

Panel: China's Defense Policy (Orchid Room)

Date/Time: Wednesday, December 12, 2012 / 09:00-10:15

Talking Points for: Han Yongsub, Vice President, Korea National Defense University

China's Growing Military Power and Its Implications for the International Security

The Rise of China has begun to affect the existing power balance in the economic as well as in the military arena. Interestingly enough, the Chinese government stated that the world is now changing into a multi-polar world, the American power is declining.

As such, it is widely discussed whether the Chinese military power will surpass the American military power in the long run, that is, twenty years later or not, at least in East Asia. Worrisome is that China has recently demonstrated its intention to secure its sea lanes of communication by outreaching the South China Sea and the East China Sea with the exercise of its military means. Most recently, China claimed the territorial rights of the Senkaku (Diaoyu) Islands by disputing with Japan by dispatching naval ships around the Islands.

The China's defense policy is to step up efforts to modernize its military capabilities to be able to fight the information warfare in the future and to strengthen its naval and air force power in order to protect its maritime and aerospace national interests. As China's national power increases over time, its defense budget records a double-digit growth, enabling them to be equipped with advanced and the state-of-the-art weapons and operational methods. Though the Chinese government made it clear that China would maintain the policy of a "peaceful rise" by keeping defense-oriented strategy and policy as long as it pursues continuous economic development, people and states in the Asia-Pacific feel the strength and presence of the China's military might. Without China's special efforts to enhance mutual confidence in China's long-term strategic intention and capability, China will be regarded as an assertive and nationalistic power by foreign countries.

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As the United States shifts its strategy from a pivot to Asia to a rebalance of its attention and effort, China raises concerns about the U.S. intention and capabilities. As the Sino-American security relationship gets complicated with more of competition and conflict, it is uncertain whether the strategic environment will become stable or unstable in the long run. Thus, it is important that countries in East Asia including the United States and China make efforts to enhance mutual confidence and cooperate to mitigate security concerns.

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