

THE MAJOR POWERS OF NORTHEAST ASIA

**Seeking
Peace
and
Security**

edited by

**Tae-Hwan Kwak
Edward A. Olsen**



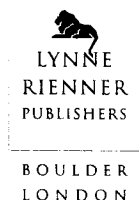
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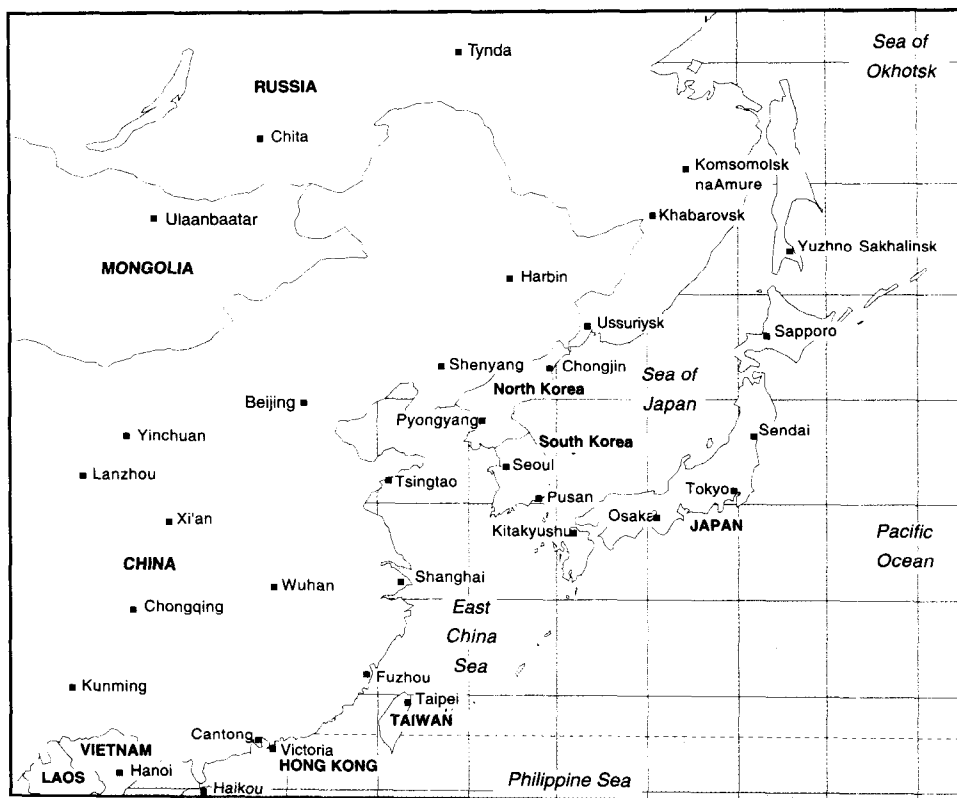
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Northeast Asia

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Introduction

*Tae-Hwan Kwak and
Edward A. Olsen*

Northeast Asia is a dynamic region of the world. It is comprised of Japan, the two Korean states in a divided nation, adjacent portions of China and Russia, and the seas that simultaneously divide and connect these countries. Northeast Asia has changed significantly since the Cold War, in part as a result of Japan's economic renaissance after World War II. Japan's emergence as a global economic superpower and its influence on the developing states of Asia is commonly described as an example of Asia's "economic miracles." In the forefront of those states that followed Japan's lead was South Korea. Although South Korea was long noted for its political repression, its "Miracle on the Han River" eventually allowed political pluralism and democracy to spread in that country.

As the Cold War ended, Northeast Asia confronted an altered international framework that posed serious challenges to the states of the subregion. For all their vaunted dynamism, these states faced global changes that strained their capacities and policies. The factors that have affected Northeast Asia's adjustment following the Cold War include each state's level of participation in the regional version of the superpower Cold War, the various threat perceptions that prevailed in the region, the ways in which the Cold War camouflaged indigenous tensions, and the extent to which a local variant of the Cold War took root on the Korean peninsula. Furthermore, Northeast Asia is trying to come to terms with the collapse of the central organizing principle in strategic affairs, conflicting pressures for new security architectures, an emerging—yet tentative—regional balance of power, and apprehension about the stability of a continuing U.S. role in the region. China's developmental tensions and North Korea's particularly severe problems adjusting to the loss of the old world order also greatly complicate the region's situation. Northeast Asia has one foot in the post-Cold War world, but the other foot remains entangled in the legacy of the Cold War. It is trying to

enter the post-Cold War era completely, along with the rest of the world, but the task is formidable.

This volume addresses this adjustment process and analyzes the security situation in Northeast Asia with special emphasis on security and peace issues on the Korean peninsula. The security and military situation in this region is extremely volatile and complex. The Korean peninsula, in which the interests of the four major powers of China, Japan, Russia, and the United States are intimately intertwined, remains an area of potential international conflict. Thus, this volume centers on the security issues of the major powers in Northeast Asia and the two Koreas.

The analysts whose chapters are assembled in this volume are acknowledged experts in their fields. The chapters are integrated so that the theme of Northeast Asia's adjustment to post-Cold War issues is addressed in a structured and coherent manner. To help the reader grasp the essence of the chapters, a brief summary of each is provided here.

"Japanese Security Policy in Post-Cold War Asia" by Tsuneo Akaha explores Japan's search for expanded political and security roles in the post-Cold War Asia Pacific. Japan faces many formidable tasks that defy short-term solutions. First, Japan must overcome its historical insularity and ethnocentrism in order to communicate in unequivocal terms what its future intentions are. Second, Japan must develop a strategic view of the region, which is characterized by an unstable balance between nationalist-realist tendencies and economic interdependence. Third, Japan must maintain a security alliance with the United States but at the same time forge a multilateral security framework (not an organization) by engaging Russia and China in security dialogue and economic cooperation. Fourth, Japan will be well advised to keep its defense spending and capabilities limited but continue to expand its economic assistance more explicitly for the purposes of comprehensive security. Finally, Japan must develop a national consensus on the scope and nature of its participation in the United Nations, including in peacekeeping operations and the Security Council.

"Chinese Security Policy in Northeast Asia" by Fei-Ling Wang analyzes Chinese security policy in the Northeast Asian region in the post-Cold War period. In the author's view, Chinese security policy appears to be focusing on maintaining the status quo, which is viewed by the Chinese as favorably stable and peaceful. Beijing seems to be quite relaxed in a secure Northeast Asia and enjoying its "unprecedented" best relations with every country in the region in over one hundred years. Most of the past security threats are gone, and the new challenges have yet to cause serious security concerns. Economic gains, rather than political influence, have become the main motives behind China's activi-

ties in this region. But Beijing watches carefully for potential security hazards to its political stability at home and its reunification of the motherland. It is very cautious about any new development that may alter the status quo. Limited by its own capacity, China appears to be playing a subtle yet familiar balance-of-power game with "Chinese characteristics" aimed at a prevention of U.S. dominance or of Japanese military resurgence in Northeast Asia, either of which would be viewed as a major security threat by Beijing. Thus, to use and contain the United States in Northeast Asia has appeared to be a major theme in China's security policy. From a short-term security perspective, the United States is welcome and even encouraged by the Chinese to continue its military presence in Northeast Asia to suppress the Japanese. But a United States that aggressively promotes human rights and political democracy is deeply feared by Beijing as a lasting and long-term challenge to the political stability of the Chinese regime. Any new actions or initiatives (such as a possible new policy on Taiwan) that may be viewed as expansionist or hegemonic behavior by the United States are therefore carefully monitored and firmly opposed.

This chapter analyzes in some depth the recent Chinese actions regarding the North Korean nuclear issue as a case study to illustrate what can be expected from an economically fast-growing yet politically stagnant China. It also examines four possible explanations for Beijing's sometimes puzzling policy toward the North Korean nuclear issue. It suggests that Beijing hopes for an outcome in which Pyongyang gives up its nuclear program and Washington helps to stabilize the status quo by giving full diplomatic recognition to, and perhaps injecting dollars into, North Korea.

In sum, the status quo is the best security environment China can ask for in Northeast Asia. Beijing is likely to work for the maintenance of this status quo for a considerable period of time. Therefore, a drastically growing and transforming China ironically will become a very conservative power in Northeast Asia.

"Australian Security Policy in Northeast Asia" by Dora Alves analyzes the economic and security roles of Australia as an active middle power in the Asia Pacific region. From the time of the Australian Labour Party's ascension to power in 1983, the Australian government has sought "enmeshment in Asia," encouraging public awareness of the countries to the north. Australia has become sensitive to the regional liking for ample discussion and unanimity. Alves maintains that in the mid-1990s, Australia's goals are to achieve self-reliance within the U.S. alliance and pursue a more independent policy as an active middle power. Striving to maintain peace in the region, it used its good offices during the impasse on the Korean peninsula. The economic development

of Northeast Asia, closely tied to exports of Australian raw materials, has changed the pattern of world trade and benefited Australian and Southeast Asian industrial development. Joint ventures have created interdependence. Japan is now Australia's chief trading partner; South Korea and Taiwan are also important to the Australian economy. At present, shared economic interests add to the stability of the region. Australia plays an important role in the Cairns Group, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum, and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Regional Forum, encouraging discussion and exchanges of views. Foreign Affairs and Trade Minister Gareth Evans strongly supports using established international bodies—though, in the case of the United Nations, new developments could enhance relevance to today's conditions—to settle international differences and to avert confrontation.

"Russian Security Policy in Northeast Asia" by Alexei D. Bogaturov analyzes the new international environment in the region after the disbandment of the USSR. The author argues that the region is developing in accordance with a "fluctuation stability" pattern that may be described as a dynamic combination of an overall regional peace and local "pointlike" conflicts that serve to discharge over tensions resulting from a "natural process of ripening" by the regional structure. Regional security matters, it is suggested, may be analyzed within a "core-and-shelter" scheme. The core of the regional relations between China and its neighboring smaller nations includes the first (inner) shelter, composed of the Japan-U.S. alliance and the Washington-Seoul axis, and the second (outer) shelter, composed of Russia's, Canada's, and Australia's policies. From a structural point of view, Russia remains an outsider in the region.

However, Russia may be important as a check vis-à-vis China, whose growing might and ability to press peacefully its neighbors in the south as well as in the north may be of critical importance in the future. Russia may be especially concerned with the asymmetry between the Russian and Chinese demographic presences in the Far East and possible interethnic tensions in Xinjiang that may affect Russia and its allies in Central Asia (Kazakhstan, etc.).

The Russian approach to the problem of Korea is criticized for being one-sided. Bogaturov insists Moscow should denounce the old era but simultaneously sign a new political and economic treaty with North Korea to reestablish tools to influence Pyongyang. In dealing with Tokyo, the chapter suggests that Moscow is interested in preserving U.S. control over Japan's defense policy. A breakthrough in territorial settlement is hardly possible; however, sooner or later the provisions of the 1956 Joint Soviet-Japanese Declaration should be implemented. A compromise might be reached in a context of strategic accommodation among Rus-

sia, the United States, and Japan in the regions of the Sea of Okhotsk and the Sea of Japan.

"Russia's Policy Toward the Two Koreas" by Seung-Ho Joo analyzes Russia's foreign policy toward the two Koreas in the broad contexts of Russia's foreign policy concept and the regional systemic structure of Northeast Asia, and discusses the major issues in Russo-Korean relations. Russia's foreign policy concept that was adopted in the spring of 1993 called for an independent and autonomous foreign policy for Russia and elevated Russia's security interests to a higher level. Subsequently, Moscow showed some signs that it might pursue a new Korean policy on the basis of an equidistant relationship with the two Korean states.

Northeast Asia is undergoing a radical structural transformation in the post-Cold War era. Russia has become a regional power in decline and is pursuing the policy of preserving the status quo in Northeast Asia. To achieve its goal of regional balance and stability, Russia utilizes two policy instruments: bilateral arrangements and a collective security system. Russia's tendency to use "the Korean card" against Japan and its persistent interest in forging a close military relationship with South Korea are part of its broader scheme for bilateral arrangements. Russia's call for a multinational conference to resolve North Korea's nuclear issue is closely intertwined with its plan for a collective security system in Northeast Asia.

"U.S.-Northeast Asian Security Relations: From Bilateralism to Multilateralism" by Edward A. Olsen analyzes systemic changes in Northeast Asia by examining the motives and policies of the United States, Japan, and South Korea as each attempts to adapt its bilateral relationships to contemporary pressures for greater multilateralism, as well as the roots of those pressures. U.S. security relations with its two Northeast Asian allies have been primarily bilateral during the post-World War II years. Now that the world is redefining the nature of post-Cold War security and economic relationships, various pressures exist to move toward greater multilateralism. U.S. relations with South Korea and Japan are virtually certain to play a major role in the creation of these new international structures. That evolutionary process is complicated by the differences between two sets of bilateral Northeast Asian ties and how the United States performs as a nexus.

There were strategic perception gaps operative in the two alliances that now must be reconciled. These differences were compounded by the separate approaches Seoul and Tokyo followed en route toward global economic interdependence in the 1970s and 1980s. From the vantage point of such different backgrounds, both Japan and South Korea today are experimenting with various forms of multilateralism. As they do so,

they are contending with a continually evolving set of U.S. policies toward economic and military multilateralism, and their impact on U.S. leadership in the region. Although all parties are pursuing these agendas with a post-Cold War geopolitical environment characterized by uncertainty in mind, their tenuously incremental approaches to the new milieu only add to the uncertainty factor. All parties seem committed to using multilateral venues as a supplement to continuing U.S.-based bilateral arrangements, but they also are apprehensive that events might lead to multilateralism supplanting bilateralism. This anxiety is cause for caution on all sides.

"U.S. Security Policy for Northeast Asia: Handmaiden of Export Promotion?" by Thomas L. Wilborn evaluates the Clinton administration's security policy in Northeast Asia. The United States entered the post-Cold War era with a security policy toward Northeast Asia that was widely accepted by most governments in the region, one that has also apparently been successful in achieving the primary U.S. regional security objective: a relatively stable and tranquil region. The Clinton administration adopted the main features of this policy, making changes primarily to reflect its determination that foreign policy should support its number one national priority of fostering domestic economic growth and social cohesion. In addition to the basic regional policy orientation, the Clinton administration also inherited its most serious regional security problem: North Korea's nuclear weapons potential and challenge to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty regime.

The Clinton administration has introduced three innovations into U.S. Northeast Asian policy. First, Northeast Asia (and the rest of the Pacific Rim) is receiving greater attention than it has at any other time. Second, economics has been given primacy over other aspects of foreign policy. Third, multilateral, as well as bilateral, security structures in Asia now have U.S. support. The U.S. commitment to South Korea goes beyond the concept of assuring stability. U.S. forces have been critical in deterring a North Korean attack as South Korea has improved its own military capability. The U.S.-North Korea Agreed Framework may result in lower tensions, improved North-South relations, and a change in Pyongyang's offensive deployments. But until that happens, U.S. forces will remain central to detering an attack by Pyongyang.

To achieve its security objectives in Northeast Asia, the United States depends primarily upon its alliances with Japan and South Korea and the forward presence of its military forces, which have become a symbol of U.S. engagement. The cost of relying on these approaches could be significantly reduced if a regional network of security structures, which could minimize instability while promoting change, were to evolve.

"Northeast Asian Nuclear Weapons Proliferation and U.S. Policy" by Lawrence E. Grinter surveys the patterns of proliferation of Northeast Asian nuclear weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and examines how U.S. policy, unilaterally and in concert with other countries and organizations, seeks to influence the phenomenon. Proliferators such as China and North Korea are treated as are potential proliferators such as Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan. This chapter concludes with recommendations for U.S. policy: U.S. policy toward Asian proliferators of WMD needs to discard the "one policy fits all" approach and apply the Israeli example to East Asia. The United States needs to have ready a sanctions option against North Korea, a previously hostile and dangerous government, should negotiations fail. The United States needs to continue discussions with China, whose government is generally friendly in spite of some policies contrary to U.S. interests. And the United States needs to keep Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan assured of its commitments to their security and viability. Asia is the test bed for new, more flexible and more realistic U.S. policies of countering the proliferation of WMD.

"North Korea's Nuclear Program and Its Impact on Northeast Asian Security" by Seong Whun Cheon examines seven major questions that have been raised with respect to North Korea's nuclear problem. It also addresses broader regional security measures that could support the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula and enhance peace and security in Northeast Asia.

It is argued that the resumption of the Team Spirit military exercises and the request of the International Atomic Energy Association (IAEA) for a special inspection in 1993 were provocative decisions and reduced the possibility of peaceful resolution of the problem at an earlier time. It is also pointed out that North Korea has not yet developed a complete nuclear bomb and that its nuclear program is frozen. The North's current strategy is to use "the nuclear card" to gain international assurance that the regime will survive. Pyongyang's intention to convert its reactors to a light-water system should be interpreted in this context. The disclosure of the past history of the North Korean nuclear program would reveal its exact amount of plutonium, an amount somewhere between the 90 grams that North Korea reported to the IAEA and the 12 kilograms that represents the worst-case estimate. The U.S.-North Korea Agreed Framework signed on October 21, 1994, and the bilateral Kuala Lumpur light-water reactor talks held in May 1995 are also analyzed.

The efforts of North and South Korea alone to delegitimize nuclear weapons would have little influence in curbing regional proliferation attempts. However, the following measures can be taken by the regional powers to enhance security in Northeast Asia: (1) a UN resolution of comprehensive security assurance to the Korean peninsula; (2) regional

nuclear nonproliferation measures, such as a regional test ban agreement; (3) regional arms control and disarmament efforts; and (4) a regional open skies agreement as a transparency measure.

"Basic Issues in the Peace Process on the Korean Peninsula" by Tae-Hwan Kwak analyzes basic issues that still remain obstacles to the peace/unification processes on the Korean peninsula and makes several policy recommendations for creating favorable conditions for the peace process there. The issues discussed in this chapter are the implementation of the inter-Korean Agreement on Reconciliation, Nonaggression, and Exchanges and Cooperation; North Korea's nuclear issue, the U.S.-North Korea Agreed Framework, and the issue of denuclearization on the Korean peninsula; and the U.S. troop withdrawal issue. The author argues that a new peace regime in Korea will emerge in the late 1990s only if the inter-Korean nonaggression and denuclearization agreements discussed in this chapter are sincerely implemented. The two Koreas must work together to create essential conditions for achieving peace in Korea.

In their separate chapters, Seong Whun Cheon and Tae-Hwan Kwak offer insights into the ways that the prime obstacle to Northeast Asia's transition to the post-Cold War era may be facilitated through resolution of Korea's seemingly intractable problems. Their judgments and recommendations reinforce the volume's succinct conclusion because the dynamism of some of the states in Northeast Asia cannot become the vehicle for the region's adjustment to a changing world until the entire Korean peninsula and its immediate neighbors discover the means to extend that dynamism throughout the region and use it as an instrument to facilitate the transition. When that is achieved, Northeast Asia's prospects are bright. Until that time, however, Northeast Asia will remain a troubled region, which makes the contributions to this volume particularly relevant within the context of the late 1990s.

1 | Japanese Security Policy in Post-Cold War Asia

Tsuneo Akaha

Japanese security policymakers today face global and regional environments that are dramatically different from what they have experienced previously in the postwar period. The environments are much more favorable for bilateral and multilateral international cooperation, on the one hand; but, on the other hand, security implications are considerably more complicated and more uncertain than they were during the Cold War era. Japan has yet to develop a stable national consensus on the desirable direction for its post-Cold War security policy.

The global system of hegemonic international relations under the U.S.-Soviet strategic rivalry has ended, but no stable structure has yet emerged to replace it. The threatening Soviet superpower has been replaced by the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) led by postcommunist Russia, but the weakened Russia presents serious international challenges in nuclear nonproliferation, in the global environment, and in a host of other areas. China's path toward a "socialist market economy" appears successful so far, with its growth outpacing that of even some of the most dynamic economies of Asia Pacific, but post-Deng leadership transition in Beijing remains problematic, and even the booming economy may breed political instability under inflationary pressures and growing income disparity. The United States no longer faces the menacing Soviet threat of the Cold War era but has yet to develop a stable cooperative relationship with the post-Soviet Russia. Washington also has serious difficulty reconciling its human rights policy with its economic policy toward Beijing. Moreover, growing transnational economic processes in Asia Pacific are deepening the interdependence among the region's economies, giving rise to the need to coordinate their foreign and domestic policies. At the same time, the increasingly wealthier countries of the region are acquiring more powerful weapons and more sophisticated arms technology, and this is generating a specter of multiple regional arms races.¹

Japan's own relationship with its most important ally, the United States, faces serious challenges. The Cold War rationale for the bilateral alliance has disappeared, and Tokyo and Washington must now develop a new strategic and political logic for their security alliance. They are barely able to contain the potentially destabilizing consequences of the frictions over their uncontrollable trade imbalance. The gradual draw-down of the U.S. military presence in the post-Cold War Asia Pacific forces Japan to seek a genuine postwar reconciliation with its Asian neighbors, a reconciliation that was long delayed by the Cold War system of international relations organized around the U.S.-centered bilateral alliances.

The end of the Cold War has also shaken the foundation of Japanese domestic politics. It has eliminated the ideological basis of the left-right rivalry in the country. Amid the sweeping power realignment between and within all major political parties, the fragile coalition governments in Tokyo have been unable to forge a stable national consensus on post-Cold War foreign and security policies. Japanese self-confidence has also been shaken by the "bursting of the economic bubble" and the ensuing recession, the deepest recession the country has experienced since the 1940s.

The dramatically altered world requires a new system of international relations based on collective, cooperative sharing of power and responsibilities. Japan cannot remain a passive actor and adjust itself to a world order constructed by others but must actively participate in the forging of a new system. At a minimum, Japan, with its enormous economic power, must play a leading, if not *the* leading, role in developing a post-Cold War regional security system in Asia Pacific.²

In the following analysis, I discuss the major tasks facing Japan's security and foreign policy makers vis-à-vis the post-Cold War realities of Asia Pacific. The central questions I address are what Japan's security policy priorities should be and how Japan should pursue them. First, I argue that Japan must overcome its historical insularity and ethnocentrism and learn to communicate more openly and more effectively about its interests and concerns. Second, I maintain that Japan must find a new rationale for maintaining its security alliance with the United States, forge a new relationship with post-Soviet Russia by overcoming historical legacies, and establish a balance between political and economic interests vis-à-vis China. Third, I hold that Japan must develop a credible and legitimate national defense policy under increasing spending constraints. Fourth, I suggest that Japan must squarely meet international criticisms about its foreign economic assistance—an important part of its comprehensive security policy. Finally, I discuss domestic and international obstacles to Japan's global security role, with a focus on the issues

of a permanent Japanese seat on the UN Security Council and its participation in UN peacekeeping operations.

OVERCOMING INSULARITY AND ETHNOCENTRISM

Most Japanese are aware of the growing international expectation for their international political and security roles commensurate with their economic power. They are also agreed that the end of the Cold War has opened opportunities for expanded international roles for their country. However, what many Japanese acknowledge as their insular worldview and what many foreign critics describe as Japanese ethnocentrism severely limit this nation's ability to assume important international roles.³

Some trace these national traits of the Japanese to their history and culture. A 1991 study by the Ministry of International Trade and Industry stated that "the ethnocentrism of Japanese who have built our history in a nation of islands surrounded by seas on all sides, without any experience of large scale foreign invasions, is seen as peculiar from the point of view of the world's common sense."⁴ Japanese contemporary insularity is also due to the peculiar strategic position in which they found themselves during the postwar period. The Cold War antagonism in Asia and the U.S. policy to nurture Japan as the most important regional ally long delayed postwar reconciliation between the former imperialist Japanese and their Asian neighbors. It was not until 1965, for example, that Japan finally restored diplomatic relations with South Korea. Japanese-Chinese normalization came as recently as 1978. Japan and Russia are yet to conclude a peace treaty. The Japanese are also keenly aware of the suspicion their Asian neighbors continue to harbor about their foreign policy objectives. As Masataka Kosaka has symbolically stated, for Japan, 1945 is not over.⁵ The Japanese continue to stress their country's unique history as a "pacifist nation" and its future potential as a "global civilian power."⁶

The process of psychological and emotional reconciliation between the Japanese and their Asian neighbors is just beginning. In 1993, amid growing demands for compensation for Asian "comfort women" who were forced into working for the Japanese during World War II, Prime Minister Hosokawa expressed his personal view that Japan's war with the Asian nations was a "war of aggression" (*shinryaku senso*) and an "immoral war."⁷ In his meeting with South Korean President Kim Young-sam in Kyongju in November 1993, the Japanese prime minister offered an official apology for the atrocities Japan had committed during its colonialist control of the Korean peninsula from 1910 to 1945, and the