and South Korea relations, I find that present administration in South Korea has sought to move closer to the United States and they have basically, neglected their relationship with North Korea. It seems that they do not have any second plan to deal with North Korea, if North Korea refuses to forgo its nuclear and missile programs. The present stalemate in the inter-Korea relations may not be overcome until the South Korea think beyond its reciprocal approach towards North Korea. The current South Korean administration's strong stand on North Korea, tit-for-tat policy, going to NATO summits, inviting again US tactical nuclear weapons would not be able to bring any opening in the inter-Korea relations in the near future.

In a strange way, North Korea has got a window of opportunity in the last few months especially after the beginning of the Ukraine War. Now North Korea has been dealing with Russia and, as Amb. Tayal mentioned, launched its spy satellite in November 2023. North Korea in return has been providing military equipment's and artillery to Russia to fight in Ukraine. North Korea has also improved its connection with China in recent times.

So, at the end of my presentation if I have to summarize what is happening in Northeast Asia, I would say that in the last two, three years, of course, the US-led alliance has got consolidated, though, as Amb. Tayal mentioned, we are not

sure how much it's going to sustain and it may be cited as a good thing for the US.

However, at the same time, we also see that the US opponents and rivals such as China, Russia, North Korea and even Iran have also got more connected with one another. It means that the US must be aware that its moves have led to consolidation of not only friends but also the rivals.

At the end, I will say that there are some important things which are going to happen in coming months and they must be observed carefully as they have important consequences for the region. First, as Amb. Tayal mentioned, South Korean parliamentary elections are going to happen in April 2024. Second, in November 2024, the US Presidential elections are going to be held. Third, there may be a Summit meet between the top leaders of China, Japan and South Korea 2024. In November 2023, in South Korea there was a trilateral meeting of the foreign ministers of China, Japan and South Korea after a long break and it is expected that the Summit meet among these countries may happen soon. In my opinion, these are some important developments and they may decide the future course of the Northeast Asian landscape.

Before I end my presentation, I would also like to draw your attention to another interesting development in the region. Recently the Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said that he would like to have Summit meet with North Korea leader and Kim Yo-jong, the politically powerful sister of the North Korean leader who said that North Korea was positive about any such Summit meet with Japan. All these developments are going to have their effect on the future prospects of the region and its landscape and we need to be observant of them. Thank you.

**Ambassador Skand Tayal**

Thanks, Dr. Mishra. You have raised a very important point. Are we witnessing the rise of two blocs Russia-China-DPRK and US-Japan-ROK again? All yours, Professor Mahapatra.

**Prof. Chintamani Mahapatra**

Thank you, Chair. I am grateful for this opportunity to share some of my thoughts on very dangerous developments taking place in North East Asia. I will basically touch upon three things. What is happening now? What are the major trends? What is likely to happen in the future?-- a kind of political astrology. At the moment as I see it, a very complex Cold War is already evolving in North East Asia. And you are right, Ambassador, that new kinds of groupings have come up, particularly Russia, China and North Korea and these triangular ties are getting strengthened in the midst of the Ukraine war. All three countries, China, Russia and North Korea are feeling that they are politically isolated from mainstream international relations. All three of them are under heavy sanctions from the United States, the European Union and Japan. And all three of them in a way want to see a new kind of world order which should not be dominated by the United States. When the Americans talk about rule-based order that they created in the post-Second World War period and say that this order is under challenge, these three countries are saying "whose rule"? Who sets the rules? Why can't we have a new set of rules? On the other hand, the US-Japan-South Korea have signed a compact, called the Camp David Agreement, which is also a very new development.

For decades, the Japanese and the South Koreans hated each other, disliked each other for historical reasons and also have territorial disputes. And now, after a lot of struggle, the U.S. managed to bring the Japanese and the South Korean leaders together, organized an event in Camp David and got an agreement signed. And if you see the details it is very clear that two new and antagonistic strategic triangles are shaping up in Northeast Asia. Not only that, this new Cold War that I am observing is not confined to just bloc

formations alone. It is getting into even the area of economy and trade with a kind of tariff war still going on between the U.S. and China. The trade relations of the United States, European Union, Japan and South Korea vis-a-vis China is currently declining as well. There are clear indications that China's economy is slowing down. The Chinese stock exchange has lost value by 20% from 2021. The country is facing some kind of energy crisis within and the public debt too is huge, running into, trillions of dollars. And in terms of debt to GDP ratio, China's is now more than 290% of the GDP. Whereas the developed countries have 250-260% debt to GDP ratio.

While the US White House asserts that it does not have a containment doctrine, certain American actions indicate otherwise. The US Government does not want to say that it has a policy of containing China. But some kind of US containment policy is discernible to people who are keenly watching the developments there. The US efforts to contain China clearly gets reflected when the U.S. encourages its allies to have off-shoring and friend-shoring or have alternative supply chain routes side-lining China. Secondly, the US and its allies have taken steps through G7 and other forums to have some kind of alternative connectivity initiatives to Chinese BRI. The BRI is basically a hub and spoke commercial structure. The Chinese fund it, supply engineers, capital, technicians, and technology to build various infrastructure, such as ports, roads, railway lines and transport corridors in different parts of Asia and Europe. Thus, China is the hub and other recipient countries of Chinese assistance are the spokes. Whereas the Americans are supporting a more transparent and debt-sustainable infrastructure projects, Chinese BRI has already created a lot of debt for many, many developing countries. So even at that level of connectivity projects, some kind of competition or rivalry between the US-led West and China is already evolving in that part of the world.



Now in this new kind of emerging Cold War rivalries, some of the mega changes are observable. Japanophobia in East and Southeast Asia that persisted for decades in the post-Second World War period seems to have disappeared. Recall the time when some of the Southeast Asian countries would say, we want a “permanent boot on the Japanese neck”. And today, we see a new phenomenon at least from 2010 onwards where Japan has been more acceptable politically and its emerging defence postures and regional security initiatives pose no problems for countries in this region. While Japan seems to have partially amended the so-called Yoshida doctrine and adopted new security policies, it, of course, continues to house myriad US military facilities and about 50,000 American troops on its soil.

Simultaneously, Japanese policymakers have systematically been adopting defence and security policies that sidestep the traditional restraints the country had been following on political security matters and others related to the country’s role in international affairs. China’s aggressive posturing and assertive policies and North Korea’s nuclear and missile belligerence seem to have forced Japan to alter its defence and security policies. Examples of emerging defence and security postures of Japan include its rising defence expenditure which is more than 1 percent of its GDP; sending military satellites to orbit; selling weapons abroad, helping friendly countries at war, extending the defence perimeter to waters closer to Taiwan and building up its missile capabilities. Significantly, Japan is reportedly going to spend about \$56 billion in the next five years, which would qualify it to emerge as the third largest defence spender in the whole world. Moreover, the Japanese government has now funded to make missiles with counter-strike capability, which again was unthinkable in the past.

One of the most noticeable developments in this part of the world is disappearance of Japanophobia despite Tokyo’s

emerging defence postures. This has occurred in contrast with fast rising Sinophobia due to irrelevance of the concept of “peaceful rise of China” and steady growth of China’s military muscle flexing and “wolf warrior” diplomacy. Reports that the Chinese are going to have 1,500 nuclear warheads by 2035, almost equal to the number that the Americans and the Russians, have not gone unnoticed. Sinophobia, however, is the undercurrent, as smaller neighbours of China maintain tight-lips about China’s behaviour for fear of retaliation. Fear of China can be discerned only at the time of bilateral engagements with certain Southeast Asian countries and Northeast Asian countries. Importantly, one finds apprehensions about China’s aggressiveness and assertiveness even in certain American writings and debates on China. It is no wonder that hidden or spoken Sinophobia has begun to spark a missile race, military build-ups and various defence and security coalition formations in Northeast Asia. Of course, added to the regional apprehensions is North Korea’s missile test series and offensive invective. North Korean missile developments, under-the-sea nuclear weapons, and even the images that they have taken about Pentagon and the White House have captured the headlines in global media, along with its rhetoric that if the South Koreans violate 0.0001 millimetre of our territory, Pyongyang would wipe out South Korea from the surface of the earth.

In the Korean peninsula, South Korea and North Korea are at war, literally. Because after the three years of Korean war in 1953, they never signed a peace agreement. So technically, they’re at war. Now North Korea has declared that South Korea is enemy number one. Moreover, Pyongyang has dismantled all the agencies which were engaged in Korea unification dialogue.

The South Korea is not far behind in its responses. It has given an order to the maritime troops to fire first at North

Korean provocations and then report. That means the Korean Peninsula has turned into a dangerous flashpoint. If we in India would have talked about the Korean Peninsula situation three years ago, probably we would have said “it’s all big talk”, and nothing is actually going to happen there. But in the midst of the Ukraine war and the war in West Asia, we cannot say that back to back rhetoric in the Korean Peninsula is empty threats and there will be no war. There may or may not be an armed conflict in the Korean Peninsula, but the political tension and exchanges have enhanced the stress level and has deeply affected the regional economies.

North Korea’s strategic backer, the People’s Republic of China has its share of responsibility for the strategic scenario in Northeast Asia. Beijing seems to be making use of North Korea as a strategic asset vis-a-vis the United States and its allies in the region. China’s behaviour is partly because of its conviction that the Americans are trying to contain them. The stated policy of the Biden Administration is to engage China in competition and to work closely with the Chinese leadership to ensure that the competition does not veer into conflict. But in reality, there is no simple competition between the US and China in trade and investment. Through the pandemic, through the tariff war, the U.S.-China trade pattern appears to have contributed a complex Cold War between them. Such a complex Cold War is the consequence of the deep economic interdependence between the US and China and cannot be compared with the kind of Cold War the US fought with the former Soviet Union. The US-USSR type Cold War would automatically invoke the MAD Doctrine or the Mutual Assured Destruction and neither Washington nor Beijing can afford it. But at the same time, the competition is complicated. A number of American official documents amplify that the US cannot tolerate the rise of any rival power in the world. And China is the number one rival power on the ascendance,

aspiring to become a superpower, and trying to replace the U.S.A. as the number one power in the world, especially in the Indo-Pacific. So, Sino-US tension and stress are palpable.

Now, what may happen in the future? All eyes are on the American Presidential election. If Donald Trump would win the election, then what would happen? That is a question that is bothering everyone everywhere, both the American allies and American adversaries. Now, when Trump says that he may allow Russia to attack even NATO allies, especially those who are not contributing enough to NATO fund, not just eyebrows are raised, serious rethinking of NATO's future has been sparked.

So, what may happen in the Indo-Pacific in the event of a Trump 2.0 administration in the US? See, the so-called QUAD was dead for 10 years. It was Donald Trump who revived it. And Biden continued it. It is most likely that even if a change of guard in Washington DC takes place and Trump becomes the President, Quadrilateral security initiative will most likely continue. Yesterday the U.S. Congress passed a Quad bill in order to strengthen the relations among the Quad members so it is going to continue.

AUKUS, another mechanism where the Americans are trying to challenge the Chinese aspirations for domination is not going to be undone even if Trump wins the election. What may happen to peace in the Korean peninsula and America's alliance relationship with Japan and South Korea are serious questions for strategic contemplation. When Trump became the US President in 2017, he said I did not believe in alliances and Japan could go nuclear if they wanted to. Whether he would continue the decades of alliance relationship with Japan and support extended nuclear deterrence is anybody's guess. South Korean leadership recently said that if the U.S. was not going to provide the nuclear umbrella, then Seoul could as well develop its

own nuclear weapon. The Biden Administration promptly exerted political pressure and the matter was removed from the agenda, Will Trump allow or indirectly force South Korea to go nuclear? It is difficult to determine now. That there is a possibility of more nuclear weapon powers emerging in this part of the world cannot be completely ruled out.

**Ambassador Skand Tayal**

Thank you, Prof. Mahapatra. So, many more nuclear powers in Asia maybe. But that point about Japanophobia going down is very valid. Namrata, all yours.

**Dr. Namrata Hasija**

Thank you, sir and I would like to thank ICWA for giving me this chance. I am speaking after my Professors who have actually taught me when I was in Delhi University. But it is a great opportunity to speak in the same panel as them.

So, let me begin by talking about the Taiwan elections. I am speaking to a very informed audience so I will not go into the background of you know what DPP, what KMT or what DPP is. Now I want to begin actually with Ko Wen-je. Now Ko Wen-je, why I want to begin with him and I want to talk about him, because after the Taiwan elections this time which have been extremely, extremely I would say neck-to-neck. And because the last two elections for all of us who are following the elections it was very clear that the mandate is with DPP. But before this election, you know few of us who have been following us like me, we actually predicted that maybe the Presidential election will be a DPP win but DPP is going to lose the majority in the Legislative Yuan and that is what happened. And because of that loss in majority is where Ko Wen-je will actually play a very important role.

Now Ko Wen-je is the chairman of Taiwan's People's Party. The party was actually formed in 2019 and, if you look at the vote share, they have actually got 26.46% of the vote share. And DPP got 40, which is 40.05%, which has been its lowest, if you compare to the last two times. Because President Tsai

Ing-wen actually came with a bigger mandate than this. And then, of course, the KMT, which is the Blue Party, which got 33.49% of the vote share.

To me, this is extremely important. Also, why? Because in the legislative Yuan, if you see, that KMT actually has 52 seats. And DPP has 51 seats. And TPP, which can be the game changer, it has 8 seats. And initially, before the elections, KMT and TPP, they tried to kind of form a coalition, which, of course, did not happen. And there was actually a lot of drama for all of us who were watching, because they met at the Hyatt Hotel. And they were actually fighting that you did not give me a better room, and stuff like that, the normal election process, like any democracy has. But very interestingly, one can see that DPP does not have a clear majority. So, when it comes to the domestic policies or the foreign policies, they would need the support of TPP or, to some extent, the independents also. So here, that is why I started with Ko Wen-je, because he could be a game changer.

Now, he has the experience of working with DPP also. But later, of course, he fell out with the DPP. And that is why, before this election, he tried to partner with the KMT. Now, he is some, I mean, it's called the white party. In Taiwan, it was very interesting when we were there, we would always ask people whether they are blue or green. But now, this is a third party, which is the white party, and which has actually kind of surprised many people with the vote share that they have had. But one can speculate also that, is this party just a bubble? Because a lot of youngsters who did not kind of wanted to vote for DPP because of the stagnation in the policies, especially the domestic policies. Because the salaries have not gone, I mean, the salaries have been stagnant for a very long time. And economy is also one of the factors that the youngsters actually chose to vote for this TPP party.

So, can they maintain that, or is it just a bubble in this election? Because a lot of people also don't trust Ko Wen-je because he has shifted sides many times. And also, at one point of time, he was also kind of, people spoke about him that he's also getting funding from the PRC.

Now there is of course Dr. Lai who has won the Presidential elections and so Dr. Lai has been from the faction which is called the Deep Green which has been pro-independence. So, he is also called the golden grandson of, you know, Taiwan's independence. So, his policies initially have been very hard line when it comes to independence of Taiwan. But over the years there has been a change in his policies and before this election, he's actually met people from different backgrounds. He's even met academicians, think-tank people, economists who have been KMT supporters also. So, he has tried to kind of get into -- get everyone involved and also get the view from the other side.

So now there is, of course, the KMT candidate Mr. Ho. He has also got 33% like I said of the votes. Now when I was watching the television everybody was saying that Taiwanese have rejected the Chinese -- China's interference and they have voted for independence. I don't feel that's how the Taiwanese actually voted for.

And maybe, you know, I'll discuss now why? Because for me Dr. Lai's policies now have been more pragmatic rather than you know being really hardcore on independence. He's actually given interviews also before he became the President that Taiwan will not declare independence formally and that you know he doesn't really need to -- the DPP does not really need to do that. Now Ho's position, who's the KMT candidate, he accepts the 1992 consensus. Now 1992 consensus is when ROC and PRC both agreed that there is one China but both have different interpretations. Now he accepts that 1992 consensus which DPP has never publicly acknowledged nor ever denied.

Now he has of course been very vocal about DPP's rejection of the 1992 consensus and he's also spoken about closely working with the Chinese to lower the pressures. Because when I had the opportunity of taking interview of many of the KMT legislative members, and so they said our main objective is to lower down the tensions, the cross-strait tensions because we don't want our grandchildren to go to war. So, this is generally what they have spoken even in the elections.

Now Ko Wen-je's position, like I said, has neither been here nor there. Now he's of course spoken about how they should actually have two sides of the cross-strait, like one family and he's also given this policy of five mutuals. But on 1992 consensus, he's not made his position very clear because he's not entirely rejected it, but he's not accepted it. There have been different statements at different point of time.

Now why these are important and why we are actually talking about their positions on 1992 consensus, because this is where the impact will be on the cross-strait ties. Now right after the elections, what we saw after Pelosi's visit, we did not see after the elections. There have been no major PLA exercises. In fact, there was no PLA aircraft around Taiwan or in Taiwan's ADIZ on the election day, though there were PRC balloons that were reported, but no PLA aircraft. But two days after the win of DPP candidate as the President, Nauru withdrew its diplomatic support from Taiwan and they recognized PRC.

Now China also resumed military flights along and across the median cross-strait line after January 14th. And of course, China, I mean we can speculate, they have not done it now, but I think they are waiting probably for his inauguration speech. And we cannot negate the fact that China can escalate economic military pressures in the near future. Now 17th and 18th January, we saw that 24 PLA aircrafts were flying around the island, while



some conducted the rare night-time patrolling that they have done.

So now what will Taiwan's elections, how it's going to impact the regional stability? And that's the question. And what will be the cross-strait ties? Now for any major foreign policy decision, DPP, like I said, it does not have the majority. So, it will need the support of either TPP or to a certain extent, independents and the KMT also. And President Lai has already said that he's going to follow the policies of President Tsai Ing-wen. There'll be no major deviations.

And the voting as I look at it, and why I'm saying that I differ from the breaking headlines that were everywhere that the Taiwanese have actually voted against the Chinese. But I feel the Taiwanese have, yes, they have rejected a pro-China party probably, as the Presidential elect. But I think they have voted very pragmatically. They have factored into both the domestic policies that they wanted the DPP to change, and they have also voted for a status quo. Because there were also opinion polls before the elections and after elections where 80% of the Taiwanese said that they want to maintain the status quo. So, I would say that rather than making it something like this, I think the Taiwanese have voted for a status quo, and also some changes in the domestic policy.

And when it comes to the cross-strait ties, I think for now, like the Chinese reaction, unless once his speech is done, the inauguration speech, either during the inauguration speech, if he says something, or after, if there's any policy where Dr. Lai crosses the red line, we cannot deny it. We can speculate that he will do that. So, I'm just building the scenarios, what could happen, that there will be a possibility that China might use military force. But I think if he does not cross that line, for now, China is not going to do that. And there are three reasons why.

First, if you've been reading the Chinese social media, especially Weibo and other accounts, they were kind of restricted to discuss about Taiwan's elections, but they always use proxy words to discuss that. And also, whatever has come out from the Chinese official media, they are negating this Dr. Lai's win. They're saying that he does not have the full mandate, of course, because he's not got the majority. So not all people in Taiwan, and especially taking into consideration the number of votes, if you join together the KMT and TPP, both of whom actually spoke about having better cross-strait relations, they have more votes than Dr. Lai.

Yes, I'm just concluding. Two more points. And then, of course, we also cannot negate the fact that China has its own economic problems right now. And there has been a major reshuffle or major dismissals, if I can say, in the PLA rocket force. So that also we have to think. And I'm not saying that if anything happens, if there is that red line that crosses, that any of these will actually stop Xi Jinping. But if nothing happens, then these are the things that he might consider, that the relationship will be okay, and there'll be no military crisis right now.

And also, the major factor to me, more than the cross-strait ties, or that impacts the cross-strait ties more than anything, is the U.S.-China factor. Right now, after the meeting, especially the November one, at least I feel that U.S. has given an olive branch to the Chinese. And they also want to stabilize the U.S.-China relationship. So, I think as long as Chinese, I mean, the U.S.-China relationship is either stable or it's moving forward; so, because I feel the U.S. is the biggest deterrent when it comes to the Chinese not using the military force because it's not Taiwan's military, it's not anything else, but I think it's the U.S. that has been the deterrent. And I think that will remain the deterrent. So,

I'd like to end here. Maybe I can have more when we have the Q&A. Thank you.

**Ambassador Skand Tayal**

Thanks, Namrata. Yes, U.S. is the deterrent. And one would agree with you that Taiwan will be well-advised not to disturb the status quo in any manner and just be happy where they are.

Well, the time is short, so let us open for questions. Any questions, please.

**Dr. Stuti Banerjee**

Thank you. Thank you so much. I'm Dr. Stuti Banerjee. I'm a research fellow in the Council. My question is to Dr. Namrata Hasija. You just spoke about Taiwan. So, and everybody else in this panel can talk about the dynamics between U.S.-China, Russia and North Korea. So I want to talk to you about how do you fit Taiwan with this dynamics of U.S.-China, Russia that is happening? And as we are looking at new elections in the U.S., in the event of any leadership change, how do you see this leadership change affecting the foreign policy outlook and therefore the deterrence that you just spoke about? Thank you.

**Ambassador Skand Tayal**

You may answer.

**Dr. Namrata Hasija**

So, of course, Taiwan does fit in this whole U.S.-China, you know, that relation that we are talking about, because this has been, if you look at, especially the last, I would say, eight, nine years, especially after DPP came and the trade war between the U.S.-China and everything started, I think Taiwan has been one of the factors that if you read the Chinese official media and Chinese language media also, again, I mean, they have been talking more about Taiwan when it comes to the US-China relations. And they've also been saying that Taiwan is the red line when it comes to even the U.S. Even if you see that recent meeting between Biden and Xi Jinping, Taiwan was brought up in this context. And Taiwan is in one of the most volatile regions that we can say, because the ripple effects right now will not

just be, it's not that China attacks Taiwan and that's it, we are out of it. No, I think the ripple effects will be the entire Indo-Pacific and for everyone to feel.

The second is the US policy on Taiwan, I would not say has been, if you look at, again, yes, you've spoken about the leadership change. But to me, the U.S. policy and the arms sales were there when even the Republican government was there and even now. So that support will continue. Even if there is a change in the U.S. government, the support to Taiwan will continue because Taiwan also is very strategically located. It's the first island chain for the U.S. and also because of the semiconductor industry that's there. We have to factor in the semiconductor industry.

So, I feel the support of the US will continue, even if there's a change in the US government.

**Dr. Sripathi Narayanan**

If the chair would permit, I have two questions. One is that given the way North Korea is behaving, is there anything that the world can offer North Korea or make a deal that could make them live with the neighbours in a more peaceful manner? And some form of arms control, not in terms of denuclearization, but a moratorium on testing and firing missiles.

The second question is, the chair had mentioned in the opening remarks, the two quasi-allies, which goes all the way to Iran in the West and UK and Australia in the East. In this quagmire, where does India fit in? Or does India even find a place?

**Dr. Sandip Mishra**

I will say if we look at the North Korean regime, we find that their nuclear and missile programs are meant for security as well as domestic legitimacy. So, if we can somehow provide North Korea some kind of collective security guarantee, such as a five-countries, (Russia, U.S., China, Japan, and South Korea) assurance that they are collectively or bilaterally not going to attack or wage a war against North Korea, the

raison d'être of North Korea nuclear and missile programs would become weak. Secondly, North Korea is doing badly in most of the developmental parameters and people in North Korea have been suffering because of it. North Korea nuclear and missile programs provides a symbol on which North Korea people take pride and thus provides domestic legitimacy to North Korean regime. So, I think if the regime can have their legitimacy from some other sources, like with economic growth and development, then probably North Korea could think about giving up its nuclear weapons. But these are just, two seemingly improbable propositions and it is not easy to realise them and thus, I think what Amb. Tayal told, North Korea giving up nuclear missile program is an impossible, is quite a realistic assessment. And thus, we can look for deterrence rather than North Korea giving up its nuclear weapons. More than anything else, we need to have communication with North Korea. Even if North Korean behaviour is provocative or not acceptable, still communication line with it must be open.

**Ambassador Skand Tayal**

So, negotiations have to shift from denuclearization to arms control. That is the only way to go forward. Second part, please?

**Prof. Chintamani Mahapatra**

Even in the first part, what kind of arms control? It cannot be unilateral. North Korea please reduce your weapons or missile tests. It is not going to happen. The North Korean parliament has already passed a legislation, no more discussion on denuclearization. So, North Korea has become a de facto nuclear power and countries may accept, may not accept, but they will continue to be there. So, forget about it, it is not going to be there.

If you see from the North Korean perspective, they have a right to conduct nuclear tests and why not? At one time they were part of the NPT, they walked out of the NPT very nicely and did not violate any NPT rules. They want to strengthen their defence and security. They feel threatened because of

American, Korean, Japanese military exercises, very, very provocative. So, if you see from their perspective, it is only for national defence and who can tell them that no, no, no, you are safe, you are secured, don't do all these things. This is not going to work.

Otherwise, you see that, you know, now the Italians, the Germans, the British, the French and the Indians, all are deeply involved in what's happening in the Indo-Pacific including in Northeast Asia. Italians have walked out of BRI. They have signed an agreement with Japan. So is Germany. Military agreements. Japan has signed military logistic exchange agreements with all these countries. So, I don't think North Korea is going to change any position. And India will play a role in terms of, of course, India will always say dialogue and diplomacy. Nobody wants war there. But the war is not going to happen. But what is happening is too much of tension and the tension will continue.

On Taiwan, just one line, sir. It is not in the interest of Taiwan to declare independence. Even the DPP, they know it very well. Without the support of the international community in a very big way, they cannot. The number of countries which recognize them is reducing by the day because of the Chinese diplomacy. The Americans would never like to support Taiwanese independence. The bottom line is status quo. The status quo will benefit everyone including China. So, the real problem is in China. Because for Chinese rejuvenation, they want to annex Taiwan by 2027 if possible, by using military force. That will create problem for everyone including India regarding what position to be taken.

**Ambassador Skand Tayal** One last question.

**Dr. Manoj Panigrahi** Thank you, Chair and ICWA for having me here. I am Dr. Manoj from Jindal University. My question is to Professor Mishra. Sir, you talked about different alliance formations.

So, am I correct to say that we are seeing a more mini-lateral rather than bilateral or a big Indo-Pacific group being implemented in the region? Is it correct to say that multilateral is the new way to go in Northeast Asia, East Asian regions? That includes both U.S., Japan, and Korea trilateral meetings, or China, Japan, Korea?

And second question would be: So, we all know that Taiwan has lost a lot of diplomatic allies, and right now they have 12 left. So, if Taiwan loses all diplomatic allies, will it be possible for Taiwan to raise up, put out its voice in the world? That's my question.

**Dr. Sandeep Mishra**

I think multilaterals definitely are going to be more effective, because of the given complex equations in the region. But apart from existing multilaterals, I will say more overlapping minilaterals must be articulated in the region. For example, as I mentioned about Japan, South Korea, and China annual meeting could be made regular. Multi-layered interconnectedness must be effectively utilised through minilaterals apart from working through multilaterals.

**Dr. Namrata Hasija**

Thanks for the question. I think there are two sides of it. One, of course, is the debate that is happening, even in Taiwan, that at what cost are we maintaining these allies? Because most of them are with Taiwan because of the huge aid that they are getting.

Now, second is that, of course, how the Chinese are also squeezing the Taiwanese, right? Because they want to do it on all fronts. And this is one important front. Now they are down to 12, and when they are down to zero, so there will be no country that will actually raise its voice for Taiwan in the international forums. So, the Chinese might have this plan that you talk to us if you want to, you know, deal with Taiwan. That's also one of the ways that China can pressurise Taiwan.

**Ambassador Skand Tayal**

Okay, last question. Brief.

**Ms. Arshey Bhardwaj**

I'm so sorry. Good afternoon. I'm late. And I'm last one to ask a question. My name is Arshey Bhardwaj and I'm a research associate from Stratfor news. I know we all have spoken about the security and the defence area. I'd like to put in one point in regards to the demography, the demographic issues that China and Taiwan both are facing. And I want to ask, how can China culturally, by trying to maintain its relation with the Northeast Asia and try to overcome that issue. And how it will impact the economic development? And can China, using its cultural similarities with the Northeast Asian countries, try to normalize its relation and use the youth to overcome the bigger issues.

**Prof. Chintamani Mahapatra**

Let me say a few lines on that. Number one, China's aging population is there, but China is not going to need or even want a kind of immigration policy that Japan is now thinking about. Because Japan also having tremendous amount of aging population, so much so, Japanese military is facing a lot of deficiency in terms of manpower. Right?

So, South Korea, same thing. People are aging very fast and the number of people who are above 60 is growing by the day. So, not just China, but multiple countries in the region are having that aging problem. It is going to have some impact on the economy, there is no doubt about it, because without the labour force, without a young dynamic people in your country, your economic growth rate is bound to slow down.

So, what kind of impact it will have, we have to watch. But it is going to have an effect, there is no doubt about it. Twenty seconds, sir, about this mini-lateral thing. You have now the Quadrilateral, four countries. You have the Camp David, Japan, South Korea and U.S.A. You have JIA, Japan, India and America. You have Japan, India and Australia. You have France, Japan and India. So, there are too many trilaterals, quadrilaterals and mini-laterals are working there. That is the solution.



The Chinese are worried about any kind of multi-lateral organization. They already point out Quad as an Asian NATO. So, that kind of thing is not going to happen. But mini-lateral thing is one of the ways to resolve the issues.

**Dr. Sandeep Mishra**

One small clarification I would like to make. China is not an aging society right now. Because of the impact of the one China policy it may be so in the future but right now its median age is around 39 years. South Korea and Japan are definitely aging societies and facing big problem as Amb. Tayal mentioned in his remarks. More than demography, I would like to bring in cultural connectedness among the countries of the region such as China, Japan, Korea, and Taiwan. So, I think this cultural connectedness could play important role in case they are allowed to do so. Because of the contentious hard issues among these countries most of the time the cultural connects through Korean Hallyu or Japanese J-pop and Chinese movies are not having desired positive results. Actually, cultural products of these countries are quite popular across the region, but they are not allowed to play any decisive role in foreign policy making of these countries. In case that happens, it would be great and that space is there.

**Ambassador Skand Tayal**

I will conclude by saying that post the end of the Cold War, whatever was the world order is unravelling and as Henry Kissinger has also written, a new world order is being formed. But the way things have been happening in the last few years, it seems that the respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity is declining.

U.S. always never respected any country's sovereignty. Then China was quiet, but China is aggressively going in South China Sea, our Galwan, et cetera. Then Russia has invaded Ukraine. Now Iran attacked Pakistan, Pakistan attacked Iran. So, these are all signs that somehow the high respect for sanctity of territorial integrity which used to be there is getting diluted.

Now what impact it will have in the Pacific? Everything is up in the air. You watch your national interest and there are no rules. So, let's see how it goes, but things are in a very uncertain situation, things are in a flux.

**Dr. Tunchinmang Langel**

Thank you Ambassador. Once again, thank you for so kindly agreeing to Chair this panel discussion. On behalf of ICWA, I would like to thank the esteemed panellists for taking time out from their busy schedule to share their insightful perspectives. And I thank the distinguished audience also for joining us for this productive engagement.

# Programme



## ICWA Panel Discussion

on

# Deciphering Northeast Asia's Complex and Evolving Landscape

## Quest for Regional Stability

16 February 2024 | 1100 - 1215 hrs IST  
Conference Room, Sapru House

## Programme \*

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| <b>1100-1110 hrs IST</b> | <b>Opening Remarks by Chair</b><br><i>Ambassador Skand R. Tayal</i><br><i>Former Ambassador of India to Republic of Korea and Uzbekistan</i>   |
| <b>1110-1120 hrs IST</b> | <b>Dr. Sandeep Kumar Mishra</b><br><i>Associate Professor, Centre for East Asian Studies, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi</i>  |
| <b>1120-1130 hrs IST</b> | <b>Prof. Chintamani Mahapatra</b><br><i>Founder &amp; Honorary Chairperson of Kalinga Institute of Indo-Pacific Studies. Formerly Pro-Vice Chancellor &amp; Professor of International Studies, JNU, New Delhi</i> |
| <b>1130-1140 hrs IST</b> | <b>Dr. Namrata Hasija</b><br><i>Research Fellow, Centre for China Analysis and Strategy (CCAS), New Delhi</i>  |
| <b>1140-1210 hrs IST</b> | <b>Q &amp; A moderated by Chair</b>  |
| <b>1210 hrs IST</b>      | <b>High Tea</b>  |
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\* The Panel Discussion was coordinated by Dr. Tunchinmang Langel, Research Fellow, ICWA

# Bio-Profiles



### **Amb. Skand Ranjan Tayal**

Ambassador (Retd.) Skand Ranjan Tayal is a graduate of Allahabad University and has a Post-Graduate Degree in Chemistry from the prestigious Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur.

After joining the Indian Foreign Service (1976), Ambassador (Retd) Tayal served in Indian Missions in Sofia, Warsaw, Geneva and Moscow. He was India's Consul General in Johannesburg (1996-98) and Houston (2002-05), and Ambassador of India to Uzbekistan (2005-08). Since 2008, he was Ambassador of India to the Republic of Korea.

Ambassador (Retd) Tayal was Secretary of the Indian National Commission for UNESCO during 1991-95 and served briefly as the Director in charge of IITs in the Department of Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development. He was Joint Secretary and the Chief Passport Officer of India during 1999-2002.

Ambassador (Retd) Tayal has wide experience in both bilateral and multilateral diplomacy and has been a frequent speaker on contemporary affairs.

In July 2013 Ambassador Tayal was appointed as Chairman of the Governing Body of the well-known Dyal Singh College in New Delhi for three years. He was an independent Director in 2012-15 on the Boards of Hindustan Shipyard Limited, Visakhapatnam and Minerals & Metals Trading Corporation, New Delhi.

Ambassador Tayal was a Visiting Professor in the Department of East Asian Studies, Delhi University from 2012 to 2016.

Ambassador Tayal is the President of India-Republic of Korea Friendship Society, New Delhi, Secretary of the Society for Complementary Therapies, Delhi and Advisor to the Millennial India International Chamber of Commerce & Agriculture, Delhi.



**Dr. Sandip Kumar Mishra**

Dr. Sandip Kumar Mishra is Associate Professor at Centre for East Asian Studies (CEAS), School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India. He is also Honorary Fellow at the Institute of Chinese Studies (ICS), Delhi and Distinguished Fellow at the Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies (IPCS), New Delhi. He obtained his PhD from the Jawaharlal Nehru University in Korean Studies and International Relations. He studied Korean Language at the Yonsei University and Sogang University. He has been Visiting Fellow and Visiting Scholar at Korea National Defense University, Northeast Asia History Foundation, Kim Dae-jung Presidential Library and Museum, Institute for Far East Studies, Kyungnam University, Sejong Institute, and Korean Institute for International Economic Policy.

He has published several articles in Indian and East Asian academic journals along with book chapters and contributed opinion articles to newspapers such as Korea Times, Times of India, Indian Express, Financial Express, Pioneer, Tribune, and Statesman.

His areas of interest include North Korean Nuclear Issue, International Relations of East Asia, East Asian Security, Asia-Pacific Security etc.



### **Prof. Chintamani Mahapatra**

Prof. Chintamani Mahapatra is the Founder and Honorary Chairperson of Kalinga Institute of Indo-Pacific Studies. He was Professor at the School of International Studies of JNU. He served as Rector (Pro-Vice Chancellor) of Jawaharlal Nehru University from 2016 till early February 2022. He was Editor of Indian Foreign Affairs Journal, published by the Association of Indian Diplomats.

Prof. Mahapatra has authored/edited eight (8) books, and has contributed chapters to above 30 edited books. He has published above 70 research articles in reputed journals. He has guided 26 PhD scholars and 51 M. Phil Degree scholars. He has chaired and presented papers in numerous national and international conferences.

He has been awarded a number of international fellowships, such as Fulbright Fellowship, Commonwealth Fellowship, and Visiting Fellowships to undertake research in the US, UK, Austria, Australia and many other countries. He has been a visiting faculty in several UGC-run Academic Staff Colleges, the Foreign Service Institute of the Ministry of External Affairs, National Defense College, Army War College, Naval War College and the College of Air Warfare.





**Dr. Namrata Hasija**

Namrata Hasija is a Research Fellow with the Centre for China Analysis and Strategy, New Delhi and her primary area of interest is Chinese foreign policy and India-Taiwan relations. She was also the recipient of the Taiwan Fellowship by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2019-20) and the Huayu Enrichment Scholarship by the Ministry of Education, Taiwan (2014-15).

Before joining CCAS she was a Senior Research officer at the Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies and has been a visiting researcher at the Institute of International Relations, National Chengchi University, Taipei and National Tsing Hua University, Hsinchu. She has also completed a one-year intensive level Mandarin language from the National Chengchi University, Taipei.

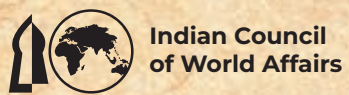
## ABOUT ICWA

The Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA) was established in 1943 by a group of eminent intellectuals led by Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Dr. H.N. Kunzru. Its principal objective was to create an Indian perspective on international relations and act as a repository of knowledge and thinking on foreign policy issues. The

Council today conducts policy research through an in-house faculty as well as through external experts. It regularly organizes an array of intellectual activities including conferences, seminars, roundtable discussions, lectures and brings out a range of publications. It has a well-stocked library, an active website, and publishes the journal *India Quarterly*. ICWA has over 50 MoUs with international think tanks and research institutions to promote better understanding on international issues and develop areas of mutual cooperation.

The Council also has partnerships with leading research institutions, think tanks and universities in India.





Sapru House, New Delhi