

KÖRBER POLICY GAME

Berlin, 4–5 April 2014

**SECURITY IN
EAST ASIA**

KÖRBER FOUNDATION
INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

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Executive Summary

- Europe plays a limited role in East Asia's security policy. Europe's ambition clearly extends beyond mere trade relations.
- Germany views the coordination of policy on Asian security with its European partners as crucial. In contrast, France and Britain are more oriented towards the US than the EU. US leadership in Asian security is undisputed.
- If an incident like the one described in the scenario were to occur between China and Japan, Germany, France, Britain and the US would avoid taking sides for as long as possible. Furthermore, economic sanctions against China or Japan would not be an option.

Policy Recommendations

- Germany, France and the UK should set up a strategic dialogue on security policy in Asia which reflects Europe's aim to assert its influence in the region.
- The US should coordinate its Asia policy more closely with its European partners in order to strengthen its position in Asia.
- Germany, France, Britain and the US should work together to help building a system of cooperative security in Asia modeled on the OSCE.

Introduction

Asia is of crucial importance to the world economy. This is illustrated by the fact that almost half of EU trade and over one third of trade with the US takes place with Asia. Central shipping routes pass through both the South and East China Sea. Recently, however, the security situation in the region has worsened, and rearmament and military modernization is occurring throughout the Asia-Pacific. At the same time, the US "pivot to Asia" and China's rising assertiveness in the region have further raised tensions in the region.

It was against this background that the Körber Policy Game "Security in East Asia" took place on 5 April 2014 in Berlin. The pol-

icy game was based on a fictional three-step scenario in which an armed confrontation was said to be taking place between China and Japan over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands. The scenario focused on three questions:

1. What is Europe's role in Asian security policy?
2. To what extent do Europe and the US, but also the European partners, coordinate their Asia policy?
3. What opportunities for action would be available to Europe and the US in the context of a conflict between China and Japan?

Four teams representing Germany, France, Britain and the US took part in the Körber

Policy Game. Each team consisted of between four and six senior government representatives and experts from their team's respective country. The teams used internal meetings to discuss their own country's interests, and to develop tactical and strategic recommendations to take action that subsequently were discussed by all participants.

Results

The Role of Europe and the US in Asian Security Policy

The European teams agreed that Europe plays an albeit limited role in East Asian security policy; however, this role extends beyond mere trade relations. Arms sales to the region and increased cooperation on security policy with countries in the region alone have led Europe to become a factor in Asian security policy.

Asia also illustrated France's and Britain's aim to shape global politics – even if they recognized their influence was significantly less than that of the US. In contrast, the resolve to harmonize and develop common policy on the EU level was weak. During the scenario, Germany continually called for the E3 countries (Germany, France and Britain) to coordinate policy. However, France seemed to view policy coordination as more of a formality than a strategically important step.

The teams from France and Britain aligned themselves more towards the US than to their

European partners, thus underlining US leadership in security policy in Asia. France, for example, called for increased policy coordination between the P3 countries (France, the UK and the US) within the framework of the UN Security Council. Britain viewed maintaining its “special relationship” with the US an important objective, as opposed to focusing on policy harmonization with its EU partners. Despite this, the US did not prioritize close policy coordination with its European allies. Instead, faced with declining defence budgets, the US focused on coordinating its security policy with its Asian allies in order to ensure they would be able to defend themselves if necessary. However, one US participant did argue that the US ought to think about how to engage the EU in the region and how to reduce China's leverage over the EU.

“THE US SHOULD THINK ABOUT HOW TO ENGAGE THE EU IN ASIA.”

The Positions on China and Japan

The teams differed on their positions on China. Whereas the US saw no alternative to a policy of deterrence, the UK called for the long-term effects of China's rise in international politics to be taken into account. This also included sustaining an accommodating environment in which China could continue its peaceful rise. Closer security cooperation between the UK and Japan, which formed part of the scenario, was therefore viewed with skepticism. Germany stressed the importance of calculating the consequences of policy decisions and the signals they might send to China. The

origin of this thought was a formal request by the Dalai Lama to officially visit Germany, which also formed part of the scenario. In contrast, the US categorically rejected any responsiveness to China's sensitivities.

The teams also differed on their positions towards Japan. The US welcomed a possible

“A MORE ACTIVE SECURITY ROLE FOR JAPAN WOULD BE POSITIVE.”

reinterpretation of Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution, which currently prohibits Japan from possessing a regular

army. Moreover, the US also viewed a more active security role for Japan as positive. France and Germany were reticent on this issue, and viewed themselves as in no position to influence Japan in this respect. All of the teams were clear that further visits to the Yasukuni Shrine by high-ranking Japanese government officials would constitute a provocation and only worsen the current situation with China. If such a situation were to develop, Germany would call for a common EU declaration.

The teams also rejected any unilateral attempt by China to impose an air defense identification zone (ADIZ) in the South China Sea that extended to disputed territories. In fact, the US viewed unilateral territorial changes by China as far more provocative than further visits to the Yasukuni Shrine by Japanese government officials. In such a scenario, the US would attempt to prevent the imposition of an ADIZ in the South China Sea, or at least limit its scope and block its extension to disputed territories. If the US – and France – were unable to block the imposition of the ADIZ, they would refuse to recognize it, and call on their allies in the region to follow suit.

Conflict Prevention and Crisis Management

With regard to a long-term mechanism aimed at conflict resolution and prevention, all teams favored establishing a system of cooperative security. However, a Japanese collective security system modeled on NATO directed towards China was widely opposed. Instead, the US proposed developing confidence-building measures between China and Japan. Similarly, Britain called on the countries in the region to agree on a rules-based system that was founded on international law. Britain argued that without such a system in place, the region would see a power-based order which would contribute to instability and tensions. However, a common security system would require a common code of conduct and specific situations would need to be defined in advance, including the meaning of an “incident” and “military action”.

If an incident like the one described in the scenario were to occur between China and Japan, all teams stated that they would refrain from taking sides for as long as possible. If not, France warned that one of the parties might instrumentalize this situation. All of the teams agreed that if an incident were to occur, then an independent international investigation would be needed in order to establish its cause. Such an investigation could be undertaken in the framework of the UN. Britain and the US stressed the need to ensure that China was left room to maneuver, as forcing it into a corner would only lead to further escalation of the conflict.

“WE SHOULD AVOID TAKING SIDES FOR AS LONG AS POSSIBLE DURING ANY CONFLICT BETWEEN CHINA AND JAPAN.”

Economic sanctions against China or Japan were unanimously rejected. Rather, reversing the mutual trade embargo between China and Japan, which had formed part of the scenario, was viewed as an essential means of protecting the world's economy. France argued for an enhanced exchange of intelligence with the US via ALPACI and PACOM in the Asia-Pa-

cific region and for increased satellite monitoring of the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands. Finally, if an incident were to further escalate, the US stated it would place its forces in Japan on red alert, but would not increase its PACOM forces in the region so as to avoid intensifying the conflict.

KÖRBER POLICY GAME

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