

About APAC

Spring 2009

The Asia Pacific Affairs Council (APAC) is a forum for all Columbia students interested in East and Southeast Asian affairs. Founded and run by students, APAC serves the entire university community by organizing events, distributing information, and coordinating East Asia-related activities while building a community for students interested in East Asia. APAC works with the Weatherhead East Asian Institute to fulfill its mission.

To add your name to the APAC weekly mailing list, e-mail us at: apaclist@gmail.com.

Visit www.columbia.edu/cu/weai/apac.html for more information.

Interested in contributing to the APAC Journal? Comments and suggestions?

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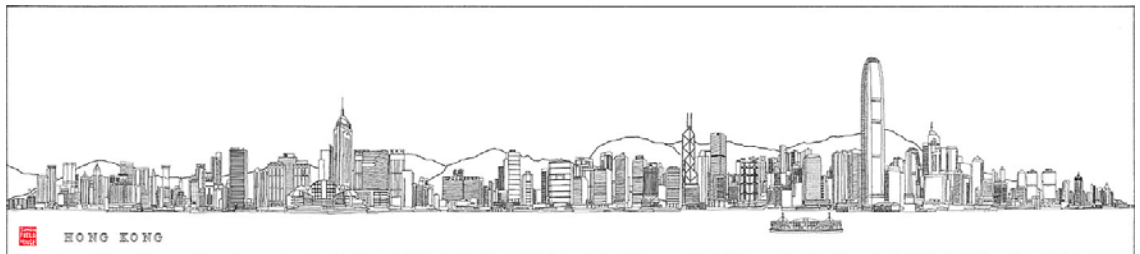
DELIVER EAST ASIA

APAC Journal

FROM THE ASIA PACIFIC AFFAIRS COUNCIL AT THE WEATHERHEAD EAST ASIAN INSTITUTE



Celebrating East Asia



THE YEAR 2009 marks the 60th anniversary of the Weatherhead East Asian Institute (WEAI). Throughout the year the Institute and its partners are organizing several programs/events to commemorate this historical occasion. The central focus of these programs will be to reflect on and honor Columbia University's pioneering past and present connections to East Asia and to contribute to further strengthening of this important relationship.

While further affirming the WEAI's standing as a premier institution for research, publishing and public programs, the 60th anniversary programs highlight the quality and depth of East Asian scholarship at Columbia University and its significant influence on the region and beyond. This will not only help in consolidating Columbia's relationship with the East Asian region, but will also further enhance the university's commitment to East Asian Studies.

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Deliver East Asia: Letter from the editors

IT'S BEEN ANOTHER exciting semester for the Weatherhead East Asian Institute and the Asia-Pacific Affairs Council!

We are celebrating Weatherhead's 60th anniversary, taking stock of the history the Institute has witnessed, and looking forward to another 60 years (at least!) of world-class research, scholars, speakers, and students.

We are honored to be part of these celebrations, and wish WEAI continued success as it brings East Asia to Columbia.

In this issue, we have tried to cover the entirety of East Asia, ranging from pieces on the Tibetan Film Festival in Harlem, to an exclusive interview with Professor Michael Buehler regarding current events in a rapidly-changing Southeast Asia. We also take a look at Vietnamese motorbikes, diplomacy on the Korean peninsula, and celebrated Chinese artist Xu Bing during his recent visit to Columbia. In addition, we have remarks from former U.S. Ambassador to Japan,



The Weatherhead logo. The APAC Journal is published by the Asia-Pacific Affairs Council (APAC). APAC works with the Weatherhead East Asian Institute to fulfill its mission.

Thomas Schieffer, who provided his insight into Japan's changing relationship with its neighbors in East Asia.

We then leave you by presenting our new Program Assistant for next year, Jennifer Davis. We congratulate Jennifer and wish her the best of luck in her role next year!

For news and views, or lectures and pictures, the APAC Journal aims to be your guide to all things East Asian at Columbia University.

We deliver East Asia.

The *APAC Journal* Editorial Committee is:

Weilun Soon
Xavier Ortells
Barbara Khayat
Petra Dunne
Mareike Ohlberg
Michael Prosser



From Tibet to Harlem, USA

BECKY BEST visits the Tibetan Film Festival in Harlem

IN THE FIRST WEEK of March, Maysles Cinema hosted the *Tibet in Harlem* film festival. With the support of the Kham Film Project, Machik and the Modern Tibetan Studies Program at Columbia University, the festival presented seven days of films and events focused on contemporary Tibet and the Tibetan exile experience. The festival drew members of the substantial local Tibetan community, area academics and interested New Yorkers. Each film showing was followed up by panel discussions or Q&A sessions with the filmmakers, the figures portrayed, or experts on the issues involved. Running concurrent to the film festival was a display of artwork by contemporary Tibetan artists such as Tenzin Phakmo, Sonam Dhondop, and Tenzing Rigdrol.

The festival opened with documentaries concerning CIA's involvement in Tibetan resistance in the 1960s. *Raid into Tibet* (1964) features rare footage of an actual raid on a People's Liberation Army (PLA) convoy staged by Tibetan resistance fighters. *The Shadow Circus: The CIA in Tibet* (2000), by Ritu Sarin and Tenzing Sonam, provided historical context to the raids that illuminates little-known aspects to the story: CIA's support of Tibetan resistance and the vio-

lence many Tibetans were committed to during that time. Ultimately, the film shows that the good intentions of the CIA directors and the fierce dedication of the Tibetan fighters, when combined with the political realities of high-level CIA decision-making and international diplomacy led to a human tragedy of the failure of political systems to adequately address human needs. The rest of the festival went on to examine and celebrate many aspects of Tibetan history, religion and culture. *Leaving Fear Behind* (2008) is particularly notable for the appearance of Tibetans voicing their grievances and fully knowing the danger of the act. This highly politically sensitive film was smuggled out and released in time for the Beijing Olympics. Tuesday features were *The Forbidden Team* (2003), the Tibetan national soccer team, and *Beauty and the Beast: a Search for Miss Tibet* (2006), and *Miss Tibet in Exile* (2008), interestingly on beauty pageants in exile.

On Wednesday, the festival provided glimpses into the history of the Tibetan exile experience in India. *Tibetan Story* (1965) and *Tashi Writes a Letter* (1964) portray daily life in exile, while *A Stranger in My Native Land* (1998) shows the story of a Tibetan born in exile visiting Tibetan regions of China for

the first time.

Thursday evening brought two films about the Dalai Lama: *Religious Investiture of His Holiness the Dalai Lama* (1970) and *Dalai Lama, Colombia*, which is a work in progress concerning his 2006 visit to the South American nation.

The feature of Friday night was the 2004 Chinese drama *Kekexili (Mountain Patrol)*, a fictional account concerning the endangered Tibetan antelopes and the Tibetans who risk their lives to protect them. The final day of the festival presented *The Reincarnation of Khensur Rinpoche* (1991) and *The Thread of Karma* (2007). This remarkable pair of films begins with the search for the reincarnation of the lama Khensur Rinpoche and returns to the boy as he reaches adulthood, showing the growth of his relationships with those who discovered and raised him. The festival concluded with a reception and a musical performance by Phurbu Lhamo.



Becky Best graduated from Yale in Religious Studies and a concentration in Buddhism. She has lived in Tibet, and next year she will begin her Ph.D. in Modern Tibetan Studies at EALAC.

Former Ambassador Schieffer on Japan

TAKAHIDE SOEDA reports on the former Ambassador's talk at Columbia

ON FEBRUARY 24, NBK (*Nihon Benkyo Kai*, or the Japan Exchange Forum) hosted a lecture session with former US Ambassador to Japan, Thomas Schieffer.

Ambassador Schieffer was nominated by President George W. Bush on January 2005 to serve as the 27th US Ambassador to Japan from April 2005 to January 2009. During his term, he coped with a wide spectrum of issues such as BSE (bovine spongiform encephalopathy, or "mad cow disease"), the beef import problem, and the reorganization of the US military base system in Japan.

Professor George Packard, a personal friend of Mr. Schieffer, offered to help NBK organize a lecture session with the Ambassador. When I received the offer, I thought that it would be a good opportunity for those who were interested in Japan as Mr. Schieffer had been engaged on the front line of the US-Japan relationship up until this January.

At the beginning of the session, Mr. Schieffer provided attendees with a brief review of the Japanese domestic political situation: the two houses of the Japanese Diet had been controlled by different parties ever since the two watershed elections in 2005 and 2007.

"Japanese politicians have not yet figured out how to manage the situation. The situation will continue for next four years," said Mr. Schieffer. "I hope Japan can overcome the political gridlock it now faces."

Mr. Schieffer also pointed out that the United States experienced similar situations many times that two parties controlled different branches and even different houses of Congress, but both parties managed to find bipartisan solutions, and Japan should learn from the US experience.

During the question and answer session, I asked him what the toughest issue was that he faced during his tenure in Japan. "The six-party talks" was his sharp reply. The Ambassador described that managing the talks was his most difficult mission because every participating country had differ-

ent interests and there was no way anyone could control North Korea.

In addition, keeping the issue of the abduction of Japanese citizens by North Korean intelligence agents on the agenda was of prime importance to the Japanese public, but the Japanese people did not sense a serious commitment from the US



Former Ambassador
Thomas Schieffer

tackling the abduction issue in order to strengthen the bond between the US and Japan, he emphasized.

In responses to some questions asking about the prospects for Japanese economy, Mr. Schieffer stressed that an increase in productivity would be key to Japan's future economic growth. In his view, although Junichiro Koizumi, the former Japanese prime minister, achieved many reforms and directed Japan in the right direction, the Japanese economy is still overregulated. One example he provided was the very low levels of foreign direct investment into Japan, which was doubled as a result of Koizumi's reforms, but still remained at just 2% of GDP. He claimed that there is still much to be done for Japan's economic prosperity. In

the face of unfavorable demographic trends and a troubled fiscal policy, productivity growth is the only way to lead to economic prosperity. However, he optimistically expected that Japan would achieve robust growth through innovation, since Japan has, similarly to the United States, a strong knowledge base for innovation. On the other hand, he raised concerns that the current political deadlock might damage the appetite for further economic reforms.

Mr. Schieffer also provided an interesting perspective on Japan based on his experience. When questioned about what advice he would give to his successor, he remarked that patience was important for his position in dealing with Japanese policymakers. Japan's decision-making process was quite different from that of the United States, which often frustrates the U.S. officials, but the U.S. needs to be patient, he stated.

A slight detour to U.S. domestic politics was made when a question was asked on the assumption that if he became the governor of Texas, how he would make use of his experience in Japan. He answered that providing good education is significant because the United States has to compete with emerging countries such as China and India, both of which have high-quality education systems, something that the Texas education system could work towards.

I believe that his wide range of experiences and views, backed by his deep analyses of Japan, fascinated all participants. His sharing of his experiences as a diplomat in Japan gave us profound perspectives on the politics, economy, and foreign policy of Japan. The lecture was definitely a great opportunity to remain up-to-date on US-Japanese relations.

I would like to thank Mr. Schieffer and Professor Packard for offering students this wonderful opportunity.



Takahide Soeda, a first-year MPA student at SIPA, is the chairperson of the Nihon Benkyo Kai.



An Artist Through the Looking Glass

XAVIER ORTELLS takes a look at Chinese artist Xu Bing's lecture, which opens the Weatherhead East Asian Institute's 60th anniversary celebrations

DURING HIS PRESENTATION of Xu Bing's lecture on March 11, Professor Robert Harrist (Jane and Leopold Swergold Professor of Chinese Art History) noted that the sun never sets over Xu Bing's works. His international acclaim, his bridging between cultures and intelligent artistic positions makes of him one of the most important living artists, Professor Harrist continued. More than the expectation that the quality of your guests will make your dinner, Xu Bing's superb lecture was the Weatherhead East Asian Institute statement of purpose on setting off the celebration of its 60th anniversary, an affirmation of its position in the present and its expectations for the future as a significant actor in the academic arena.

After the introductions of Professor Myron Cohen, Director of the Institute, and Professor Harrist, Xu Bing led the audience through a generous trajectory over his most significant works and themes. Professor Harrist had highlighted Xu's role as an educator (lately recognized by his post as Vice President of the Central Academy of Fine Arts of China); the lecture did not fall short to the expectations. Aided by images, Xu Bing traveled his artistic recurrences, or obsessions, since the late 80s, when his *Book from the Sky* raised international attention, to his present projects. Established in Brooklyn since 1990, Xu Bing has developed a career full of depth and insights, valiantly committed with the times and the social discourses.

His meditations on language, perception and translatability are of particular interest to the academic community on East Asian Studies. The Square-Word Calligraphy, consisting of English words shaped into Chinese-like new characters, forces perception to abandon pre-assumptions and habits. Far from a mere trick, this new calligraphy talks about linguistic estrangement and cultural hegemony. In a step further, the on-going process *Book from the Ground* provides a neo-language made of the globalized icons of contemporary capitalist life that reduces the educational barriers and collapses post-Babel hermeneutics. Is it also a return to the pictographic origins of Chinese language?



Art for the People, 1999

The nature and logic of Chinese culture is indeed a constant presence. At his lecture, Xu Bing remarked his predilection for traditional folk crafts, which he used to carve the 4,000 false characters that conform to the books for *Book from the Sky*. His latest work, an enormous phoenix that will decorate the façade of a new state-of-the-art building in Beijing's business district, was also approached as in the spirit of lantern making. In this work, the mythological reference merges with the contemporary reality on the phoenix's components: construction materials, scraps and tools from the construction site take the floor to highlight the materiality and social reality of Chinese growth, too often behind the scenes.

Ambiguity, as Professor Harrist underscored, articulates many of Xu Bing's works. Showing the trick does not work against, but reinforces the effect and intention of his projects. In *Background Story*, straw, grass and organic rubbish, covered by a milky glass, transforms into the natural, ideal landscape of ancient painting in the other side. After the initial gullibility, one recognizes the donkeys painted as zebras (*Wild Zebra*), the pigs behind the panda masks (*Panda Zoo*), the words camouflaged into characters, the straw that shapes the mountain.

Xu Bing has traced an ascending and challenging path around issues that interpellate both China and the U.S., Asia and the world at large, a global audience that shares preoccupations and common aspirations. We are left to expect that the Weatherhead Institute, in a similar vein, will travel a corresponding route (starting with, in a reversal, opening the Beijing section) towards academic robustness and vigorous interdisciplinarity in the global academic arena.

Xavier Ortells is a M.A. candidate in Regional Studies East Asia at the Weatherhead East Asian Institute, and intends to pursue his interests in a Ph.D. in Modern Chinese cultural production.

How Vietnam Travels

MICHAEL SIEBURG takes us on a motorbike tour through Vietnam



INITIAL IMPRESSIONS OF VIETNAM are invariably shaped by the swarms of motorbikes that weave through the streets with an anarchic sense of order. Journalists visiting the country for the first time can't seem to help but begin their articles with the obligatory mention of motorbikes. Tourists chat endlessly about them. And for those who live in Vietnam, whether Vietnamese or expatriate, the motorbike is the subject of much conversation and an integral part of daily life. City dwellers around the world transport themselves and their goods using a diverse array of means, from car to train, water taxi to public bus. In Vietnam, it is the motorbike that moves the city. The motorbike is not simply a means of transportation but it is also a symbol of social mobility and an important indicator of the purchasing power of the country's lower and middle classes. The upper class is increasingly showing a preference for cars but the proportion of the population that can afford a car remains small. In a 2004 report on consumer markets in the BRIC's, Goldman Sachs estimates that the income "sweet spot" representing the point at which a significant number households in a country are able to afford a car comes at \$8,000 GDP per capita (PPP). The IMF estimates that Vietnam's GDP per capita PPP will be approximately \$2,900 in 2009. Clearly, Vietnam requires significant income growth before it reaches this sweet spot, meaning that the motor-

bike will continue to be the country's dominant means of transport and an important indicator of the state of the Vietnamese consumer for the foreseeable future.

Motorbike sales help to tell the story of Vietnam's economy during this financial crisis. Over the past year, Vietnam has transitioned with breakneck speed from inflation rates reaching near 30% in the summer of 2008 to rapidly slowing growth rates in the second half of the year. As inflation sped past 20% in early 2008, motorbike sales plummeted by some estimates of up to 30%. Decreased purchasing power caused first by rising prices and then an economic deceleration slowed motorbike sales considerably. Even during Tet, normally a season of heightened consumption, motorbike sales plummeted in Hanoi. *Vietnam News* tells the story of one motorbike shop that typically sold 300 units a month in previous boom years but only managed to sell 100 this New Year season, even with decreased prices. The *Vietnam News Agency* reports that in the latter months of 2008, many motorbike shops reported a decrease in sales of up to 50% compared with the previous year. These numbers are illustrative of the economic challenges facing Vietnam's economy. Consumer demand and purchasing power will remain depressed until external demand returns, investment picks up, and the economy recovers. To look for signs of that day, analysts will be pouring over current account data, FDI and FII inflows, GDP growth, inflation rates, and other macroeconomic indicators. In some countries, these analysts might also count the number of cars on the road during rush hour as a gauge of economic conditions but in Vietnam a more appropriate measure would be the sales of one of the country's most ubiquitous modern symbols, the motorbike.



Michael Sieburg (MLA 2010, Economic and Political Development) lived in Vietnam before coming to SIPA and drove a Honda Wave through the country's dynamic cities and beautiful countryside. Michael will be interning in Ho Chi Minh City this summer.

Restless Democracy in Southeast Asia

FRANCIS ASPREC interviews Professor Michael Buehler

THE APAC JOURNAL interviewed Dr. Michael Buehler, who is the 2008-2009 Visiting Postdoctoral Fellow at Weatherhead East Asian Institute. Dr. Buehler has made a tremendous impact at WEAI, especially with the responsibility of coordinating various events and lectures throughout the year. In addition, he played a significant role in assisting the Asia-Africa Governance Series, which has become an exciting and attractive workshop at SIPA. For his efforts, the APAC Journal wanted to interview him on various issues taking place in Southeast Asia. Dr. Buehler's answers have been edited for brevity and clarity and should not be considered a full transcript.

At the present time, what general theme or commonality do you personally see with Southeast Asia? How much of an impact has this particular theme or commonality had in the sub-region?

MB: The common theme that has been seen in Southeast Asia

is the roll back of democracy. Thailand, the Philippines, Malaysia, and Singapore still struggle with the concept of democracy. Indonesia is the big exception. It is a country that is willing to make a move towards democracy.

US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton recently visited Asia in order to promote stronger diplomatic ties between US and Asia. One of her visits included Indonesia. Did her visit to Indonesia bring a different kind of inspiration for US-Southeast Asian relations? What does her visit to Indonesia mean for other Southeast Asian countries?

MB: Her visit sent an early signal about further strengthening the relationship between the US and Indonesia. But the main three goals to her visit in Indonesia were 1) to highlight Indonesia's role in the Muslim world and to showcase a successful democratization process in the country, 2) to visit the ASEAN

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Restless Democracy in Southeast Asia

Continued from Page 5

headquarters in Jakarta, and 3) to continue to foster a relationship with Indonesia on a domestic level. Also, her visit strongly connects with President Barack Obama's vision on bridging the relationship between the West and Muslim-majority countries. Indonesia is the country with the largest Muslim population in the world.

Touching on an important issue for Indonesia is the upcoming parliamentary elections in April and presidential elections in July.

Current President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono is poised to be re-elected. So far, Yudhoyono has been credited with the levels of poverty and unemployment levels decreasing, success in a multibillion-dollar reconstruction following the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, and ending a 29-year separatist conflict in Aceh. If all goes according to plan and Yudhoyono is re-elected, what issues will be considered to be a top priority for the country? What challenges linger for both Yudhoyono and the country?

MB: If Yudhoyono is re-elected, there are five issues that will be on his agenda. They are:

- 1) Environmental issues will be a concern, especially the issue of climate change. Indonesia is third in the world in Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emitters, lesser only to China and the US. GHG emissions in Indonesia occur due to deforestation. This issue has to be addressed.
- 2) Deepening anti-corruption programs continues to be a challenge for Indonesia. There is resistance within the Indonesian civil service to a lot of these reforms.
- 3) The country is becoming more vocal in promoting democracy. By doing that, the Indonesian government is trying to deepen the concept of democracy throughout Southeast Asia.
- 4) Education reform is another top priority for the country.
- 5) Radical Islam remains a concern for

the Yudhoyono administration.

Since the fall of former Thai PM Thaksin Shinawatra, Thailand has undergone changes in its leadership. Abhisit Vejjajiva is trying to bring a new direction in Thai politics, but protests and



Professor Michael Buehler

clashings from the Thai population are hampering it. What can be assessed about Thai politics so far?

MB: Problems in Thai politics are running deep. The problem with Thai politics is a structural one. Until their structural issues are addressed, conflicts will continue.

“As for Malaysia, Thailand, and the Philippines, these countries continue to struggle with the concept of democracy.”

Current Philippine President Gloria Arroyo's term will be coming to a close in 2010. Her time as President has been marred with many corruption scandals. Depending on who takes over, what kind of leadership do you see in the Philippines government post-Arroyo? Will

it put an end to the continuation of cronyism that has been going on in Philippine politics?

MB: Like with Thailand, the weakness in Philippine politics is in its structure, especially land ownership patterns. I doubt that changes will take place any time soon in addressing the reduction of cronyism in the country.

Economic concerns have plagued Asia for quite some time. The current global economic slowdown has left a severe effect on all parts of the world especially in Southeast Asia. For example, Singapore, which is seen by the world as one of the thriving countries in Asia both politically and economically, has been in a recession for a little over a year. Despite being an economically strategic location to both Asia and the world, the city-state's GDP is dependent on globalization and foreign trade. Does this economic slow-

down prove to be worse than the Asian Financial Crisis in 1997? Was Southeast Asia, especially Singapore, prepared for the next round of an economic slowdown? What lessons has Southeast Asia learned so far from this crisis as opposed to the 1997 financial crisis?

MB: Economies in Southeast Asia are definitely affected by the global downturn. The GDP of Malaysia or Cambodia will shrink by about 1%, according to World Bank data. Likewise, Thailand will see a fall of 2.7% of its economic growth. However, compared to developing countries in Africa or Latin America, Southeast Asia is doing relatively OK. Many countries have learned their lesson from the 1997 crisis and have built up reserves of foreign currency, have reduced government debt, and have reformed their banking sector. Quite ironically, Southeast Asian countries were told in 1997 by the IMF/World Bank not to bail out their banks, but let them go bankrupt. The banking sector in Southeast Asia is now healthier than in the United States.

After looking at these Southeast Asian countries, ASEAN comes to mind. ASEAN is trying to identify itself with Southeast Asia and the world as “One vision. One identity. One community.” With all the changes, challenges, and issues going on in each SE Asian country, what does it mean for ASEAN and its identity? Despite the difficulties, will ASEAN be able to produce the particular identity that people will be able to better identify Southeast Asia? Does ASEAN see further unity and harmonization in its agenda for the next few years?

MB: I don't think so. People in Southeast Asia still identify with their country or their region, not with an identity of being Southeast Asian. The same is true for Europe and the European Union.

Francis Asprey, who recently completed his M.Sc. in Global Affairs at NYU, has been an active member of APAC since Fall 2007 and has contributed on numerous occasions to the APAC Journal.

So ju Diplomacy

HOON HWI JOO takes a look at political relations on the Korean Peninsula

NORTH KOREA'S "DEAR LEADER" Kim Jong-il is at it again. Following his failed attempt to launch a satellite into orbit in early April, Pyongyang expelled four United Nations International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspectors and four U.S. personnel from Yongbyon nuclear complex and announced its withdrawal from the six-party denuclearization talks that involve Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), Republic of Korea (ROK), U.S., China, Japan, and Russia. These recent developments put involved nations in an awkward position of punishing this "maverick" leader for his defiance to the international community and digging up whatever carrots left for North Korea to come back to the negotiation table.

In terms of incentives and by extension diplomatic leverage to influence North Korea, the consensus is that China – North Korea's major supplier of petro deliveries – is the most likely player to deliver Kim back to the talks. However, is China the best response to resolve this issue in the long-run? What does this "proxy diplomacy" mean for the U.S. and other liberal democracies? And, are there other options?

For the Bush administration, its ideological restrictions against bilateral talks with North Korea necessitated its efforts to engage DPRK through a proxy – China. This "proxy diplomacy," albeit unintended, empowered and increased the diplomatic influence of China with North Korea. Although China has, in the past, demonstrated its efforts to be a responsible power in the region (e.g. China's initiative to create the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and its involvement in ASEAN) Beijing remains an authoritarian regime with a questionable domestic hu-

man rights track record. Delegating U.S. leadership over the denuclearization process to China may lead to a decline in Washington's influence in the region in the long-run.

So what other viable options are there? One is to have the U.S. engage in bilateral talks with the DPRK. The Obama administration appointed Ambassador Stephen Bosworth, former Dean of the Fletcher School at Tufts University, as a special envoy to North Korea. Bosworth has long held

failure. The second attempt had been marginally better in terms of formulating a multilateral solution to the nuclear question. However, due to misaligned diplomatic efforts, compounded by the rising anti-American sentiment in South Korea, the talks resulted in the sidelining of South Korea and Japan. As a result, Seoul's diplomatic leverage had been handicapped, arguably losing out to China.

For the aforementioned reason, ROK should be more assertive in coordinating US-DPRK talks in the immediate future. One way to accomplish this is to give guarantees to North Korea of Seoul's commitment to continuation of diplomatic talks, particularly a tripartite meetings of North and South Korea and the U.S. This could be coupled with humanitarian and economic aid incentives and other creative avenues.

Therefore, the onus falls onto ROK and its new administration to show the international community, particularly the U.S., that Seoul can deal with this issue capably and adroitly.

Undoubtedly, the nuclear issue is a destabilizing factor for the region; yet, it has a potential to create a mechanism through which counties can establish further security and economic cooperation that might lead to the creation of a peace regime on the Korean peninsula. It is crucial for the liberal democracies involved to construct their policies with a long-term vision in mind.



the view that the U.S. should engage with Pyongyang and be prepared to discuss their normalization process. Although this approach might yield a more desirable outcome, domestic critics in the U.S. can make it difficult for the new administration to implement this option.

The second and more feasible option is to empower South Korea to engage with North Korea. In other words, instead of relying on China to relay its messages, Washington should make more use of its ties with Seoul to discuss future options for Kim. It is important to note that China should remain an integral part of the negotiations, but it is mutually more beneficial for the US and ROK to coordinate their efforts.

Many academics have argued that South Korea's stance in the past nuclear talks were not optimal. The first accord to address Pyongyang's nuclear ambition was the Agreed Framework in 1994. Lack of coordination between the involved parties, especially between the U.S. and ROK, led to its eventual

Hoon Hwi Joo is a first-year MLA student concentrating in International Security Policy. Prior to SIPA, he was a senior editor and project manager at the Embassy of the Republic of Korea in Washington, D.C.



Introducing Your New APAC Chair and WEAI Program Assistant



JENNIFER DAVIS is currently working towards her Master of International Affairs, studying East Asian Regional Studies as well as Economic and Political Development. Since graduating from Scripps College with majors in International Relations and Cultural Studies, she has had the opportunity to work with organizations in diverse international contexts. From 2003-4 in Taipei, Taiwan, she studied Chinese and edited a weekly news magazine. After receiving a grant from the Avery Foundation in 2005, she moved to Yunnan Province, China, and assisted in the development of HIV prevention projects. Leaving China, she continued fundraising work over the next three years for public health promotion in Oaxaca, Mexico, human rights advocacy at Amnesty International Turkey, and most recently with the Private Sector Development office of the United Nations Development Programme in Istanbul, Turkey. After finishing at SIPA, Jennifer hopes to work in East Asia on issues related to energy security and environmental protection.



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- Internship and Career Panels
- Green Dragon initiatives
- Inter-regional Event Series
- Brown Bag Discussions
- “Meet the Faculty and Visiting Professionals” Luncheons
- Job and Internship Announcements
- And more!

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