

## **The New Normal and Regional Orders**

**Session:** Plenary Session 2

**Date/Time:** April 26, 2016 / 14:45-16:15

**Moderator:** David Sanger, The New York Times

**Speakers:** Lee Chung Min, Yonsei University  
Douglas Paal, Carnegie Endowment for Int'l Peace  
Gerhard Sabathil, Delegation of the European Union to the ROK  
Zhang Tuosheng, China Foundation for Int'l Strategic Studies

### **Session Sketch**

The moderator of the session, Mr. David Sanger, national security correspondent of *The New York Times*, opened the session titled “The New Normal and Regional Orders” observing trends of rising populism and increasing suspicions over post-war institutions globally.

Dr. Lee Chung Min, professor of Yonsei University, stated that it is imperative to understand the other side of a rising Asia. Dr. Lee argued that conventional narratives of the region make it difficult to cooperate and the growth pattern inherited from Meiji Japan to the “four tigers,” then to China and India has come to an end. Dr. Lee regarded the Chinese transition as inevitable. The only issue at hand is how smooth the transition will be. The aging population of Japan and South Korea, the two most developed economies in the region, was mentioned. The two societies are not ready to pay for increasing social welfare expenditure and this same phenomenon will appear in China soon. Regarding regional security, Dr. Lee reiterated political breakthroughs rather than multilateral institutions. He argued that US alliances will remain at the core of the regional order as long as China continues to make neighboring countries uncomfortable about its maritime disputes and position on the DPRK nuclear issue.

Dr. Douglas Paal, vice president for studies at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, noted that Asia needs to adjust to the new normal of weak economy and cross trade agreements. Arguing that anti-trade is denying sources of growth, the pending legislative action in the US is said to be the result of failure of American leadership to explain benefits

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such as growth of industry and job creation. Concerned that the four remaining US presidential candidates are against the deal, Dr. Paal stated that the chances are low. However, once TPP is passed, gravitational forces will be created in Asia Pacific and in Europe to conclude the Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP). For economic integration and growth in the region, the need for mini-lateral institutions and domestic reforms were highlighted. Taking instance of the failure of DOHA, Dr. Paal argued that like-minded countries need to cooperate first to achieve multilateral trade deals.

Amb. Gerhard Sabathil, ambassador of the European Union to the Republic of Korea, stated that the region has never been normal and has continuously faced challenges. Despite of wave of populism and increasing resentment over migrants, Amb. Sabathil takes an optimistic view over future of the regional institutions. Europe has proved to overcome crises throughout history and will maintain regional orders to develop the institutions further. As for the US pivot to Asia, Amb. Sabathil did not think that the policy is neglecting the region as the EU still plays a role in security and soft security issues. However, Amb. Sabathil expressed concerns over US hesitance in the Middle East, arguing that the region is more in crisis than East Asia. US should be urged to play a more influential regional role, eventually helping EU resolve the migration issue.

Prof. Zhang Tuosheng, chairman of the Academic Committee and director of the Center for Foreign Policy Studies at the China Foundation for International Strategic Studies, noted that new organizations are needed in accordance to changing regional orders. For successful operation of regional institutions, the UN Security Council should continue to play a central role, regional multilateral forums should be further promoted, and major powers need to collaborate. In the security sphere, Prof. Zhang suggested the idea of transforming US military alliances to deal with non-traditional issues and engage in talks with Russia and China. Trilateral talks were suggested as a way to bridge US and China. As for territorial disputes, Prof. Zhang stated that China takes a two-track policy approach. Though open to multilateral efforts, it was reiterated that the issue can be fully resolved only through bilateral means.

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