

Draft Presentation

International Conference on the Process of Reconciliation and Historical Reflections in East Asia and Europe after the Second World War

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From security configurations to sustainable peace: Moving beyond the confrontational legacies and reconciliation challenges of the Second World War in East Asia

First of all, thank you to the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences for inviting me to this important conference. The various presenters have given us insights into the need for reconciliation more than half a century after the atrocities we still remember today. I hope to plant the seeds of how we may move from the prevailing security architecture inherited from the Second World War, transcending reconciliation challenges towards a sustainable peace in East Asia. I will draw on the experiences of Germany and Japan, and my own country the United States, and hope to convince you that the tools of peace and conflict studies, just beginning to be employed, may help us construct a more harmonious, less confrontational, future.

The Second World War shaped the international security architecture in place for 65 years now, and important grievances have not all been successfully addressed by this system. Moving beyond the shadow of the war requires revisiting those grievances and incorporating some of the lessons learned from, and opportunities presented by, peace studies and its related fields of study and practice, including conflict prevention and transformation; dialogue, truth-telling and reconciliation efforts; and the concept of social cohesion.

While the military and human devastation following the war now seems like a distant reality, the legacy of atrocities and the claims of victims and their descendants create fertile opportunity for misunderstanding and conflict today. The treatment of wartime history and atrocities have been different in both Germany and Japan, and so have the ensuing geopolitical realities of Europe and East Asia that have impacted the potential for reconciliation.

Germany and Japan

The United Nations and associated Bretton Woods system developed by the victors of the Second World War did accomplish one of their principal goals, preventing a third world war, but there is still a need to increase the international systems' capacity to address conflict at other levels (as illustrated by the growth of the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations over the last several decades). The system is in need of modernization, especially at

the United Nations where ultimate decision-making is conditioned by a Security Council with permanent members with veto power consisting of the five powers that emerged from a war in the middle of the last century, which may therefore not be able to adequately define and accomplish an expanded peacebuilding agenda in this century.

At first look, the de-nazification process and German economic development following the war resulted in integration and reconciliation. Japan's Constitutional tutelage by the US appears to have produced a different outcome that did not lead to integration and reconciliation with neighboring countries that suffered from imperial aggression. Beyond these generalities, the realities of each situation are more complex. While the international architecture functioned to prevent a Cold War show-down, the alignment of allies on each side and internal politics within and between those countries shaped the realities of post-war reconciliation.

Geo-political alliances, regional realities, and strategies that impacted reconciliation

In Europe the evolution of integration into a European Union from an initial European Coal and Steel Commission of six countries in 1951 and the Treaty of Rome in 1957 is well documented. For our purposes, it should be noted that despite being a continent physically divided by Cold War confrontation, no further wars took place in Europe in the period after the Second World War almost up to the Treaty of Maastricht, which founded the European Union in 1993. (The exception being the wars of the dissolution of the former Yugoslavia from 1991-1995, which I will comment on in a moment). The Morgenthau plan just following the war envisioned a de-industrialized "pastoral" Germany stripped of any military capabilities. The collapse of the Soviet Union and its Eastern bloc in the 1980s facilitated integration and alleviated the pressures of strategic Cold War alliances inherited after the Second World War.

In Asia, the Korean War (1950-53) exacerbated tensions and positioned the US and South Korea face to face with China and North Korea, with Japan allied with the US/S. Korea configuration. In fact, the war in Korea was one of the reasons the US decided to rearm West Germany as a Cold War bulwark in Europe. With German reunification in 1990 we tend to forget these details. But the legacy of Cold War alliances in East Asia has endured from the 1950s to this very day, and has made, and continues to make, both integration and reconciliation efforts difficult.

Internal political and social dynamics

The internal political and social realities of post-war Germany and Japan also were quite different. Both Germany and Japan experienced extensive de-nazification processes, including judicial accountability exercises that concluded in the conviction and execution of criminals indicted for atrocities before and during the Second World War.

In West Germany, the need for support in the Cold War alliance caused the occupying powers to abandon the punitive Morgenthau plan and begin to support stronger development and industrial

capacities under the Marshal Plan, which lead to decades of record growth: a *Wirtschaftswunder* or “economic miracle.” Economic development and relative political stability under Konrad Adenauer up until the 1960s, plus a determined effort to condemn its Nazi past that emerged from opposition parties in the 1960s¹, including landmark trials known as the Auschwitz Process from 1963-65, formed the basis for what we now consider to be the path of German leadership towards reconciliation and integration. Denying the existence of the holocaust is a crime² and trials of Nazi concentration camp guards continue in Germany to this very day.³

The internal politics of Japan evolved differently, in part due to the aforementioned regional alliances resulting from the Korean War, in part due to the internal repercussions of US occupation, which have led to the instrumental use of history for political purposes.⁴

Unlike the multiple divisions of Germany by occupying powers, the US moved to occupy the principal Japanese islands and ensure, through the US Initial Post-Surrender Policy for Japan, creation of a peaceful US ally. Vigorous US influence continued throughout the post-War period, including covert use of US funds⁵ to support the conservative Liberal Democratic Party which ruled almost continually for more than half a century until its defeat in 2007 elections. During this period, the LDP developed patronage networks that included the infamous Yasukuni shrine, that have become more present in Japanese society through revisionist efforts following the lost decade of economic stagnation in the 1990s.⁶ The LDP’s longevity as the source of political authority in Japan also inhibited the growth of pluralistic institutions and civil society that would promote broader reflection on conflict resolution and reconciliation. This has often led to the defacto empowerment of deniers of imperial aggression and intimidation of Japanese voices that would reflect on, and indeed apologize for, crimes committed in China during the war.⁷

The argument for the prevalence of local political dynamics’ impact on possibilities for reconciliation, whether German opposition calling for historical reflection in the 1960s or Japanese political patronage structures impeding reflections, is also the point of many Japanese critics of Chinese handling of the reconciliation agenda. Some Japanese believe the need for an

¹ Berger, Thomas, “Dealing with Difficult Pasts: Japan’s ‘History Problem” from a Theoretical and Comparative Perspective, in East Asia’s Haunted Present: Historical Memories and the Resurgence of Nationalism, 2008, p. 24.

² Ibid, p. 18.

³ “Suspected Nazi Indicted in Germany”, New York Times, July 28, 2010

⁴ Berger, *op cit*, pps. 20-21.

⁵ Tim Weiner, “CIA Spent Millions to Support Japanese Right in ‘50s and ‘60s,” New York Times, Oct. 9, 1994.

⁶ Hasegawa, Tsuyoshi, and Togo, Kazuhiko, East Asia’s Haunted Present: Historical Memories and the Resurgence of Nationalism, Praeger Security International, 2008, p. 2.

⁷ Chang, Iris, The Rape of Nanking, The Forgotten Holocaust of World War II, Basic Books, 1997, pps 199-214.

apology is superseded by the Sino-Japanese Treaty of Peace and Friendship of 1978.⁸ Other sources note that “many members of the Japanese foreign policy establishment genuinely appear to believe that the main problem is that the Chinese and South Korean governments have cynically used Japanese historical issues to boost their domestic support,” and cite Chinese concerns about Japan’s increasing “militarization” even when military spending has trended downward⁹ and the patriotic education campaign implemented in China in the 1990s as examples.

Today, 65 years later, though a series of apologies have been issued by various Japanese administrations reconciliation with both China and South Korea has not been achieved to some degree due to the internal politics in Japan which have compromised the apologies issued. An apology by Prime Minister Toshiki Kaifu in 1991 was criticized by Japanese conservatives as “self-flagellation.” An apology was issued in 1993 for comfort women enslaved in Korea, but it was not ratified by the Diet. PM Keizo Obuchi apologized to South Korean President Kim Dae-jung in 1998 for colonizing Korea. But Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi’s repeated visits to the Yasukuni Shrine did much to undo any reconciliation from previous apologies.¹⁰ So how can we move towards reconciliation? I think the key is continued engagement between constituencies and implementing the tools we have learned from peacebuilding and its related fields. But first I think there are important lessons to be learned from the experience of my own country.

Role of the United States

The United States played an active role in the geo-political positioning in both Europe and Asia, as evidenced in the previous discussion. The US pursued what it perceived as its national security interests in the context of the Cold War, including support for the redevelopment of West Germany and the entrenchment of the LDP in Japan, with very different impacts on the possibilities for reconciliation. Over the half century of the Cold War US foreign policy was dominated by the concept of political realism or “realpolitik,” which posits that the international system is anarchic and prioritizes individual countries’ quest for relative power over moral or social concerns.

In Japan, the US consistently chose to emphasize what it considered strategic interests over issues that would have facilitated reconciliation. The US also chose not to prosecute the imperial hierarchy or the infamous biological warfare Unit 731 at the close of the war, further

⁸ Inoguchi, Takashi, Japanese Politics, An Introduction, Transpacific Press, Melbourne, 2005, p. 125.

⁹ Straub, David, “The United States and Reconciliation in East Asia,” in East Asia’s Haunted Present, p. 216.

¹⁰ Berger, *op cit*, pps. 32-33.

complicating possibilities for reconciliation by not documenting responsibilities for atrocities. Furthermore, the US has had difficulty with its own legacies and reconciliation challenges in Japan, including for the firebombing of Tokyo and atomic bomb attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.¹¹

US experience during the Cold War has produced a slow, painful learning process in which we, or some of us, are beginning to realize the value of having a larger view and longer timeframe than common under the guise of *realpolitik*. The short-term priorities espoused under “realism” often led to long-term problems in the international arena. Simply put, Machiavelli is focused on a prince, one finite lifetime, which should be clear is not a sufficient frame of analysis for building peaceful national or international partnerships over time. How many countries that were trapped and manipulated in Cold War power struggles have become failed or failing states with devastating humanitarian impacts? The list includes Afghanistan, Congo, Guatemala, Iran, Iraq, Nicaragua, Somalia and others. Peace and conflict studies give us a lens for developing more fruitful long-term partnerships, and I will return to this.

We have also begun to realize the double-edged nature of projecting military strength: once you have capabilities and extended interests there is a subsequent, if not imperial, tendency to have to exercise and defend them. Today the United States is engaged in two wars and security enforcement efforts around the globe and in its seaways.

These realizations form some of the most important on-going debates in the US regarding foreign policy, and a clear trend for the future is not yet apparent. I am pleased to report that our institute is part of a concerted effort through the Alliance for Peacebuilding to get peacebuilding language in the US Foreign Assistance Act, which will frame our efforts in terms of the democratic and human rights values we hold most dear and must work to fulfill, as well as emphasize sustainable development as an important element of conflict prevention.¹²

Implications for East Asia

So what can we learn from the different experiences of Germany and Japan regarding the potential for reconciliation in East Asia. The internal politics of each place evolved distinctly, and both Germany and Japan today are diverse societies which have both deniers of past atrocities and healthy contingents of peace activists. Both do have small populations of skinheads and deniers of imperialist aggression – though the post-war internal political and social realities diverged between overt experiences of public rejection, as in the Auschwitz process in Germany, and the political patronage exemplified by visits of politicians to the Yasukuni shrine in Japan. Reconciliation challenges, even when addressed, continue to resurrect themselves depending on

¹¹ Straub, *op cit*, pps. 208-215.

¹² Foreign Assistance Act Reform on Advocacy sub-page of www.allianceforpeacebuilding.org

local and regional political and economic dynamics, as when renewed discourse on German victimization emerged in Germany when confronted by nationalist political administrations in Poland and the Czech Republic in recent years.¹³ North Korea just called for reparations from Japan.¹⁴ Unreconciled grievances, instrumentalized in the ongoing regional rivalries in East Asia, are indeed a significant security concern.¹⁵

A short divergence is important to illustrate the threat to security of persisting, unreconciled grievances, from the experience of a related place where I lived and worked for 3.5 years. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, following the dissolution of Yugoslavia, the narrative of historical grievance, projected back over even longer periods of many centuries, became a crucible for renewing extreme violence. The comparison is important: Yugoslavia, to some extent a creation of the Second World War, was also deeply impacted by Cold War fragmentation. Marshal Tito consolidated its diverse ethnic constituencies into a political federation and contained ethnic nationalism for 40 years. As in Germany and Japan, efforts were made by the victorious powers of the Second World War to eliminate ethno-nationalist (fascist) politics and discourse. This appeared to have been successfully achieved while power remained centralized under Tito. Following his death in 1980, and the economic collapse of Eastern Europe during the following decade, ethno-nationalist politics re-emerged citing historical grievances tracing back from the Second World War all the way to battles that marked the beginning of the Ottoman Empire in Europe in 1389. The usage of these grievance narratives by nationalist leaders to consolidate a power base that would continue on beyond the Yugoslav Federation led to civil wars that cost the lives of hundreds of thousands of civilians.¹⁶ This is an important example of how grievance narratives, if not reconciled, can be renewed and inspire fresh and even greater violence.

Another simple inference from the former Yugoslavia example indicates that nationalist tendencies were usually constrained by a central power structure controlled by those that defeated them.¹⁷ German fascists, Japanese imperialists and Serbian, Croatian and Muslim nationalists in Yugoslavia were all kept in check by the victorious forces of the Second World War for a forty year period after the war. Nationalist discourse often reappears once that centralized authority is removed and economic indicators have trended downward. The example of the former Yugoslavia is clear. Revisionist histories also gathered momentum in a declining economic environment in Japan.

¹³ Berger, *op cit*, p. 34

¹⁴ Cable News Network (CNN), August 22, 2010.

¹⁵ Straub, *op cit*, p. 207.

¹⁶ Little, Alan, and Silber, Laura, *Yugoslavia: Death of a Nation*, Penguin, 1997.

¹⁷ This function is theoretically the responsibility of a democratic State that institutionalizes rights and enforces laws.

Why have they not returned in Germany? Arguably they have reappeared, as in the skinheads mentioned previously and anti-immigrant mobilizations during economic downturns, but the combination of a generalized rejection of Germany's Nazi past amongst most Germans, the transcendence of Cold War polarization through German reunification and the demonstrated benefits of integration with the rest of Europe have overwhelmingly prevailed, along with the development of institutions to mediate conflict and guarantee rights and the rule of law that have been sufficient to contain, marginalize and prosecute those with extreme views.

This balance is the key to social cohesion, stability and harmonious efficiency within a society, and is one of the key outcomes offered by the various initiatives encompassed in the emerging field of peace and conflict studies. Peace and conflict studies, and their application in Japan, China, the US, Europe and the world, offer important ways forward for dealing with legacies of both extremism and grievance, and the regional security threats they pose.

A peace architecture is a security architecture

By developing peace studies and peacebuilding initiatives in Japan, China and the US, including at the level of foreign policy as mentioned above, we can begin to transcend both the historical grievances from the Second World War and the outdated, fragile security architecture that is its legacy.

A peace architecture is ultimately a security architecture. Peace studies do not simply consider lofty goals but are dedicated to the practices and methodologies of truth-telling and accountability; conflict detection, assessment and management; social cohesion and engagement. As Lisa Schirch notes, "A peacebuilding framework prevents, reduces, transforms and helps people to recover from violence in all forms while at the same time empowering people to foster relationships at all levels to create structural justice.... Peacebuilding is (also) a process of constructing or reconstructing state structures to foster peace and human security."¹⁸

Our joint challenge is to create a biology of peace, not the social Darwinism and biological determinism that have justified exploitation and conflict,¹⁹ but a hard science where we learn to reconcile historical grievances, manage conflict, engage national minorities and historically marginalized populations in participatory development and facilitate collective action to address international and domestic problems. There is increasing evidence that cultural factors, in this case an increased recognition of and vision for peacebuilding efforts, can impact biological

¹⁸ Schirch, Lisa, "Linking Human Rights and Conflict Transformation, A Peacebuilding Framework" in Human Rights & Conflict, Exploring the Links between Rights, Law and Peacebuilding, United States Institute of Peace, 2006, pps. 64 and 71.

¹⁹ Crook, Paul, Darwinism, War and History: The Debate Over the Biology of War From the 'Origin of the Species' to the First World War, Cambridge University Press, New York, 1994, p. 28.

evolution,²⁰ and the capacity of humanity to evolve beyond inter-species violence may determine our survival.

One of the frustrations of those present here today is the lack of recognition of error that is the underpinning of reconciliation. The horrors of Nanjing, should never be forgotten, and we should continue to engage both the Japanese and the world in truth-telling, a key reconciliation methodology²¹, and dialogue efforts to ensure that “never again” becomes an enduring reality for our children. We must also remember that grievance narratives have great potential to fester and create latent problems, even wars, as in the case of the former Yugoslavia.

John Paul Lederach says that “there is a sense in which the whole of peacebuilding could be summed up as finding and building voice.”²² Continuing to support the voices for reconciliation for atrocities committed over 65 years ago is still important in establishing the foundation that will transcend the security arrangements we have inherited from that period.

This work has progressed, in academic fora like this one and through the work of important scholars from Japan, China, Korea, the US, UK and beyond. Joint history textbook projects have produced a trilateral Modern History of the Three East Asian Countries (2005) with scholars engaged from China (17 scholars), the Republic of Korea (23) and Japan (13).²³ Professors Kazhiko Kimijima and Shigemitsu at Tokyo Gakegei University and Cheong Je-Cheong at the University of Seoul have published a joint history of Japan and Korea. Professor Hiroshi Mitani of the University of Tokyo, Komaba, is organizing a subsequent three volume project that will include China as well in an effort to create common regional history texts.²⁴ Professor Zheng Wang of Seton Hall University will publish an important book this fall titled “Never Forget National Humiliation: Historical Memory in Chinese Politics and Foreign Relations.”²⁵

Engagement should also go beyond academic reconciliation efforts. Youth in China, Japan and the US today have very little to do with the issues that created the Second World War, even if younger generations of Chinese and South Koreans feel more hostility towards Japan than their elders.²⁶ We should be connecting them in as many ways as possible in order to create the

²⁰ Wade, Nicholas, “Human Culture, An Evolutionary Force,” New York Times, March 2, 2010.

²¹ Hayner, Priscilla, Unspeakable Truths: Confronting State Terror and Atrocities, Routledge, 2001, pps. 107-133.

²² Lederach, John Paul, The Moral Imagination, Oxford University Press, 2005, p. 169.

²³ Wang, Zheng, “Old Wounds, New Narratives: Joint History Textbook Writing and Peacebuilding in East Asia,” History & Memory, Volume 21, Number 1, Spring/Summer 2009, pps 102, 106.

²⁴ Mitani, Hiroshi, “The History Textbook Issue in Japan and East Asia: Institutional Framework, Controversies, and International Efforts for Common Histories” in East Asia’s Haunted Present, op. cit., pps. 88- 92.

²⁵ Forthcoming, Columbia University Press.

²⁶ Straub, *op cit*, p. 208.

international understanding and solidarity that will allow populations to reject conflict as a means to fulfilling national ambitions. Our institute sponsors a youth and world affairs program called WorldLink that very much wants to partner with youth in China, Japan and around the world.

Citizen mobilization against historic crimes, like the Auschwitz process in Germany, or the civil rights movement in the United States, are important acts of recognition and accountability absolutely necessary to reconciliation and social cohesion. Current citizen movements against structural violence caused by environmental degradation or social exclusion can be divisive but, depending on government responses, may ultimately strengthen the institutions that mediate conflict we hope to build for the future.

The world has become increasingly aware that diverse polities, and Japan, China and the US are diverse polities both ethnically and politically, need mechanisms to mediate political and social differences. Peace and conflict studies have much to contribute to the construction of institutions to address these challenges. The United Nations has only recently, in 2005, instituted a Peacebuilding Commission, and its initial capacity has been limited to working only on a few select cases in Africa.

Social cohesion both within and between states can be achieved through the engagement and empowering of peace initiatives, methodologies, and institutes like ours at the University of San Diego and the efforts that have begun at Nanjing University.²⁷ This conference is an important opportunity to reflect on the unreconciled atrocities committed during the Second World War and how to ensure that we are defining and working towards a peace architecture that will transcend these legacies.

The US has learned powerful and painful lessons regarding imperial projections. As China assumes a more active role in international affairs we must work together, all of us across the world who are committed to peace, to ensure that we are integrated not just in terms of markets, but in a vision of a peaceful international order where conflict can be prevented or mediated, and grievances do not go unreconciled for generations.

Our commitment, amongst people in Japan, China and the US and beyond, towards a culture of peace and an evolution towards peacebuilding capacities means investing in peace education, including conflict resolution and citizenship training; international engagement and solidarity; and building the institutions necessary for ensuring justice and equity both domestically and internationally. This is our challenge today. It is also our best option for a peaceful future.

²⁷ Cheng, Liu, "Afterword: Aspirations for Peace Studies in China," in Peace Studies in the Chinese Century, Alan Hunter (editor), Ashgate Publishing, 2006.

Thank you.