

Vision 2030 for Northeast Asia

Politics

We, the members of the Future Leaders Forum, drawing distinguished members of government, business, academia, media and civil society of Japan, People's Republic of China and the Republic of Korea, propose the following points concerning the pressing political issues of the East Asian region.

1. Nationalism

We are fully aware of the risk of strong nationalist sentiments held by the population of the three nations harming political stability in the region. In order to avoid such an unfortunate outcome, we propose, firstly, the principle of mutual respect for other countries' historical experience. Only on the basis of such can a consensus for the future be constructed. We recognize past and ongoing efforts to strengthen mutual respect and understanding made by the three nations, such as the dialogues between Japan and China, and Japan and the Republic of Korea towards the development of a common history textbook, and strongly urge their extension and expansion.

With respect to territorial disputes, which usually become focal points for nationalist outrage, we stress here the importance of peaceful resolution of any outstanding disagreements, so that they do not become impediments to the enhancement and deepening of regional cooperation.

2. Regional Security

As of this meeting, which should be an occasion for the celebration of the 40th and 20th anniversary of the normalization of relations between Japan and the PRC, and the PRC and Republic of Korea, respectively, the region again finds itself grappling with a nuclear crisis originating in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). We recognize the nuclear crisis as the gravest threat to regional stability and to avoid any escalation of tensions confirm the importance of continued peaceful negotiation with that country. We would also like to convey our concerns regarding regional humanitarian issues.

3. Energy Security

Although energy tends to be treated as a primarily economic issue, in East Asia with its vast industrial capacity, safe and abundant availability of energy is a matter of survival and, hence, a political issue of prime importance. On this issue, we would like to express our strong support for cooperation in the development of new and alternative energy sources, as well as exploring the possibility of a common petroleum reserve for the three nations, all of which are heavily dependent on imports for that vital resource. The nuclear power plant accident in Fukushima, although a tragedy for Japan, provides an important lesson from which PRC and the Republic of Korea could learn much. We therefore would like to propose the sharing of experience and know-how regarding the construction, operation and crisis management of nuclear power plants, as well as the establishment connecting the three nations of a nuclear power “hotline” to facilitate communication among regional leaders.

4. Leadership

No matter how brilliant a policy advice may be, it will be worthless without strong and competent political leadership. In this regard, we would like to urge our political leaders to avoid the exploitation of narrow nationalist sentiments. Also, we strongly encourage more frequent meetings and exchanges between leaders as well as working level officials of the three nations to strengthen the possibility of cooperation in concrete policy matters.

Economics

Step-stone Toward Regional Economic Integration

1. China-Korea-Japan Free Trade Agreement should be one of tools to promote economic integration amongst the three countries. However, it is still unclear whether the three countries can directly jump to signing an agreement, since each country has different political difficulties in implementing free trade amongst them.
2. The participants shared the vision that people of China, South Korea and Japan should continue to push the trilateral economic cooperation in the direction of mutual trust and good friendship.

3. Thus, our proposal is to start from building a free economic zone amongst a part of the three countries separated as an independent customs area.
4. The free economic zone will enable the three countries to try many types of economic cooperation. Business persons and tourists should be able to take advantage of a visa waiver within the special economic zone. Also, the three governments maybe can together promote the development of new businesses such as green energy and eco-friendly technologies in the zone.

Civil Society

Introduction

After discussion by the participants, we found a lot of similarities and differences between the three parties. We discussed a full range of issues, including natural disasters, education, cultural exchange, aging society, immigrants, unemployment of youth, health problems, food safety, climate change, marriage and the birth rate, as well as multi-cultural society. We talked about these topics and we all recognized the importance of the civil society and of the vital significance of collaboration among three countries.

The discussion focused on the following five topics.

1. Natural Disasters

We agreed that there should be more responsibility from the government side when facing the natural disasters. Both China and Japan experienced earthquakes in the past few years. The past experience showed that cooperation and sharing information are very important. For example, China and Japan sent their rescue teams to the other counties for the emergency relief job. This helped a lot with regards to promote mutual understanding. We call for a “Co-working system” to deal with future natural disasters.

2. Education

We found that our 3 countries are facing the problem of limitations in education resources. To deal with this, we call for governments to provide more funding for education related infrastructures and more efforts from the civil society. We believe the education should be provided on a universal basis no matter if people are rich or poor, or live in urban or rural areas.

3. Aging Society

Aging Society has already been a big social problem among our three countries. Japan and Korea are now experiencing the aging society. In other words, more seniors and less young people will cause social problems like labor shortages and expensive welfare expenditures. The question should draw high attention as it will affect the speed of economic development if not properly handled.

4. Cultural Exchange

We all believe the importance of cultural exchange activities among our three countries. We should explore more ways, not only popular culture. As we know for instance, there is huge influence from Korean TV Dramas on Chinese young people. But actually this is not enough, they have the desire to know more about Korean society. We call for enhanced cultural exchange from the governmental level to non-governmental level. We believe civil society could contribute substantially to this end. We also think the language exchange is important to mutual understandings. We had a wild expectation that the official languages for the forum in 2030 could be Chinese, Japanese, and Korean.

5. Unemployment of the young generation

Youth unemployment is a common issue which needs to be addressed properly among our three countries, because youth is the future of our countries. If the young generation cannot get a job after graduation, they are likely to end up being parasite singles or being isolated from Society. We are shocked to find that “3Ds” phenomena are common in China, Japan, and Korea. The “3Ds” which represent Dirty, Dangerous, and Difficult reflect the situation for the young generation. They are not willing to go out to find a job and communicate with other people. To deal with this situation,

we suggest the provision of more job opportunities, setting up more consulting organizations to help them to better adapt to the society. We also believe that we should focus on building up the morale and confidence of the young people, especially under the situation where the economy has yet to recover. For three parties, we should join hands to deal with the situation and share our experience.

Conclusion

We realized there are a lot of issues need to be further addressed. And we believe that enhancing our mutual exchanges should be a continued effort for three countries to jointly deal with the social problems in our society in along with political and economic problems.

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