

It would appear preferable that the issues of human rights and environmental concerns be treated separately within the NPCSD, and that priority be given to developing the environmental dialogue. This would avoid the appearance of developing a "basket three" approach which, in turn, would lead to charges of attempting to impose a CSCE-style agenda on the North Pacific. Human rights issues are a legitimate concern of the NPCSD and, as has been illustrated, there are precedents and structures in place which would allow for a sub-regional multilateral dialogue.

III The Geographic and Two-Track Rationales

This paper accepts the definition of Asia Pacific as comprising four sub-regions. Consultative arrangements exist in South Asia through the (admittedly imperfect) South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation - SAARC; in South East Asia through the Association of South East Asian Nations - ASEAN - and the ASEAN-Post Ministerial Conference; and in the South Pacific through the emerging South Pacific Forum. In the North Pacific, where there is a significant concentration of conventional and nuclear forces, which is not fully represented in the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation process (APEC), and where growing instability - centred on but not exclusive to the Korean peninsula - would have an adverse global political, economic, social and environmental effects, there is no multilateral forum to allow the timely discussion of policy. Existing bilateral mechanisms in the North Pacific would be usefully complemented by a wider dialogue, and accepted multilateral processes developed to enhance North Pacific stability could serve as exemplars for other regions.

The NPCSD has a non-governmental (NGO) and a governmental (official) track, and focusses on the North Pacific countries: China, the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea, Japan, the Soviet Union, the Republic of Korea, the United States, and Canada.

The NGO track of the initiative, while encouraging an exchange of views by regional experts, is designed specifically to explore issues and prospects for dialogue and to focus knowledge and awareness on the North Pacific. York University's Centre for International and Strategic Studies is coordinating research activities. A highly successful NPCSD colloquium was held in Victoria in April 1991, attended by experts from North Pacific and other interested countries, which identified research themes and suggested a series of workshops to explore these further. These workshops, which will be held in North America and Asia, will examine:

- evolving security perceptions and national responses in the North Pacific;
- the prospect of arms control and CSBMs in the North Pacific;
- unconventional security threats in the North Pacific; and,
- the history, culture and prospects of multilateralism in the North Pacific.