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Not Let the Past Be the Enemy of the Future

Reporter: Sonja CAO



■ Arne Walther

Associate Fellow at Fridtjof Nansen Institute in Oslo, Norway; Former Norwegian Ambassador to Japan and India; Professor at the TERI University in New Dehli, India. His research interests include geopolitics, energy security, global energy developments and governance, and petroleum activity in the Arctic.

Reporter: Despite the history, China and Japan are increasing the cooperation between the two countries on several areas. Which area(s) do you think have the biggest positive and negative impact on both countries? And Why?

Arne Walther: First, I would like to say that we should not let the past be the enemy of the future. People-to-people contact and cooperation is of great importance. This does not need to be political. In the Nordic countries, we used to fight each other in the past, but at one point we stopped doing that and started cooperating at a certain point in history. That was also the case when we realised we had a separate identity, and we were proud of it, living in the North with our climate conditions, being able to understand each other living in a globalizing world. That also strengthens the need for creating solidarity. When you live in a globalized world and learn more about it, you also realize how small you are in the big picture.

So where do you start? People might say, let us go ahead and make union – something very ambitious at once. That doesn't work. After World War II, the new awareness of a special Nordic identity in a world that was rearranging itself prompted the establishment in 1952 of the Nordic Council. The European Union (EU) also started out as a cooperating platform on coal and steel between France, Germany, Italy and the Benelux countries, which later developed into the EU we know today.

Reporter: One of the main ideas behind the establishment of the European Union (EU) was to promote economic cooperation across borders to prevent war. The European Single Market seeks to guarantee free movement of the “four freedoms”: goods, capital, services and labor. While Sweden, Denmark and Finland are EU member states, Norway and Iceland are non-EU states that participate with exceptions. Do you think this is a cross-border cooperation model

[When global solutions to global problems are difficult to find, cooperation within regions becomes even more important. As does cooperation between regions. The Nordic countries seem to be peaceful and successfully developed countries today, but it has not always been like this. "Do not let the past be the enemy of the future" is perhaps the best line to keep in mind when countries try to establish different channels and platforms for cross-border cooperation.]

that can be implemented to Asia/Northeast Asia?

Arne Walther: I certainly think it is possible to cooperate on a regional basis, but it is up to the leaders to decide how it will be executed. The history and World War II experience gave strong impulse to post-war Nordic cooperation at a time of peace and as a new world order was being established.

However, regional cooperation does not need to start on a political level. You can have cooperation between institutions, universities, newspapers, etc., and even gatherings like Northeast Asia Women's Association just to make an example. The Nordic countries are already sharing experiences bilaterally with countries of Northeast Asia. Why not share on a region-to-region basis as well?

One obvious difference between the countries in our two regions is that China is so much bigger than the other countries in Northeast Asia. In the end, it is up to yourselves to determine both the utility and scope of any regional cooperation and integration. Conditions in Northeast Asia differ from those in the Nordic countries in many ways. Regional stability and security is dependent on sustainable economic development and mutually beneficial cooperation.

Reporter: The tensions between China and Japan have risen over the past few years as both countries claim sovereignty over East China Sea islets, known as Diaoyu Islands for the Chinese, and Senkaku Islands for the Japanese. How do you think this conflict can be solved?

Arne Walther: There is no simple answer to that question. That is also why it remains a conflict between China and Japan. I think it is important to look to the future and again, not let the past be the enemy of the future. There is no point in looking back and trying to learn from the history. What part of the history would

you look at? It will only be accurate if you go all the way back to the beginning of history, because it makes no sense to only study parts of it for comparison. That is why I think you should opt for the future, not the past. Look to the future and decide what kind of future you want, and what role these islands play in that future. There are no people living there, and do you want people to live there? In what sense are these islands important? And meanwhile, if the situation cannot be solved at once, it is up to the political leaders to manage the situation – which is obtained by having contact with each other.

Reporter: Despite many conflicts, both China and Japan have common interests economically. Take Toyota as an example; if Toyota cuts the investment and closes all the factories in China, millions of Chinese people will lose their jobs. At the same time, Toyota will suffer a great loss as the Chinese market is of great importance. So how can the countries in Northeast Asia increase common interests?

Arne Walther: It is important to meet and have dialogues. In the Nordic countries, we have created a common identity and values which we all take pride in, which can perhaps be of interest to you, a Northeast Asia identity. There are many ways to increase common interests, on all levels. Apart from cooperating in business as you have mentioned, you can also arrange forums, exchange between institutions like universities, engage media, etc. It is also important to create contact and trust at a sustainable level.

Reporter: Enlarging the interdependence between the Northeast Asian countries may have a positive effect on stability and peace in the region. Do you share this view? If so, what can the different countries do to contribute to cross-border interdependence? If not, why?

Arne Walther: Yes, I share this view. What you need to do is to start with what we call the low-hanging fruits. Just look at the basics. What small things do we have in common? What makes us a little different from the rest of the world? And when you start that exercise, people usually think that you are very different within a region, but you are not all different. When you start to make a list of all the little things you have in common, you will realize that the more you do this, the more you have in common. And this is surprising sometimes, because you did not realize you had so much in common. Picture that you have a pile of things you have in common, and add even more things to it, the pile gets bigger and bigger. And what separated you before, the conflict, hatred and past, becomes smaller and smaller. It becomes natural to create institutions, formalise corporations and you get so close to each other that there is no point in having a war against each other because it would be of mutual disadvantage. This is very much the case in Europe.

Reporter: Most people would argue that the Nordic region and Northeast Asia are more different than similar in most aspects, from

politics and culture to history, language, etc. What are the common features and distinctive features for cross-border cooperation in the Nordic countries and Northeast Asia? Which successful experiences can be transferred from the Nordic countries to Northeast Asia?

Arne Walther: The Nordic Council is a unique form of cooperation among Nordic parliamentarians across nation-state dividing lines, but along common political party lines. It started with small steps of integration, picking low-hanging fruits that were successively added over the years to the growing cooperative Nordic body through dialogue and harmonizing laws, rules and regulations. Later the Nordic Council of Ministers was established with overall responsibility for cooperation lying with the prime ministers. Nordic Prime Ministers have indicated five flag projects for cooperation which may also be of interest for Northeast Asia; Sustainable Cities, Climate and energy solutions, Food and nutrition, Welfare solutions, Gender equality, Business and work.

Countries of Northeast Asia might for several reasons not be looking for the degree of integration to which the Nordic countries have aspired. My hope is that you might find things in our experience that could help enhance a feeling of regional identity and solidarity also in your region that could reduce the probability of any conflict getting out of hand.

Reporter: Environmental protection is a global responsibility. The Nordic Council holds an important role in the work of climate changes and consequences of it among the Nordic countries, as the official body for formal inter-parliamentary co-operation. What can Northeast Asia learn from the Nordic countries regarding regional cooperation?

Arne Walther: The Paris Agreement, strongly supported by the Northeast Asian and Nordic countries, sets ambitious targets for sustainable and low-carbon global energy future. Sustainable development in the Arctic Ocean means finding the right balance between commercial and industrial activity on one hand, while safeguarding the environment on the other. Apart from what I have already mentioned, the Arctic Council also presents an interesting model for regional cooperation and economic dividing lines in addressing regional challenges that have global impact. Developments in the Arctic affect interests also of Northeast Asia. The Arctic Council is the only circumpolar forum for government level, political discussions of common challenges in the Arctic. The council does not make agreements that are legally-binding on members, but makes consensus-based recommendations on Arctic issues with focus on scientific research. It is the member states who subsequently make legally-binding agreements among themselves.

Reporter: Earlier this month, chief financial policymakers of China, Japan and South Korea

decided to resist all forms of protectionism during a meeting held on the Asian Development Bank's annual gathering in eastern Japan. Japan is concerned that China will dominate Asia while China thinks of Japan as being too aggressive. Do you think this decision of "resistance of protectionism" is a step towards cooperation or competition among the Northeast Asian countries?

Arne Walther: In the Nordic countries, we have experienced that longstanding animosity through history need not last forever, nor preclude future peaceful cooperation and integration. Our experience is also that political isolationism and economic protectionism is not the way to go forward. Wise political leadership can turn things around to a peaceful and cooperative win-win tomorrow. Currently, political tension in Northeast Asia is running quite high with global consequence. Also the rest of the world is nervous

about developments among countries in Northeast Asia. In the Nordic countries, we are proud of our common Nordic identity and values. We are also very proud of our individual national identities. Our nationalism and regionalism is cooperative, not confrontational.

Reporter: Based on your working experience in Japan and India, is there something we can learn about diplomatic relationships that may be beneficial to Northeast Asia?

Arne Walther: I think the main thing you learn from diplomacy is that it is better to talk than not to talk. But you must do more than just talk. You need to implement the good ideas for cooperation you get by talking. We need to do more of talking, on different levels. Again, I want to emphasise that we should not let the past be the enemy of the future.

Enhance the Internet Information Security with Joint Efforts from Multiple Parties

INTERVIEW

Reporter: Zeng Qinziqi, Zhang Lan



■ Yang Haijun

Chief engineer of the Office of the Leading Group for Cyberspace Affairs of CPC Shanghai Municipal Committee, and Cyberspace Administration of Shanghai

[Personal information security is faced with threats arising from the information production, security measures and information usage. There is a saying goes that without internet security there would be no national security. To address this, the government has invested massive energy and resources. Internet users and enterprises should also move to upgrade their technologies and transform their businesses. To conclude, the internet security issue needs not only support from the state, but also actions from the internet users.]

Reporter: Last year, General Secretary Xi requested to build a sound internet ecosystem. In your view, what kinds of problems have the social media brought to the internet ecosystem technologically?

Yang Haijun: The media socialization and social media have been brought to reality. The social media has caused great shocks to our real lives. On one hand, after reaching a certain scale, the social media will control the newsgathering in all fields of news in a way that is totally different from the traditional media. Especially when the We Media like the WeChat official account, the Weibo, the Netease account and the Toutiao emerge, the threshold for media industry has been further

lowered. Therefore, greater efforts are needed to build a sound internet ecosystem. On the other hand, the media platformization has come with great public appeal. Media VIP accounts (certified accounts with massive followers) or media celebrity accounts can attract as many as tens of thousands of followers, with strong leader effect. The mobilizing ability can promote social progress if used in a proper manner. Otherwise, it can also inflict social instability or even turbulence. From a national view of point, these phenomena ought to be further managed, possible by introducing rules and regulations to build a healthy internet environment.

Reporter: In recent years, personal privacy leakage has been reported frequently, which