



THEME: East Asian Peace

The unacknowledged peace of East Asia

East Asian peace: what is it and why should it be studied

Peace for Asia

Peace and protest: unarmed Insurrections in East Asia, 1946–2006

Understanding the East Asian peace: some findings on the role of informal processes

Challenges to peace in East Asia

Have you always wanted to be a slave?

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KØBENHAVNS UNIVERSITET



This issue of *Asia Insights* is the last one that NIAS shall be sending out in paper format. Printing and not least postage costs have become an increasingly heavy economic burden on the institute; they are the main reason for making this inevitable decision, for which we trust we have your understanding. There were other reasons – these relate to moves by NIAS to radically improve communication with its friends and partners – but this is a matter for discussion in the New Year.

Now to the contents of this issue of *Asia Insights* with its theme, the *East and Southeast Asian Peace*. As pointed out by the issue's guest editors, Timo Kivimäki and Stein Tønnesson, our image of East and Southeast Asia is formed by reporting in the news media. This media coverage does not convey that the region is a particularly peaceful one, although in fact this has been largely the case for 30 years.

A central theme raised by the researchers that contribute with articles in this issue is: what can Asian experiences contribute to our general understanding of peace and conflict issues? Here, as in most other research within the social sciences, there is still an unfortunate bias towards Western experiences, Western thinking, Western approaches. It is our belief that Asian voices should be more than welcome in the process of creating a genuinely universal toolbox for the social sciences.

The papers presented in *Asia Insights* are also interesting because they represent initial findings in a research programme that we hope and expect will inform us along the way about their ideas, discussions and findings. A new book series at NIAS Press focused on peace and conflict issues (details on page 8) will help secure this. What makes this *Asia Insights* particularly interesting is that we hear many voices, each of the contributing researchers having a different disciplinary background and different set of experiences. In this respect, personally, I see the contribution by Jordi Urgell from the School for a Culture of Peace, Autonomous University of Barcelona, as posing a fresh challenge to the very notions of peace and conflict. Such a debate is a good example of how a research project should report to colleagues and other people with interests in the topic.

As such, whatever the forms that we adopt in the New Year to communicate with you more effectively in the future, rest assured that we shall continue to be a live channel for the reporting of interesting and innovative research in this field and elsewhere in the realm of Asian studies.

**On behalf of the NIAS staff I wish you a productive year end,
a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!**

Geir Helgesen
Director

The unacknowledged peace of East Asia

**Timo Kivimäki, NIAS – Nordic Institute of Asian Studies, and
Stein Tønnesson, International Peace Research Institute, Oslo (PRIO)**

While the media constantly remind us of China's and East Asia's astounding economic rise, they rarely acknowledge the fact that East Asia has also been exceptionally peaceful in the last thirty years. News from the region is most often about tension in the Korean peninsula, across the Taiwan Strait, unrest in Tibet and Xinjiang, political instability in Malaysia and Thailand, terrorism in Indonesia, or violent repression in Burma/Myanmar. Most of the region's politicians as well as most Western East Asia watchers seem unaware of the fact that the wars that characterized the region in the first three decades after World War II have long since ended, and that most disputes since 1979 have been managed without resorting to armed violence.

Peace has sneaked into East Asia, without really being noticed. It's high time that scholars take stock of this fact and start drawing lessons from this positive development. This is what the International Peace Research Institute, Oslo (PRIO), the Department of Peace and Conflict Research at Uppsala University and the Nordic Institute of Asian Studies (NIAS) decided to do two years ago in a brainstorming session organized by the Swedish School of Advanced Asia Pacific Studies (SSAAPS) in Sigtuna, Sweden. A programme was launched, with SSAAPS support, and subsequently received funding for a pilot project from the Swedish Riksbankens Jubileumsfond. While NIAS provides leadership in the pilot phase of the programme during 2009, we hope to base it at Uppsala University after 2010.

The intention of this special issue is to present some initial findings and ideas from the programme. In association with it, NIAS Press is launching a series of books on Peace and Conflict in East and Southeast Asia, which shall cater for the need to study the experiences of East Asia for the sake of understanding peace and conflict issues more generally. We hope readers find the initial ideas presented here interesting, and we hope even more that they will inspire Nordic and international scholars to participate and to contribute to the new book series and to the research programme on the 'East Asian peace'. The regional peace that sneaked upon us in tandem with East Asia's economic rise must be exposed, explained and hopefully perpetuated.



Timo Kivimäki, Senior Researcher at NIAS since 1999, will take up a professorship in Asian Security at the Department of Political Science, University of Copenhagen, from 1 January 2010. He is a specialist of peace and conflict issues in South-east and East Asia.



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East Asian peace: what is it and why should it be studied?

Timo Kivimäki, NIAS – Nordic Institute of Asian Studies

East Asia's relative peace has finally been noticed. There are now a growing number of activities dealing with the theme, seeking to explain the phenomenon. In addition to a relatively small panel at the Convention of the International Studies Association (ISA) last year, the phenomenon was addressed this year during a Panel of the European Alliance for Asian Studies at the 6th International Convention of Asia Scholars (ICAS) in Daejeon, South Korea. Furthermore, the ASEM Education Hub for Peace and Conflict Studies organized its third annual conference focusing on the East Asian Peace in comparison with the Peace in Western Europe since 1950 at Yonsei University in Seoul. But is the East Asian peace something exceptional and could the experience of the long peace of East Asia offer something unique to the study of stable structures of peace? This is the focus of the present article, which is based on my recent research on the topic and on discussions at ICAS, in the ASEM Education Hub and at the 2008 ISA conventions.

Is the East Asian peace something unique?

The East Asian peace is a phenomenon characterized by a low and decreasing number of battle deaths in conflicts between governments and their challengers in countries whose capital city is in the eastern part of Asia. This is what all recent scholarship on the East Asian peace has considered as a core finding. However, my analysis of trends in violence has suggested that there is also a decline in a variety of types of political violence. This seems to confirm that East Asia is truly becoming more pacific.

While the East Asian peace has been relative in nature (both in relation to the previous period in East Asia and to other regions in the contemporary period), some areas, especially in Burma/Myanmar and in Southern Thailand, have still experienced armed conflict. Yet all East Asian countries as a whole have become more pacific than they were before 1980, except for the Philippines, which now alone stands for almost half of the battle deaths in East Asia. For some reason, the Philippines has not become affected by the general East Asian trend.

Taken as a region, East Asia's post-1979 peacefulness has been exceptional. As revealed

by Stein Tønnesson (2009), East Asia has had fewer battle deaths than Europe, which has struggled with violence after the break-ups of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. If 1979 is taken as a watershed year in the analysis of post-World War II armed conflicts, East Asia has been uniquely peaceful. In fact, if conflict fatalities are used as indicator, no other region (as classified by the Uppsala Conflict data) has been more pacific after 1979 than it was in the period 1946–79. East Asia, however, has had 98% fewer battle deaths than it had during 1946–79. The trend towards more peaceful conditions outside East Asia started only after the initial peak (until 1992) of violence in the post-Cold War world and it seems that it has been reversed after 2003. Thus the East Asian peace is exceptional not only in comparison with the previous period in East Asia, but also in comparison with other regions.

Yet, the East Asian peace is not something historically unique; something that could not be compared to similar peace periods at other times. Western Europe has also managed to create conditions of relative peace, characterized by a very low level of battle deaths. For Western Europe, peace started after the civil war in Greece ended in 1949.

After that, those European countries that did not choose (or were not forced to adopt) communism experienced an even lower level of battle deaths, despite the few remaining conflicts in Cyprus, Basque Country, Northern Ireland and France in the 1960s. If only battle deaths are studied, it is also possible to identify a peaceful period in Eastern Europe between 1956 (after the Soviet Union had reimposed its hegemony in Hungary) and 1989. However, unlike in East Asia and in Western Europe, this period of 'peace' did not come with a declining number of victims of repression. One can also talk about a Nordic peace among the Nordic countries of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden since 1814. Relationships between members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, ASEAN, have also been peaceful, and there has not been a single conflict with at least 25 casualties in the history of ASEAN since 1967. However, the long peace of ASEAN and the Nordic peace have been about relations between specific countries, while the East Asian peace is between East Asian countries and any other country, in addition to peace internally in each nation.

Does the East Asian experience offer unique lessons?

Studying the East Asian peace is important for developing new theories and for increasing our understanding of stable structures of peace in general. According to Amitav Acharya and Barry Buzan theories of peace, conflict and international relations have been 'deeply rooted in the particularities and peculiarities of European history, the rise of the West to world power, and the imposition of its own political structure onto the rest of the world' (Acharya and Buzan 2007: 293). To broaden our understanding beyond the peculiarities of European history, it makes sense to try to add the East Asian experience into our depository of knowledge on durable structures of peace. Many of the 'naturalized truths' in the field could be challenged by studying the East Asian peace, and this could open our horizon to understanding alternative routes to peace, as



Photo: Jong Kun Choi

well as refine our assumptions as to how peace is possible. These opportunities were discussed at the Third Annual Conference of the ASEM Education Hub for Peace and Conflict Studies (www.tnpcs.niasnetworks.net) at Yonsei University, Seoul, in August 2009. Even though this conference did not aim at delivering the final word on the unique lessons of the East Asian peace, some ideas were launched offering hypotheses for how to challenge or supplement the Euro-centric understanding of the phenomenon of long peace periods. The main ideas were the following:

While the European experience of peace has been based on legal institutions, and binding supra-national arrangements, the East Asian Peace could have been based partly on liberal economic interdependence, common respect for non-interference, and informal codes of diplomatic conduct (see Mikael Weissmann's article in this issue). The East Asian experience seems to show that durable peace does not necessarily have to be based on supra-nationality or on legal arrangements.



From the 3rd Conference of the ASEM Education Hub of Peace and Conflict Studies.
 Photo: Jong Kun Choi

The East Asian peace has also been characterized by a rise in non-violent conflict, especially in the less democratic, but pacific areas of East Asia, as shown by Isak Svensson and Mathilda Lindgren in this issue. Could non-violent protest be a safety valve or an alternative for more violent expressions of grievances and dissatisfaction?

Furthermore, the influence of global hegemonic powers and global power shifts has been very different in East Asia than it has been in 'post-Marshall Aid' Europe. While the role of the United States was crucial to the emergence of a stable security structure in Western Europe, and while changes in European security clearly reflected global changes, the East Asian peace seems to be a more regional construct. The watershed year 1979 seems to be central in the East Asian development, rather than in global development. Thus it could be that the East Asian experience shows us a way to regional,

rather than global opportunities of peace-building.

The East Asian pattern of highlighting face-saving in conflict management could also be a useful, easily generalized and relevant approach for West European conflict management as well. So far it has not been given much attention, especially in the theory of international peace making or international relations.

However, international conflict theory could also teach something to the East Asian practice of peace. While conflict resolution – especially acknowledging conflict problems, talking to the enemy and accepting external help in the mediation of conflict – has not been as characteristic of East Asia as of the rest of the world, it seems that on the basis of global experience the ability to resolve conflicts will need to be developed in order to sustain the East Asian peace. Recent experiences from Korea and Indonesia seem to suggest that

conflict resolution may now become a more prominent part of the East Asian model of peace.

Even though systematic research on East Asian peace is just beginning, it seems clear that several avenues are about to be opened, which may help us refine theories that have so far not taken much account of the East Asian experience. This is a good beginning, but East Asian peace is such a unique and important topic that it requires a lot more study and explanation.

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New book series from NIAS Press

Peace and Conflict in East and Southeast Asia

Series editor: Timo Kivimäki (University of Copenhagen)

In the last three decades, East and Southeast Asia have been relatively peaceful. The end of the Vietnam War and subsequent Sino–Vietnamese War, plus China's changed orientation towards development and revolution, have had a marked impact. Since 1979, the number of military casualties each year has been only about two per cent of the region's annual average in the period 1945–1979. Moreover, these figures have been very low compared to the rest of the world. This new book series explores how East and Southeast Asia made the transition to this relative peace and questions how durable it is.

With (among others) ongoing tensions in the Korean peninsula, sporadic clashes on the Thai–Cambodian border, unresolved conflicts in the Philippines and Burma/Myanmar, and a growing insurgency in southern Thailand, East and Southeast Asia are certainly not completely free of conflict. What kinds of conflicts are these and why is it that some countries have not yet reached the level of peacefulness found in other parts of the area? Moreover, why has relative peace been restricted to East and Southeast Asia and why has it not spread to South Asia, let alone to Central Asia?

Peace and Conflict in East and Southeast Asia seeks to publish well-researched books that explore these and related issues, and that relate their scholarship to developing discourses in the field of conflict studies.



Peace for Asia

Stein Tønnesson, International Peace Research Institute, Oslo (PRIO)

No Peace for Asia is the title of a famous book published by Harold Isaacs in 1947. The end of the Second World War in Japan's surrender, he showed, did not bring peace for Asia. Instead it led to a series of civil wars and revolutionary wars in China, Indochina, Indonesia and elsewhere. When Isaacs's book was republished in 1967, his message was even more appropriate. The world's worst wars in the three first decades after 1945 were mainly in East Asia: the Chinese Civil War, the First Indochina War, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. 1950 is the year after 1945 when the greatest number of people have been killed in war. This was because of the Korean War. The Vietnam War is the war since 1945 with the highest total number of casualties. The great majority of people killed in war during 1945–79 were East Asians. The region also saw a number of other man-made catastrophes with millions of casualties: the Chinese Great Leap Forward in 1958–61, the Indonesian massacre in 1965, the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in 1966–76, and the Cambodian genocide in 1975–78.

1979 was a turning point. The Chinese three-week invasion of Vietnam from 17 February that year – in retaliation for Vietnam's invasion of China's ally Kampuchea – is the last war in Asia till this day that has caused a truly significant number of casualties in a relatively short time: some 20–30,000 on each side. In the 1980s, the armed conflicts in Burma, Cambodia, Indonesia and the Philippines would sometimes lead to several thousand battle deaths in the course of one year, but since 1988, according to the best estimates in the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP), not one single East Asian conflict has had more than 2,000 battle deaths in one year. Low-intensity conflicts have lingered on, or flared up, in Burma, Indonesia and Thailand, but the general tendency is that armed conflicts are diminishing in intensity in Southeast Asia. Nor have the militarized disputes in Northeast Asia led to armed fighting. While East Asia dominated global warfare in the first three decades after 1945, it is the region with the *lowest* number of battle deaths since 1979 (if we count all of Europe as one region, and all of the Americas as one region). Since 1979 there has been just one major catastrophe that could be seen as man-made: the North Korean famine of 1995–97.

So from today's viewpoint, Harold Isaacs's book title is no longer valid. If new wars were to break out soon, then historians could speak of East Asia's thirty years' peace' in 1979–2009. Hopefully they will instead seek to explain the onset of a much longer era of peace. What kind of explanation will they find?

Since 1979 is so clearly the turning point in statistics of armed conflict in East Asia, it is tempting to seek the causes among the changes on the international scene during the 1970s. In East Asia the main change was Sino–US rapprochement. In the 1950s the Sino–Soviet alliance stood against the United States and its allies, so East Asia became the main region of cold-war confrontation. The cold war was cold in Europe, but hot in East Asia. In the 1960s, China was more radical than the Soviet Union, and the two communist states rivalled each other for supporting armed liberation struggles in Vietnam and other former European colonies. Then, when the People's Republic of China took over China's seat in the United Nations in 1971, when President Richard Nixon visited China in 1972, and after China and the United States established full diplomatic relations on 1 January 1979, China and the USA formed a *de facto* alliance, directed against the USSR and its client state

Vietnam. Within this Sino–US alliance there was a power balance that has lasted till this day: while the USA has allowed the PRC to dominate the East Asian mainland, the PRC has tolerated US domination of East Asia's maritime rim through naval preponderance and a system of alliances with insular and peninsular states. This could explain the 'thirty years' peace' in East Asia – and make us worry when Chinese naval power grows.

In the explanation above, the main change was the realignment of China, which had to do with internal political changes in China itself. The next step in explaining the East Asian peace would therefore be to analyse the change of priorities in China's foreign policy during the last years of Mao Zedong's reign, and notably during the period 1976–78, when Deng Xiaoping established himself as Mao's successor. We shall also notice the significant fact that while China was involved directly and indirectly in most of East Asia's wars during the Mao era, the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) has not been involved in any armed conflict since 1979 – except some fighting on the Sino–Vietnamese border during the 1980s, notably in April 1984, and a naval clash in the Spratly Islands in 1988. While much attention is given in international media to the modernization of China's armed forces, there is not much talk about the fact that the PLA today lacks combat experience. If it is to gain such experience in the years ahead, it will most probably do so by extending its participation in UN peacekeeping operations to include combat forces, not by engaging in warfare against any of its neighbours.

When future historians discuss how to explain the onset of the 'East Asian peace' in 1979, there is little doubt that they will emphasize political changes in China during the 1970s. However, they will also have to struggle with the term 'onset'. When explaining the outbreak of a war, one looks for long- and short-term causes in the period up until the moment when the war begins; what happens later is of no significance. If one explains a peace agreement, all explanatory factors will also be found in the run-up to the act of its signing, but the 'East Asian Peace' did not begin with a peace agreement. The 'East Asian peace' is not an event that took place in 1979, but a pattern of avoiding armed conflict that has lasted for thirty years since. The explanations cannot therefore be found only in events and processes from before and during 1979, but must be sought in the whole period thereafter as well. This makes explaining the 'East Asian peace' intellectually challenging and politically important. The explanatory effort may, if it becomes part of East Asia's public debates, in itself contribute to prolonging the peace.



Stein Tønnesson is a research professor at the International Peace Research Institute, Oslo (PRIO), where he served as director 2001–2009. His most recent publication is *Vietnam 1946: How the War Began* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010). See www.prio.no and www.cliostein.com

Peace and protest: unarmed insurrections in East Asia, 1946–2006

Isak Svensson and Mathilda Lindgren, Uppsala University

*Whereas the discussion on East Asian Peace has primarily focused on armed conflicts, this article contributes by discussing **unarmed** conflicts in the East Asian region. The article presents the regional picture of the prevalence of these types of non-violent, popular uprisings and contends that these types of social conflicts are important to consider in order to get a better grasp of what kind of relative peacefulness that East Asia is experiencing.*

East Asia has witnessed a quite remarkable declining trend in intensity and frequency of armed conflicts, a phenomenon that has been called the ‘East Asian Peace’ (Tønnesson 2009). The discussion on East Asian Peace has hitherto focused on the armed dynamics of social conflicts. Yet, not all conflicts are necessarily armed. What does the picture look like if we focus on *unarmed* upheavals in East Asia instead?

Unarmed insurrections are broad, popular-based protest movements that use non-violent methods to air their aspirations, such as street demonstrations, boycotts, strikes, etc. Using the term ‘non-violence’ could be misleading since these protest-movements do not necessarily pay strict adherence to the principles of non-violence in the spirit of famous proponents such as Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. In fact, it is empirically not uncommon that there are outbursts of violence on behalf of some protesters. Rather, many of these popular uprisings can be referred to as pragmatically guided unarmed insurrections with strategic behaviour and certain organisational structures that are distinctive in character from armed insurrections since they do not rely on force and military means.

Using data from a global dataset (Chenoweth and Stephan 2008), we can say that there have been quite a few unarmed insurrections in the region. In fact, there were 18 cases in East Asia over the course of fifty years since 1946. The first case during this period was China in 1956–57 and the last one Thailand in 2005–06.

In terms of frequency, there was a peak around 1989, interestingly a parallel development to Eastern Europe, which also saw several unarmed insurrections around the end of the Cold War.

Some of the best-known examples of unarmed insurrections could be found in this part of the world. The non-violent insurrection in the Philippines in 1986 is sometimes lifted up as one of the prime examples of people power movements which successfully challenged the regime. On the other hand, the two unarmed mass-protests in Burma (1988 and 2007) were both brutally crushed by the military junta in the country. Like armed conflicts, the incompatibility at stake can be distinguished between contest over the control of a specific territory and governmental power. The opposition forces in these unarmed insurrections aspire to either a change in the state-formation, demanding separation or territorial autonomy, or alternatively a change in government, its leadership or the ruling ideology.

This distinction is pivotal and carries some significant explanatory power over the chance for success of unarmed insurrections. We have argued elsewhere (Svensson & Lindgren, forthcoming) that unarmed insurgents are more likely to be successful if they are able to mount a considerable challenge to the vertical legitimacy of the regime. Territorial conflicts – by their nature a horizontal divide in a society – have problems in launching successful campaigns questioning this vertical

legitimacy, and should therefore be generally less likely to be successful. This proposition is supported by empirical evidence, drawn from global data.

Interesting in this regard is the fact that the majority of the unarmed campaigns in East Asia (such as the campaign in Thailand in 1973 or South Korea in 1987) have been fought over the control of government power. Only a minority of the unarmed insurrections concern a territorial incompatibility. Examples include Tibet in 1987–89 and East Timor in 1988–99.

Another territorial conflict also stands out in terms of its longevity: the Papuan conflict in Indonesia started in 1964 and continued throughout the studied period (which ends in 2006). Mostly, the other campaigns are much shorter in their duration.^{^p}Overall campaign strategies of unarmed insurrections can vary. Building on Sharp's (1973) critical distinction, there are three main strategies: protest, non-cooperation, and non-violent intervention. The East Asian region stands out in regard to strategies employed. A majority of the unarmed insurrections have

Unarmed insurrections in East Asia*

Location	Objective	Start	End
China	Governmental	1956	1957
South Korea	Governmental	1960	1960
Indonesia (Papua)	Territorial	1964	2006
Thailand	Governmental	1973	1973
China	Governmental	1976	1979
Taiwan	Governmental	1979	1985
South Korea	Governmental	1979	1980
Philippines	Governmental	1986	1986
China (Tibet)	Territorial	1987	1989
South Korea	Governmental	1987	1987
Indonesia (East Timor)	Territorial	1988	1999
Burma/Myanmar	Governmental	1988	1988
China	Governmental	1989	1989
Mongolia	Governmental	1989	1990
Thailand	Governmental	1992	1992
Indonesia	Governmental	1997	1998
Philippines	Governmental	2001	2001
Thailand	Governmental	2005	2006

relied on protest strategies. This form of strategy is generally considered to be one of the least comprehensive, yet most public form of strategy that unarmed insurgents can use.

An important point concerns how the regimes in power meet the challenge of the unarmed insurrections. In an overwhelming number of cases, the regimes have answered with repressive measures. This has implications for how to interpret the peace in East Asia. The presence of unarmed insurrections can be seen as a sign of healthy, vibrant and pluralistic societies where discontent can be aired. However, the prevalence of government repression as a counter-measure against such unarmed insurrections indicates that the peace in East Asia can be more authoritarian in nature.

Much remains to be understood and explained when it comes to unarmed insurrections and this calls for a systematic research endeavour as part of the East Asian Peace agenda. For instance, why are some unarmed insurrections successful whereas others fail to reach their goal? Although some research has been done on this matter, it is striking how the attention towards armed conflicts in this matter clearly outbalances the focus on unarmed insurrections.

Moreover, the growth of unarmed insurrections in East Asia leads to the question whether we are witnessing a transformation in means utilised in social conflicts. Do conflicts previously fought with arms continue to exist but express themselves through more non-violent methods? This is an important avenue for future research in the context of the East Asian Peace. All cases come from NAVCO 1.0 (Chenoweth and Stephan) and the list is compiled by the authors.

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Understanding the East Asian peace: some findings on the role of informal processes

Mikael Weissmann, University of Gothenburg

This article will discuss why the interstate conflicts in the post-Cold War East Asian security setting have not escalated into war despite a lack of security organisations or other formalised conflict management mechanisms. It is argued that there are a number of informal processes in the region that can help explain this paradox. The article is based on the findings of the author's doctoral project on 'Understanding the East Asian Peace' with focus on the role of China in the Taiwan Strait, the South China Sea, and the Korean Peninsula.

Introduction

The East Asian interstate peace since 1979 is a paradox. It has continued despite East Asia being a region with a history of militarised conflicts and many of the world's most persistently militarised problems, including a number of unresolved flashpoints. It is also a region with a high level of intraregional distrust including deep unresolved historical issues. In addition to this there are strong nationalist tendencies and numerous ethnic conflicts across the region. The dominant research paradigm for analyses of the East Asian security setting is that of neorealism. Scholars following this paradigm have painted a gloomy picture of the future prospects of post-Cold War East Asia. They predict it to be a region of perpetual conflict. In addition to the above, neorealists also emphasise the presence of rising great powers and the shifting balance of power as causes of conflict. Still, the level of interstate violence has been very low.

It should be acknowledged here that other mainstream International Relations theories do not paint as dark a picture as realism, but they fail to fully account for the East Asian peace. For example, liberalism tends to either give the various institutional arrangements in East Asia more prominence than they deserve, or dismiss them simply because they are so different from the Western ones, while constructivism tends to give more credit to Asian identity building than it deserves.

The East Asian peace exists despite the region lacking any security organisation or other formalised mechanisms to prevent existing or potential conflicts from escalating and/or to build peace. Thus, the logical question to ask is whether there are other processes and mechanisms that can help explain the East Asian peace. If so, what are they, and how do they work? In my forthcoming doctoral dissertation, I aim at developing an understanding of the role and impact of such cross-border interactions that go beyond formal peace-building, conflict prevention, conflict management, and conflict resolution mechanisms. An underlying hypothesis has been that a number of informal processes and related mechanisms can help explain the relative peace in East Asia. The thesis takes account of the full range of informal–formal processes, ranging from those going on within formalised institutions such as the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and the six-party talks, through semi-formal track-two frameworks, to purely informal ones such as interaction within personal networks.

Understanding the East Asian peace

The findings concerning China's role in keeping peace in the Taiwan Strait, the South China Sea, and on the Korean Peninsula confirm the underlying hypothesis that various informal processes and related mechanisms can help explain the relative

peace. Virtually all of the identified processes and related mechanisms have been informal rather than formal. It should be noted that it is not necessarily the same types of processes that have been of importance in each and every case. In different ways these informal processes have demonstrated that the relative lack of formalised security structures and/or mechanisms have not prevented the region from moving towards a stable peace. Informal processes have been sufficient both to prevent tension and disputes from escalating into war and for moving East Asia towards a stable peace.

Elite interactions – i.e. personal networks, track-two diplomacy, and other forms of elite socialisation – have been essential both on the official and unofficial levels. Firstly, these interactions have been essential for trust and confidence building, which is of high importance in a region where trust and confidence building are not only key features of the accepted diplomatic norm, but are also deeply embedded in the regional cultures and societies. Elite interactions have been essential for peace in all three cases. They have also been important for the possibility to use back-channel negotiations, something that has been beneficial for conflict prevention across the cases. Elite interactions have also been important for the development of multilateralism and the building of peaceful relations. They have also been essential for enhancing the understanding of the other side(s). Understanding is important, because without an understanding of the others' thinking, perceived interests and intentions it is very difficult to prevent conflict escalation, and virtually impossible to build a longer-term peace. Understanding is also important to be able to overcome the range of historical issues.

Economic integration and interdependence (EII) and the interlinked functional cooperation have been important, as they have pushed positive relations towards a durable peace. This includes not only increasing cooperation and economic growth and development, but

also developing a feeling of security as the economic integration and interdependence decreases the fear of others. EII and functional cooperation have also encouraged and created a need for diplomatic relations and intergovernmental communication and agreements. They have also been catalysts for all forms of cross-border contacts including being a driving force for regionalisation. This is clearly seen in Sino–ASEAN relations and the ASEAN+3 process, but also across the Taiwan Strait where it was part of the cause of the shift in power in the 2008 elections.

Together with the Chinese acceptance of multilateralism and its shift from big-power oriented foreign policy to a focus on soft power and the building of good relations with China's neighbours, EII has been essential for the medium to longer-term overarching peace-building process in East Asia. In this context, what has been of particular importance for peace is both the high degree of economic interdependence that has developed, as well as the forces of the pan-regional 'economics first' policy focus. Here, the general acceptance of the ASEAN Way as the norm for diplomacy, with its emphasis on conflict avoidance, has worked together with the economic incentives in preventing conflict escalations and building peace.

A common feature of most of the processes is that they can be understood as aspects or manifestations of the East Asian regionalisation process. For example, elite interactions are in a sense both manifestations of, and catalysts for, regionalisation; these forms of interactions are an unavoidable result or regionalisation, while at the same time, elite interactions are in themselves important for driving regionalisation. The regionalisation process has been of foremost importance for virtually all East Asian states' overall foreign policy interests and behaviours. It has been important for ASEAN's attempt to socialise China into becoming a responsible big power in the regional community, in order to ensure that the Chinese interests

would gradually become integrated with the interests of East Asia as a whole. Over time, China has re-interpreted its role and interests as a rising power and has engaged in the ASEAN+3 process and embraced multilateralism and the ASEAN Way. This has been a reciprocal process between China's 'soft power diplomacy' and ASEAN's 'constructive engagement' policies. It is difficult to say what has caused what, i.e., to what extent China has been socialised by ASEAN to accept current practices and to become what seems to be a more benign power, and to what extent the Chinese policies have influenced ASEAN's increased acceptance of China as a partner and a (relatively) benign, peacefully rising power. It is most likely that it is not an either-or question, but a transformation where there have been synergy effects between 'soft-power diplomacy' and "constructive engagement". Regionalisation has also ensured that China (and others) adheres to an 'economic first' foreign policy focus, and that the overall peaceful relations in East Asia have developed and have been institutionalised. Although multilateralism and institutionalisation have only been identified in the South China Sea and Sino-ASEAN relations, they still have a spill over effect on Chinese behaviour in other conflicts. If China would behave badly in one case, it would risk losing its laboriously built trust towards ASEAN.

Lastly, the USA has contributed to peace by working as a frame for acceptable behaviour, safeguarding against conflict escalation over the war threshold. It has helped to ensure that negative relations do not escalate into or beyond (temporary) crises. This is important, as little has been done to address and resolve underlying incompatibilities, tensions, and disputes. By its presence, the USA also gives space for the range of other processes beneficial for peace to develop in a positive direction. In short, as the USA is perceived as a safeguard against violent confrontations, the regional parties can focus on developing good relations and continue to increase cooperation in the economic and other spheres.



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Ph.D. Fellowships. Mr. Weissmann has published on conflict prevention and peace building in East Asia. He has also written on informal networks, early warning and conflict management theory.

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Challenges to peace in East Asia

Jordi Urgell, School for a Culture of Peace, Autonomous University of Barcelona

This article attempts to contribute to the discussion about the emerging concept of 'East Asian Peace', which in its narrower formulation refers to a dramatic decline in the number of battle deaths from 1979 onwards. By using the data on armed conflicts and peace processes from the School for a Culture of Peace at the Autonomous University of Barcelona, the following article raises some academic questions that need further research.

Although there is a clear decline in warfare and battle-related deaths in East Asia since 1979, there are some issues in the discussion around the concept of East Asian Peace that need further research. While the number of active armed conflicts is already very high, especially in Southeast Asia, the several cases of latent, low-intensity or non-resolved conflict in East Asia increase the risk of warfare in the region. Moreover, the protracted character of many of the ongoing armed conflicts in the region – their duration is significantly higher than the world average – seems to illustrate the complexity of the disputes in East Asia. Finally, there are two more issues that need to be explained. First, is the reduction of battle deaths since 1979 attributable to economic, political or geostrategic systemic change or is it due to the fact that the armed groups no longer have the military capacity to pose a threat to the national security of the East Asian states? Second, why have there been so few peace agreements during the period of the 'East Asian Peace'?

The many active and potential armed conflicts

While Northeast Asia has not had any major wars since the 80s, Southeast Asia continues to be one of the regions in the world with the highest number of armed conflicts – understood, according to the School for a Culture of Peace, to be any confrontation involving regular or irregular armed forces in which the continued and organised use of violence causes at least 100 battle-related deaths in the course of a year and has a serious impact on the human security of the

population. According to the School for a Culture of Peace data, there are currently five active armed conflicts in the region: one in southern Thailand, one in Burma and three in the Philippines – the Government against the New People's Army (NPA), the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the Abu Sayyaf Group. If, as suggested by some authors, North East India is considered a part of Southeast Asia – for geographic, historical, and demographic reasons – then the number of active armed conflicts increases to seven due to the disputes in the states of Assam and Manipur. Then Southeast Asia alone would have 25% of all active armed conflicts in the world, and surpass regions like South Asia: Afghanistan, Pakistan (northeast and Baluchistan) and India (Kashmir and the communist insurgents of the CPI-M); the Great Lakes and Central Africa: DR Congo, Central African Republic, Chad and Uganda; the Horn of Africa: Ethiopia, Somalia, and Sudan (Darfur and South); the Middle East and North Africa: Algeria, Iraq, Yemen, Israel/Palestine; Europe: Turkey and the Russian regions of Chechnya and Ingushetia; Latin America: Colombia; and West Africa: Nigeria.

In addition to the active wars, there are many other cases of latent or unresolved conflicts. In the last decades there has been a significant number of relatively sudden outbreaks of violence, such as those in Kalimantan in 1997, Maluku and Sulawesi in 2000 and 2001, Southern Thailand in 2004, Timor-Leste in 2006, Tibet in 2008 and Xinjiang in 2009. In other cases, the potential for conflict stems from long-standing international disputes, such as between China and Taiwan, North and South



Student session at the 3rd Conference of the ASEM Education Hub of Peace and Conflict Studies.
Photo: Jong Kun Choi

Korea and, to a lesser extent, the claimants to the Spratly Islands. There is also the territorial disagreement between Thailand and Cambodia over the access to the temple of Preah Vihear. Other non-resolved, long standing, internal disputes are the self-determination conflict in West Papua (Indonesia), the repression of the Hmong minorities in Laos because of their support to the US in the so-called Secret War in Laos during the Vietnam War. Even in those cases that were settled through a peace or ceasefire agreement – with the Moro National Liberation Front in the Philippines in 1996, the Gerakan Aceh Merdeka in Aceh in 2005 and with several armed groups in Burma and Northeast India during the 1990s – new episodes of violence have often occurred and the risk of renewed conflict has not completely disappeared. Finally, there are several countries whose political stability is threatened by massive demonstrations (Thailand), frequent rumours about military coups d'état (the Philippines) or the holding of elections boycotted by the internal opposition and the international community (Burma).

Long conflicts, short peace

According to the data from the School of

Peace Culture¹, the average duration of the active armed conflicts in East Asia (31 years) is significantly higher than the average duration of the armed conflicts in the rest of the world (17 years). Several factors could explain this. Firstly, most of the conflicts in the region revolve around identity and self-determination issues, and are therefore more difficult to resolve than power- or resource-based conflicts. Secondly, many of the ongoing conflicts in Southeast Asia are closely related to the formation of the current states during the decolonization process. Some minorities, like the Acehnese and the Papuans in Indonesia, the Moros in the Philippines, the Karen in Burma or the Nagas in Northeast India, have strongly opposed their inclusion in the newly independent countries claiming illegal transfers of sovereignty, fears of repression or internal colonialism. Thirdly, the fact that many countries in East Asia were ruled by authoritarian regimes during most of the second half of the 20th century has prevented these armed conflicts from being resolved through negotiation and peace agreements. Fourth, with a few exceptions, the international community has not been involved in peace-making or conflict-prevention activities in the

region as most of the conflicts in East Asia are do not feature in mass media and do not enter the international agenda, or because almost all the governments, and even the ASEAN, have traditionally rejected any outside interference as a violation of national sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Considering the very few peace agreements that have been signed in East Asia over the last three decades, it seems that the decline in warfare in the region cannot be attributed to an increase in peace making capacity, but only to a certain degree of conflict avoidance. To synthesize, three kinds of agreements have been reached in East Asia since 1979: a) international agreements, e.g., between China and India in 1993, 1996 and 2005; between Indonesia and Malaysia in 2002; and between North and South Korea b) internal peace agreements, e.g., concerning Mindanao 1996; Cordillera 1986; Cambodia 1991; Sulawesi and Maluku 2001 and 2002 c) internal ceasefire agreements, e.g. in Burma and Northeast India, as well as the 2003 agreement between the MILF and the government of the Philippines. Although some of these agreements have successfully reduced the mortality rates in the region, in general terms they have either not addressed the root causes of conflict (like the ceasefire agreements with the ethnic armed groups in Burma and Northeast India), or they have not been fully implemented (like the 1996 peace agreement in Mindanao) and have thus not removed the risk of fresh outbreaks of violence.

Conclusions

Depending on the meanings attached to peace, different views of the situation in East Asia emerge. It can be argued that the governments in the region have managed the conflicts in a way that has prevented them from escalating to the stage of open violence, and that this has kept the number of casualties low – in comparison with East Asia before 1979 and with other world regions after 1979. However, there is also an alternative, more pessimistic view that regards these latent conflicts as a

constant danger and emphasizes that East Asia has not been able to resolve its deep-rooted conflicts in a sustainable way, so violence may easily flare up again and spread.

Whatever the truth, further research is needed on the factors behind the dramatic decline in battle-related deaths from 1979 onwards. One plausible explanation may be that political, economical and geopolitical structural changes have created systemic conditions more conducive to peace. An alternative explanation, however, is that the non-state armed groups in East Asia have lost some of their former military strength to launch major attacks on the state. With the exception of the MILF and the NPA in the Philippines, all the armed groups in the region are small and factionalized – Abu Sayyaf, as well as the dozens of outfits operating in Northeast India and Southern Thailand, or old and ill-equipped – the OPM in West Papua, the MNLF in the Philippines, the KNU, the KNPP or the SSA-S in Burma, the ULFA or the NSCN in Northeast India. The reduction in the military capacity of the armed opposition groups is probably related to the end of the Cold War when most guerrillas stopped receiving economic, logistical and political support from foreign countries, and to the ‘Good Neighbour Policy’ prompted by the increase in regionalism and trade – the ‘liberal peace’ – during the 1990s.

Note

- 1 School for Culture of Peace, Alert 2009. *Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding*, Icaria Editorial, Barcelona, 2009.



Jordi Urgell is researcher at the School for a Culture of Peace (Autonomous University of Barcelona). His teaching and research areas include conflict analysis, peace negotiations and resolution of self-determination struggles. He has done field research in conflict

areas in Latin America and Asia, like in India, Burma, Indonesia, the Philippines or Thailand.

Have you always wanted to be a slave?

An opportunity for specialists in peace and conflict!

Timo Kivimäki, NIAS – Nordic Institute of Asian Studies

The slave trade is back. This time, work without compensation will be voluntary and the stream of slaves will flow from the privileged centres of Asia and Europe to the grievant areas of Southeast Asian (and later European) conflict.

The ASEM Education Hub for Peace and Conflict Studies (the Hub, www.tnpcs.niasnetworks.net) has signed collaboration contracts or is in the process of negotiating such contracts with several universities in Southeast Asian conflict areas. The contracts are for a programme where top European and Asian scholars of comparative conflict studies will give their expertise at conflict area universities for students and stakeholders of East (and Southeast) Asian (and later European) conflicts, without compensation for doing so.

The idea is that well-funded top scholars in comparative peace studies will be offered access to conflict stakeholders by the conflict area universities. The ‘slave work’ will be quid pro quo for this access. Seminars with police and military officials, ethnic leaders, religious actors, NGOs, local civil servants and others are already an opportunity for top scholars in Tokyo, London, Helsinki, Oslo or Osaka to get access to the thinking of the participating conflict stakeholders. In addition to this, introductions to relevant topics offering global lessons contribute to the post-conflict peace-building, conflict resolution or conflict prevention capacity of the conflict stakeholders. The format of cooperation is from a previous operation of the Hub in West Kalimantan where an ASEM class was turned into a formal peace negotiation process under the coordination of the Vice President of Indonesia (a description of the project can be found at <http://barha.asiaportal.info/node/955>).

The ASEM Education Hub for Peace and Conflict Studies will coordinate the co-operation and will also participate in the

implementation of the current ‘slave trade’ project, at least in the initial phase. Top conflict resolution specialists do not need (in fact they should not) be specialists in the area where they will teach. The local expertise will be provided by a local collaborator, a professor from the conflict area university as well as by the local conflict stakeholders.

Activities have been negotiated with local governments (in the case of Indonesia and Thailand, also central governments) in Ambon, Mindanao, Poso, West Kalimantan, Southern Thailand, Aceh, Cambodia, Luzon (Communist-government conflict). Local collaboration partners in the ‘slave trade’ project are the following:

University of Tadulako in Poso

Christian University of Tentena

University of Tanjungpura in West Kalimantan
Aceh Institute

Yala Islamic University (together with an alliance of six universities in Southern Thailand)

Cambodian Institute of Development Research
Mindanao State University, and

Institute of Management in Manila (conflict between GoRP and communists)

The economic arrangement in most of the cases will really be based on the ability of the top conflict specialists to receive funding from their own universities, institutes or projects. The Hub is negotiating additional funding with the Finnish government for translation costs, some travel costs and perhaps some lecturing fees as well. The highly successful education project that spilled over from a peace process in West Kalimantan was funded by the Finnish



Security behind shields in Ambon. Photo: Timo Kivimäki

Foreign Ministry together with the Finnish Embassy in Jakarta. Other governments are welcome to join in the financing of the programme. Perhaps it would be possible, in time, to transform the slave trade into more legitimate forms of work, where slave work would not be needed. Before that, however, there are already several top scholars who have announced their interest in unpaid work.

The leader of the ASEM Education Hub for Peace and Conflict Studies, Timo Kivimäki, will be able to give further information to those who have established themselves in conflict studies and who have a career and a PhD in disciplines related to conflict resolution, post-conflict peace-building, and conflict prevention.

Those interested are advised to contact the programme at timo.kivimaki@nias.ku.dk. The programme needs more slaves, with a global sense of responsibility.

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NIAS Press launches a new NIAS Classics series

Many of you you may be aware that scholarly works on Asia have been published via the Institute for the last forty years, the number of titles published exceeding 300 in total. Since 2002, this work has been continued by NIAS Press. Sadly, most of those NIAS books published in earlier times have been long out of print. However, with the support of the EAC Foundation and the consent of the authors, the Press has begun work to digitise all of our titles so that these will again be available (and this time to a global readership).

In addition, NIAS Press is in the process of launching a new NIAS Classics book series, comprising selected titles from the NIAS backlist that have been judged to be of enduring value. In each instance, not only will the original book be reproduced but also supplementary material added that locates the work in its contemporary scholarly discourse. This might be a foreword by an eminent scholar in that field, a new preface by the author and/or an introductory essay that actually comments and builds on the original work. All titles appearing in the series will be published both in printed and digital format and brought to the attention of a global readership via our extensive network of distributors.

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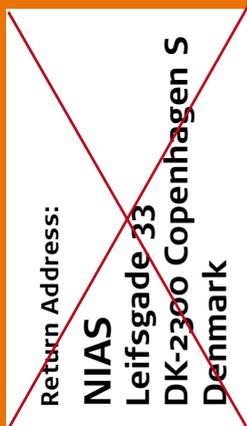
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What is actually happening, however, is a growing individualization of China – not only changing perceptions of the individual but also rising expectations for individual freedom, choice and individuality. The individual has also become a basic social category in China, and a development has begun that permeates all areas of social, economic and political life. How this process evolves in a state and society lacking two of the defining characteristics of European individualization – a culturally embedded democracy and a welfare system – is one of the questions that the volume explores.

A strength of this volume is that its authors succeed in depicting the individualization process in conceptually acute and empirically sensitive terms, and as something with its own distinctively Chinese profile. That makes this book a 'must read' for all those wanting to understand present-day Chinese society, with all of its ambivalences, contingencies and contradictions.