



TALKING POINTS

Asan Plenum 2013: “New World Disorder”
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Panel: Security Crisis and Trade Disputes (Grand Ballroom I)

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Talking Points for: T.J. Pempel, University of California, Berkeley

Four broad trends in East Asia over most of the post-Cold War have been 1) increased economic growth and prosperity throughout most of the region; 2) achieved in part through enhanced regional interdependence through FDI, regional production networks, and formal trade agreements’ 3) expansion in the number, depth, and institutionalization of regional institutional forums; and 4) an overall decline in the balance of military force as an instrument of foreign policy. Since 2010 however security tensions have risen, due largely to the toxic interactions of: 1) China’s new territorial and cyber-security assertiveness; 2) the continued saber-rattling and regional self-insulation of the DPRK; 3) rising nationalism and conservatism in the ROK and Japan; and 4) the U.S. repositioning in East Asia.

Current security tensions are currently playing out in the intra-Asian debates over potential multilateral trade agreements with TPP as the most demanding pact. TPP would implicitly bolster US-Japan links (and probably US-ROK ties) while raising high economic hurdles for China. The CJK trilateral pact would be a powerful political link among all three countries, while requiring fewer domestic adjustments pains. RCEP would be economically the broadest and least politically demanding but also perhaps the least likely to affect regional security relations.

* The views expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the views of the Asan Institute for Policy Studies.