# Middle Powers, Norms, and Balancing[1]

## -ROK's and ASEAN's Normative Balancing against Rising China-

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**Abstract**

This paper examines middle powers' normative brokerage role in mediating the conflict between great powers-i.e., the US and China through a theoretical standpoint of "normative balancing," whose origin lies in the concept of "soft-balancing." While many middle powers in the Asia Pacific feel that they must choose a side between the dominant power-the U.S. and challenging power-the PRC, others try to engage in normative balancing toward two great powers. Normative balancing refers to the middle powers' effort to persuade the great powers so as to embrace a norm of "multilateralizing security" and "cooperative security." Keenly aware of the consequences of the deadly military confrontation between the powers, these middle powers serve as norm entrepreneurs or broker and play a constructive role of persuading the two powers to be highly responsive to the above norms. This theoretical argument is tested against the cases of ASEAN and South Korea's recent efforts to constrain China such that it moves within multilateral security architecture in region, which embodies the norm of "cooperative security." The paper finds that these middle powers vigorously work together through the various kinds of networks to engage in "normative balancing."

**Key Words: ASEAN; South Korea; the U.S.; China; Cooperative Security; Normative Balancing**

## Puzzle

The paper explains why so-called middle powers in the Asia Pacific gear up their efforts to incorporate a rising hegemon-i.e., China-in various multilateral framework operating in the region. The ASEAN, for example, has been proactive in pressing China to work with other Asian countries in the framework. Australia also has shown great commitment to engage China diplomatically using multilateral framework. South Korea is not an exception. It made determined effort to invite China in the 2014 Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA). Why have these secondary or middle powers have become more willing to work with China in the multilateral framework?

Competing theories of IR have produced different explanations of the powers' such efforts. Scholars working in traditional realist mantra argue that the middle powers' such behavior is a kind of hedging strategy to minimize the risk that China, once become a great power like the U.S. may create. Most of the powers have conflict of interests of China ranging from territorial and maritime disputes to trade imbalance to possible expansion of its military might to their backyard. Knowing the risk, the scholars claim, the middle or secondary power

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has been hedging against ever-growing China's power.

But many liberals analyze the powers' efforts through the lens of the Kantian tripod. Given the strong pacifying effect of international organizations, economic interdependence, and democracy, these powers, allied with the U.S. are trying to incorporate China in the Kantian triangle. Although these mainstream scholars provide fruitful insights on the powers' motivations, however, they are not without shortcomings. First, realist scholars cannot explain why these middle powers create their common front against China independent from the U.S. From conventional realist vantage point, the powers can simply engage in bandwagon-i.e., fortifying its relations with the U.S. Bandwagoning the U.S. is much cheaper and efficient solution to the security dilemma between the middle powers and rising China. Despite the presence of such efficient policy tool kit, the middle powers work with one another to raise their own voice toward China. Liberal's Kantian tripod argument also seems sensibly understandable but the powers' effort to incorporate China in the Kantian system is not followed by any efforts to promote democracy and human rights within China.

Noting these weaknesses, the paper develops a unique theoretical framework by combining the insights from realism and constructivism. The framework, which can be called "normative balancing," explains the middle powers' ardent efforts to engage rising China through the lens of balancing but the balancing is devoid of collective efforts to balance militarily against China. Drawing upon the famous concept of soft-balancing and partially twisting it, the paper defines "normative balancing" as secondary states or middle powers' effort to balance potential rule breaker or hegemon with a set of norm such as multilateral-and cooperative security. This is a sort of balancing in that it specifically aims at counterweighting rising power in a preventive way. But the balancing is neither hard-nor soft-balancing in that it contains ideational effort-i.e., an effort to socialize the power so as to embrace the norms and ideas prevailing in international community. By doing so, the powers to prevent China, which is destined to become a hegemon, from bullying or harassing its neighboring its minor neighbors once reaching a great power status.

The paper is constructed as follows. The first section briefly reviews the literature on middle powers' constructive role as mediators, brokers, and arbiters. The review in particular highlights the weaknesses and loopholes the existing studies of the middle powers left out. Based on the critical review of the literature on the middle powers, the second section develops a novel and more nuanced approach to the middle powers' foreign policy behaviors. The concept of the middle powers is clearly defined and the so-called normative balancing by the middle powers is fully developed in the section. The third section conducts a crucial case study of the middle powers' effort to do normative balancing against a hegemon with an emphasis on both the ASEAN's and South Korea's effort to socialize China to embrace the norm of multilateral-and cooperative security. In the final section, the paper offers a short summary of the research and draws some policy implications with the suggestions for future research.

**Literature on Middle Power Diplomacy**

Recently, the concept of middle powers has received growing theoretical attention from students of international relations. The middle powers, sitting between the great powers and small powers, have raised their voice over various kinds of global issues from security cooperation to economic policy coordination to environmental issues. Scholars of the middle powers, however, diverge on who the middle powers are and has the powers try to accomplish. Some argue that the middle powers lie between militarily powerful and economically advanced great powers and militarily weak and economically undeveloped small powers and that the

powers' influence will be quite limited simply because the great powers' unequaled capabilities. Some scholars claim that the middle powers, despite its middle-ranked position in a hierarchy of power distribution, have a full potential to be effective players in the world politics partly because they are free from the incentive to struggle for becoming a top in the system and partly because they can play "bridging role" or "brokerage diplomacy." The best example of this was the middle powers' efforts to mediate conflict of interests between the great powers and minor powers over the issues of climate change.

Based on varying definitions of the middle powers, scholars have examined unique features of the powers' foreign policy behavior. Cooper and his colleagues, after conducting detailed analysis of middle powers' diplomatic behaviors, assert that the powers have shown a strong tendency to pursue multilateral solutions to international problems, to embrace compromise positions in international disputes and to embrace notion of "good international citizenship" to guide its diplomacy (Cooper, Higgot, and Nossal, 1993, 19). Lee and his colleagues have paid a more explicit attention to middle powers' diplomatic behavior. Drawing on the concept of "bridging," "arbitrage," and "brokerage," they demonstrated that the middle powers, especially Mexico, Indonesia, Korea (ROK), Turkey, and Australia (MIKTA), served as bridge or link between a great power and small powers as to the issues of climate change (Lee, Chun, Shu and Thomsen, 2015, 4). Chun, focusing on South Korea's growing commitment to creating multilateral architecture in the Asia Pacific, illustrated that it is rapidly expanding its influence in the creation of issue-specific settlement mechanism (Chun 2014). Shifting focus from non-security issues to security ones, Kim also argued that middle powers like ASEAN and South Korea have played a mediating role of persuading the rising potential challenger, i.e., China, to be more satisfied with the status quo (Kim, 2015, 251).

After reviewing such literature on the middle powers and their foreign policy behavior, it becomes evident that the existing studies offer a number of fresh insights on the role of non-great powers, notably secondary or middle powers. But the studies are not without shortcomings. First, the studies have shown a limitation in coming up with a tight and mostly shared definition of the middle powers. The middle powers can be simply called "secondary powers" in which most members of the middle powers are second-ranked powers. In this regard, Brazil, Russia, China and South Africa (BRICs) can be incorporated into the mantra of the middle powers. Second, a number of small powers or minor powers can be classified into middle powers despite their miserable economic and diplomatic performances. Another problem underlying in the studies is that too much attention has been paid to middle powers' role of mediator, arbiter, and broker, thereby dismissing the possibility that the powers play a much more active role that the studies predicted. For example, the middle powers can play a role of balancer by forming a network or informal alliance. Pape's study of soft-balancing vividly showed that some middle powers like Turkey and Saudi Arabia were major actors, who engaged in balancing against Bush's U.S.

Noting these weaknesses, the following section develops a theoretical framework, which might be called "normative balancing." Grounded in Pape's path-breaking study of soft-balancing, the framework claims that middle powers, if they succeed in forming a formal or informal coalition, can serve as balancer against rising or existing great powers. Instead of focusing the powers' military balancing against the great powers, the framework examines the mechanism in which middle powers, who are afraid of possible harassment of rising hegemon and of the potential deadly military confrontations between the hegemons, can engage in normative balancing against the hegemons, which means they collectively persuade the hegemons so as to embrace the norm of multilateral-and cooperative security.

**Theoretical Framework: Middle Powers' "Normative" Balancing**

Balancing has always been at the center of scholarly debate on foreign policy behaviors of states living in international anarchy. My framework called "normative" balancing is built upon an ideational interpretation of "soft-balancing." At the age of the U.S. unipolarity, scholars of various realist stripes attempted to explain the balance of balancing against a unipolar U.S. From Walzian scholars' perspective, balance of power, once disrupted, tends to be returned as a predominant actor, i.e., a hegemon, expands its power across time. Fearing that the hegemon might harass or exploit militarily weak secondary countries, the latter tend to coalesce into anti-hegemonic bloc and, as a result, balance of powers will be restored.

What realist scholars witnessed, however, was the absence of any effective balancing effort from the secondary power against the U.S. since the Cold War ended. To explain the absence of hard-balancing between the US and other secondary powers, therefore, the scholars develop an idea of "soft-balancing." According to the scholars, soft-balancing is actions that do not directly challenge U.S. military preponderance but that use nonmilitary tool to delay, frustrate, and undermine aggressive unilateral U.S. military policies (Pape, 2005). Even soft-balancing, however, still use materialistic tools to balance against a hegemon, the U.S. The examples of soft-balancing tools ranges from territorial denial, entangling diplomacy, economic statecraft, and signals of resolve to balance (Ibid., 36-37).

Drawing upon this novel approach to states' balancing behavior, I develop a new approach to middle powers' balancing behavior by incorporating insights from constructivist theory of international relations, which may be called "normative balancing". This theoretical approach consists of a set of assumption from realism, constructivism, and recent research on middle powers. First of all, the framework assumes that secondary states living in international anarchy still have a strong incentive to balance against threatening hegemons or great powers. Theoretically, balancing refers to states' strategy to change their relative power vs. threatening hegemon to their own advantage for pursuing security under anarchy (Waltz, 1979; Walt, 1985, Pape, 2005; He, 2012). Grounded in dazzling economic growth and rapid military buildups backed by the growth, the framework asserts, China is now becoming a threatening hegemon, provoking the secondary states' fear of being harassed or exploited. So rapid rise of China is structuring external condition in the Asia Pacific or in the world such that many secondary states must think about "balancing" against China.

With regard to the secondary countries concerned about threatening hegemon, however, the framework pays a more explicit attention to the middle powers. A middle power is, by definition, a state that ranks between a major power and minor power. A category of middle power comprises a hodge-podge of states distinguished far less by what they are than by what they are not (Schweller 2015). They are not great powers, major powers, or minor powers. Great and major powers are invariably large, developed countries; whereas minor powers are mostly small (in terms of territory, population, or both), developing or underdeveloped countries. Middle powers run the gamut from small, highly developed countries (Israel, Denmark, Singapore, Finland) to medium-sized, developed countries (South Korea, Australia, Canada, Spain, Ukraine, South Africa, Argentina) to large, developing countries (Egypt, Mexico, Indonesia, Iran, Philippines, Nigeria) (Ibid., 1).

Among others, South Korea and ASEAN countries to which the paper give special attention partially because these powers fit well into the above definition of middle powers and partially because they define themselves as middle powers. Moreover, these middle powers have consistently geared up their efforts to balance rising China through the formation of a "network" (Lee et al., 2015; Lee 2015). Using existing institutional platform or coalition, the

powers engage in a collective behavior, i.e., balancing, against China.

Third, the framework claims that these middle powers or balancers utilizes non-materialistic tools in balancing against rising China. Conventional wisdom in the studies of states' balancing behavior has paid disproportionate attention to materialistic ones. Military buildups are military alliance between balancing countries have been considered major tools for balancing (Wlatz, 1979; Walt, 1985). Even scholars of soft-balancing still focus on materialistic tools such as economic statecraft, entangling diplomacy, territorial denial, and signals of the resolve to balance (Pape, 2005, 36-37). Contrary to these materialistic understanding of the tools for balancing, however, my normative balancing framework emphasizes the utility of norms and ideas as a tool for balancing against a threatening hegemon. Normative balancing simply refers to the secondary countries' or middle powers' balancing efforts to hedge against the hegemon relying upon a set of compelling and universal norms such as multilateral security and cooperative security. This is a balancing effort in that it specifically aims both at countervailing the powers of the hegemon and at ensuring self-survival. At the same time, it is normative effort in that it tries to counter the possible threats from the hegemon by persuading it to embrace well-received and universally accepted norm of multilateral-and cooperative security and to play within the confines of the norm.

Taken together, my framework of normative balancing claims that middle powers, which is located between the two extreme power spectrum-i.e., great powers and small powers, can play a role of balancer against the backdrop of the rise of threatening hegemon-i.e., China. Rise of a hegemon provides a fertile ground for the middle powers to develop a common interest in balancing the hegemon. But each of these powers are militarily too weak to counter the possible threat from the hegemon. This condition prompts middle powers' efforts to build a common front against a hegemon through the creation of a network or alliance. Although they succeed in creating the front, however, the powers' military capabilities will be still limited to engage in a hard-balancing against the hegemon. Given this, the powers' will find that persuading the hegemon to play within the context of universally accepted norm-i.e., multilateral and cooperative security-can be effective tool for balancing the hegemon. Partly by reiterating the importance of security as a public good and partly by preaching the values of multilateral- and cooperative security, the powers are likely to balance the power in a "normative way" and to ensure their survival.

In what follows, the paper applies this rather novel theoretical framework to the case of ASEAN and South Korea's effort to hedge against future threatening China. By focusing on these middle powers' complicated but coordinated diplomacy toward China relying on the norm of multilateral-and cooperative security, the paper illustrates that these middle powers have been engaging in the so-called normative balancing against rising China.

**Middle Powers in the Asia Pacific and Their Efforts to Balance China**

The paper claims that middle powers, which are a subset of secondary states, play a critical role in balancing a threatening hegemon. A middle power is, by definition, a state that ranks between a major power and minor power. A category of middle power comprises a hodge-podge of states distinguished far less by what they are than by what they are not (Schweller 2015). They are not great powers, major powers, or minor powers. Great and major powers are invariably large, developed countries; whereas minor powers are mostly small (in terms of territory, population, or both), developing or underdeveloped countries. Middle powers run the gamut from small, highly developed countries (Israel, Denmark, Singapore, Finland) to medium-sized, developed countries (South Korea, Australia, Canada, Spain, Ukraine, South

Africa, Argentina) to large, developing countries (Egypt, Mexico, Indonesia, Iran, Philippines, Nigeria) (Ibid., 1).

Out of these, the paper examines a group of Asian states, which might be called "middle powers" in the Asian Pacific, such as South Korea and ASEAN countries. As discussed in the previous sections, these middle powers in the Asia Pacific have been suffering a fear of being exploited or harassed by a rising China, which is rapidly expanding its military activities in the region. Keenly aware of the risk rising China may entail, therefore, the powers have made concerted efforts to balance China through the construction of a network.

These middle powers have been at the forefront in Asia Pacific countries' efforts to balance rising China. The powers have become suspicious of China's real motivation underlying its rising and worried that its rising may aggravate the security dilemma in the region (Chun, 2014). Territorial dispute in the East South Sea, the ongoing tension in the Taiwan Strait, conflict in air defense zone and fishery issues in the Yellow Sea, and both maritime and territorial disputes in the South China Sea all have prompted these middle powers' fear of being militarily exploited by China.

The problem, however, is that these middle powers' military capabilities are two limited and not enough to allow their hard-balancing against China. China's military expenditure, for instance, is 6.8 times greater relative to a combined military expenditure of all ASEAN countries (AFP, 2015). South Korea is one of the militarily strongest power in Asia but China's military expenditure is 6.7 times greater relative to Korea's military expenditure (Ibid.). Under this circumstance, it is mostly impossible for these middle powers to engage in hard-balancing against China. Some might argue that an exponential growth of trade between China and the powers will have a strong pacifying effect, thereby preventing China from harassing or exploiting the powers. But a growing number of scholars in Asian politics point out that there is an "Asian Paradox," which means the disputes between China and neighboring Asian counties has systematically been increasing despite a surge of intra-regional trade (Lee, 2013: Koo, 2015; Ryu 2013).

Under this circumstance, the paper claims that key middle powers in the Asia Pacific, notably South Kore and the ASEAN, choose a unique balancing strategy, i.e., normative balancing, as an attempt to countervail China's power and to preserve their survival using a set of normative balancing tools. By evoking a set of norm such as multilateral-and cooperative security and by persuading or pressing China to embrace the norm, the powers choose a normative balancing as a self-preserving strategy.

**South Korea and Its Normative Balancing against China**

South Korea, a major middle power in the Asia Pacific, has a strong incentive to balance rising China. Although it has been closely tied to China in a wide range of areas such economy, notably trade, politics, and cultural exchange, it has constantly shown that preparing for China's rising to the status of a great power is essential to its survival. First of all, the security dilemma between China and Korea has becoming worse. China's ongoing unwillingness to control of its fishery activities in Korea's EEZ, its unilateral declaration of air defense zone over some area of Korea, and rapid military buildups in its West front, its secret support for North Korea regime, and systemic power struggle between China and Korea's key military ally-i.e., the United States-all have given Korean leaders a strong incentive to hedge against rising China.

But Korea's tools for balancing China are not broad enough. In terms of military might, China is much stronger relative to that of Korea. A set of soft-balancing tools such as territorial denial, entangling diplomacy, economic statecraft, and signals of resolve to balance are simply

not available to Korea. Korea's economy is too much dependent on trade with China. There is no ground for pursuing a strategy of territorial denial due to the absence of territorial conflict between the two countries. Entangling diplomacy is impossible without the support from the U.S. Signals of resolve to balance has a high risk in that China will become more aggressive toward South Korea and prop up North Korea. Under this circumstance, Korean leaders have found that engaging China normatively would best serve Korea's national security interest.

In this regard, South Korea has been proactive in incorporating China into the so-called Asia's multilateral security architecture (Lee, 2015, 5-6). Not only did ROK persuade China to remain as a key member of Conference on Interactions and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA), it also consistently emphasized the peaceful resolution of conflicts in both East- and South China Sea. South Korea also took an initiative to create ARF Experts and Eminent Persons (ARF EEPs) system as a track 1.5. diplomacy where security-related scholars and experts both in the Asia Pacific and in the world gave Chinese leaders a set of policy recommendations on the diplomatic resolution of the conflict in the East and South China Sea (Moon and You, forthcoming). Korea also has vigorously utilized the East Asia Summit (EAS) as a forum or platform to create East Asian Security Regime whose core membership includes China (Lee, 2011).

Most recently, South Korea has launched a comprehensive multilateral security dialogue, which is called "Northeast Asia Peace and Cooperation Initiative" (NAPCI). The initiative focuses not on immediately establishing a body for multilateral cooperation but more attention to the process of constantly fostering small yet meaningful forms of cooperation. It aims to "gradually encourage a change in perception and attitudes of countries of the region with a view to eventually developing a shared understanding with regard to multilateral security cooperation. serves to expand the scope and depth of multilateral cooperation, to lead to greater lasting peace and prosperity in Northeast Asia" (KMOF, 2015, 4).

Key members of NAPCI consist of South Korea, China, the U.S., Russia, Mongolia and, possibly North Korea. It seeks, by providing a multilateral framework for the stable management of elements of discord, and by achieving a harmony between various forms of vision pursued by countries within the region, to open a new path of cooperation. The ROK Government, actively pursuing high-level and summit diplomacy, has held NAPCI briefing sessions in major countries in the region, including the US, China, and Japan, on two occasions in each country (Ibid., 6).

ROK's NAPCI initiative in particular has two clear objectives-i.e., inducing change in North Korea's foreign policy behavior and building a bridge between China and the U.S. in Northeast Asia.[2] Regarding growing tension between China and the U.S., NAPCI especially

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[2]  Such efforts have served to further deepen understanding in the international community of NAPCI. In this way it has been able to secure the support not only of neighboring countries such as the US, China, Japan, Russia, and Mongolia but also of many other countries such as Germany, France, the UK, Canada, Australia, Indonesia, and Vietnam. Furthermore, international and regional organizations such as the UN, the EU, ASEAN, NATO, the OSCE, the EAS, and CICA have expressed their willingness to actively take part in the initiative. This year also the ROK Government will continue to exert active efforts to secure further support for NAPCI in the international community such as by holding briefing sessions in various countries. A considerable number of international seminars have been held bringing together representatives from the governmental and nongovernmental sector, such as the ROK-NATO NAPCI Seminar on July 9, 2014; the Joint ROK-EU Seminar held on September 18-19; and the Northeast Asia Peace and Cooperation Forum held on October 28-30. These have served to further foster consensus on NAPCI among experts and to gather opinions on feasible areas of cooperation and the future direction for NAPCI. In 2015 also through the holding of joint seminars with NATO, the EU, the OSCE, and ASEAN, the ROK Government will seek to deepen cooperation with these organizations and to garner wisdom

has tried to serve as a norm entrepreneur or diffuser. It has vigorously evoked a set of security-related norms such as "trust building," 'multilateral and cooperative security" and "peaceful resolution of conflict." Given its close security tie to the U.S., South Korean government has not hesitated to reveal its intention that NAPCI aims at promoting trustpolitik with China and North Korea relying upon the normative principles of "inter-state cooperation" and "sustainable peace" (Lee, 2015, 6).

To achieve the goal of mutual trust in a security realm, the NAPCI has exerted its efforts to accumulate conventions of dialogue and to identify areas of cooperation in non-traditional security related issues, as well as enlarging the scope of cooperation in traditional security related matters. The core tenets of NAPCI include: 1) overcoming the Asia Paradox, pursuing East Asia's joint peace and prosperity; 2) establishing a liberal international order within East Asia and 3) creating a vision for the Asian community; 4) establishing a cooperative international order in East Asia, rejecting the notion of a zero-sum approach to defining national interests (KMOF, 2015).

Grounded in the tenets, South Korea has actively engaged China diplomatically as well as politically. Knowing that rising powers have not been comfortable complying with existing rules and that they eventually want to rewrite rules and norms like Germany and Japan did in the mid-20th century, Korean government has tried to undermine China's unilateral effort to challenge the status quo in the South China Sea and elsewhere. Allied with other western security organization like the Organization of Security and Cooperation (OSCE), North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and European Union (EU), for instance, South Korea has continued to enmesh China within the normative confines of trust building, multilateral and cooperative security and peaceful resolution of conflict. Not only has it encouraged China to see security in Asia Pacific through the lens of non-zero sum game, but also has stressed the virtue of cooperative security (Hwang, 2013).

**ASEAN and Its Normative Balancing against China**

The ASEAN, which consists now of Philippines, Vietnam, Singapore, Indonesia, Myanmar, and Laos, is another key player in conducting normative balancing against China. Most of the ASEAN members are located in the potential sphere of influence of China once it enters a status of a great power. Both economic and cultural exchanges between ASEAN and China have experienced a dazzling growth since mid-1990s. At the same time, however, many conflicts of interest between the ASEAN countries and China have materialized into diplomatic and military disputes.

China, for instance, has consistently held the position that it prefers bilateral negotiations over multilateral negation when it comes to the territorial and maritime disputes in the South China Sea with many ASEAN countries. Chinese leadership has not hesitated to signal its desire to recover the lost territories in the South China Sea by evoking a sense of the "Century of Humiliation" through bilateral channels. But such rigid thinking has been seen as "aggression" and "expansionist" by ASEAN (Fravel 2007). They also see China's continuous expansion as its well-calculated effort to seize the resource-rich area without provoking too much international outcry. China's reticence to engage ASEAN as an entity is also seen by many ASEAN members as a "divide and conquer tactic" towards the Southeast Asian nations. So the prevailing sentiment in the region appears to be that China is a threat to the stability and

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with regard to the full pursuit of projects for cooperation on various issues in the context of NAPCI (KMOF, 2015).

peace in the region by advancing its parochial geopolitical goals.

But ASEAN has shown inevitable weakness in militarily balancing. In terms of military might, China is much stronger relative to that of ASEAN countries. A set of soft-balancing tools such as territorial denial, entangling diplomacy, economic statecraft, and signals of resolve to balance are not that threatening expansive China. ASEAN's economy also has become too much dependent on trade with China. ASEAN's constant effort to deny China's territorial claims has led to a great failure due to China's unilateral landing into the islands under contention. A strategy of entangling diplomacy has achieved little due to poor coordination between ASEAN members and due to China's preference tilted into bilateral diplomacy. Signals of resolve to balance entails a high risk in that China will become more aggressive toward ASEAN and U.S. reluctance to fully engage in the Asia Pacific. Against this backdrop, ASEAN has been gearing up its effort to balance rising China using by evoking a norm of multilateral-and cooperative security.

The first ASEAN-China summit meeting was also held in July 1997 between Jiang Zemin and all ASEAN leaders. Since then, ASEAN has made determined effort to incorporate China into a web of the norm of multilateral and cooperative security. In 2003, when China acceded to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC), a key document outlining behavioral norms between ASEAN and China addressed, "the relationship was elevated to that of a Strategic Partnership." The purpose of the Treaty is to "promote perpetual peace, everlasting amity and cooperation between the people of Southeast Asia and the people of the PRC." The Treaty also made it clear that it would contribute to their strength, solidarity, and closer relationship. In their relations with one another, the High Contracting Parties shall be guided by the following fundamental principles:[3]

1. Mutual respect for the independence, sovereignty, equality, territorial integrity and national identity of all nations
2. The right of every State to lead its national existence free from external interference, subversion or coercion
3. Non-interference in the internal affairs of one another,
4. Settlement of differences or disputes by peaceful means,
5. Renunciation of the threat or use of force, and
6. Effective co-operation among themselves.

At the center of all these vibrant ASEAN efforts has been the norm that China and ASEAN as key players in the Asia Pacific must act upon the norm of multilateral-cooperative security.[4] Relying upon their unity and network power, ASEAN countries as a whole has been trying to countervailing the future threat from rising China by evoking the norm. The ASEAN has been keenly aware that conventional hard-balancing strategy like military buildups and military alliance would not be very effective due to imbalance in military powers among ASEAN and rising China. They also know that economic statecraft or enmeshing China by increased economic interdependence will not be used as a hedging strategy because of ASEAN

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[3] http://asean.org/treaty-amity-cooperation-southeast-asia-indonesia-24-february-1976/

[4] As mentioned above, China has already signed the TAC, the modus operandi document in ASEAN's behavior in regional affairs. The TAC sets out behavioral norms in regional interstate interactions, upholding principles of state sovereignty, promoting consultation and compromise, and renouncing the threat or use of force to settle disputes. Although the TAC does not have the mandate to prevent states from using force, it does generate reputational costs for a potential violating state that deviates from the TAC. ASEAN has also encouraged China to sign its Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone, and China has affirmed its readiness to sign it in the near future.

economies' growing dependence on Chinese economy. Against this backdrop, the ASEAN has been engaging in normative balancing in which they have tried to check unilateral moves China made by centering on the norm of multilateral and cooperative security. By persuading or pressing China both to embrace and act upon the norm, the ASEAN have attempted to elevate its normative stance against China to its own advantage. In other words, the ASEAN has ardently prevented China from unilaterally exercising its power over the issues in disputes. By persuading China to play its power politics within the normative confine of multilateral-and cooperative security, ASEAN has exerted a strong influence in pressing it to act upon the norm it considers prevailing in the region (Ryu, 2013).

Such ASEAN's effort to normatively balance rising China also can be observed by ASEAN's attempt to use the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) platform as a tool for countervailing the powers of rising China. The ASEAN, for example, took an initiative in the creation of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) in which East Asian countries, including China, and other Western powers like the EU and the U.S., were invited to create a forum where they were consistently supportive of three-step approaches to conflict resolution, i.e., "confidence building measures (CBMs)," "Preventive Diplomacy (PD)," and "the peaceful resolution of conflicts" (Evans 2007). In this initiative, the ASEAN paid the highest priority on the principle of multilateral-and cooperative security and on the use of CBMs and PD as a tool to achieve the principle. The principles have clearly been defined by the ARF as follows:[5]

1. To foster constructive dialogue and consultation on political and security issues of
   common interest and concern
2. To make significant contributions to efforts towards confidence-building and preventive
   diplomacy in the Asia-Pacific region

The 27th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting (1994) thus stated that "The ARF could become an effective consultative Asia-Pacific Forum for promoting open dialogue on political and security cooperation in the region. In this context, "ASEAN should work with its ARF partners to bring about a more predictable and constructive pattern of relations in the Asia Pacific."

The ASEAN also brought China into ASEAN+3 and East Asia Summit. There are two purposes here. First, ASEAN seeks to maintain a balance between the great powers, so that no one power can dominate regional affairs. China has become a major target of such purpose. By keeping China in balance, ASEAN has enhanced its voice and influence in shaping stable relationship between it and China. Second, ASEAN has made determined efforts to attempt to balance China by constantly emphasizing the value of multilateral-and cooperative security. It has made it clear that "China should move within multilateral frameworks and that the South China Sea dispute is not about the bilateral dispute between China and other relevant Asian countries, but about the security and stability in an entire Asia Pacific region."[6] In this regard, ASEAN has constantly persuaded China to be a "responsible" regional stake-holder whose power should serve the prosperity and stability in the region.

Recently, a Plan of Action for the period of 2011-2015 has been in progress. The Plan of Action seeks to deepen and broaden ASEAN-China relations and cooperation in a comprehensive manner. Among others is the norm of multilateral-and cooperative security with which ASEAN has engaged China. By evoking the norm, ASEAN gears up its effort to construct regular high-level contacts and mechanisms for dialogue, as well as military exchanges and cooperation (Ryu, 2013, 2).

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[5] http://aseanregionalforum.asean.org/about.html
[6] http://asean.org/?static_post=asean-plus-three-cooperation-2

Accordingly, China has been the most requested hosts and participants in ASEAN-created security-related meetings and conferences. China with ASEAN, for example, hosted the ARF Professional Training Program on China' security policy in 1999. China also hosted ARF Seminar on the Outsourcing of Military Logistics in 2002. It also co-hosted the ISG on Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) with Myanmar in 2003. The first ARF Security Policy Conference also was held in Beijing in 2004. It co-chaired ISM on Non-Proliferation and Disarmament with the U.S. and Singapore in 2009. The conference on the ISGs on CBMs and PD also was co-chaired by China and Brunei in 2012-2013.[7]

What makes these meetings unique is that ASEAN or each of ASEAN members has served as normative balancer against China. Throughout the meetings, despite the differences in the topics discussed, ASEAN and it members have attempted to check China's unilateral exercise of its power in the region by evoking the norm of multilateral-and cooperative security. Clearly aware of ASEAN members' weakened bargaining power in bilateral contact with China, ASEAN members have acted like a unitary actor and undermined China's diplomatic and military power. From ASEAN's perspective, stability and peace in the Asia Pacific, notably in the South China Sea, are a public good rather than a private good that relevant states should seek to pursue. Partly by rejecting China' unilateral or bilateral approach to the conflicts of interest with ASEAN and partly by persuading it to embrace the norm of multilateral and cooperative security, ASEAN has led its concerted efforts to undermine China's growing power through the imposition of the above-mentioned norms.

**Concluding Remarks**

This paper examines middle powers' balancing effort toward rising hegemon, i.e., China through a theoretical standpoint of "normative balancing" whose origin lies in the concept of "soft-balancing." Normative balancing refers to the middle powers' balancing effort to countervail the hegemon's unchecked use of power by persuading it so as to embrace a norm of "multilateralizing security" and "cooperative security." Fearing that the hegemon would either harass or exploit the powers through the use of its dominant military power, the middle-power states have a strong incentive to develop the most efficient balancing tools designed to prevent the hegemon's reckless use of the power. The problem, however, is that the powers are too weak to engage in both hard-and soft-balancing. Under this circumstance, the paper claims, middle powers develop the strategy called "normative balancing." At the heart of this balancing strategy is that the powers will likely check the hegemon's power in a preventive manner by pressing it to be highly responsive to the above norms. This theoretical argument is tested against the cases of South Korea's and ASEAN's recent efforts to constrain China such that it moves within the normative confine of multilateral-and cooperative security. The paper finds that these middle powers vigorously work to balance rising China by enmeshing it into a web of security-related norm, notably multilateral and cooperative security.

Major contribution of the paper is two-fold. First of all, the paper develops a novel theoretical framework, which might be called "normative balancing." Drawing on the idea of "soft-balancing," the paper builds the framework in which secondary states may engage in balancing against rising hegemon using a set of normative discourses. Among others are the discourse on "multilateral"-and "cooperative" security to which the framework draws its attention. Unlike materialistic balancing-i.e., hard-and soft-balancing in which secondary states

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[7] For the details of these meetings, see ARF's Chairman's Statements 1996-2012 (http://aseanregionalforum.asean.org.librart.afr-chairmans-statements-and-reports.html).

utilize a series of materialistic tools such as military buildups, formation of counter-coalition, territorial denial, entangling diplomacy, economic statecrafts, and signals of resolve to balance, a group of secondary states can balance rising threat using non-materialistic tools such as norms, ideas, and discourse on peace and stability. In this sense, the framework can bridge a divide between realist concept of "balancing" and constructivist concept of "socialization."

Second, the paper provided a first-cut or preliminary evidence which lends support for the arguments that normative balancing framework generates. Grounded in the recent scholarly achievements of "middle powers," the paper shows that a host of middle powers such as South Korea and ASEAN have engaged in the normative balancing against rising and more threatening China. The paper finds that these middle power, who are really concerned about the negative consequences of rising China, have become more proactive in balancing China using a set of norms such as multilateral-and cooperative security, and peace and stability. Specifically, these countries have hosted a number of security-issue related meetings in which China was persuaded to attend. In almost every meeting, the powers have tried to check China's reckless use of its military might by emphasizing ideas of stability, cooperative and multilateral security. Not only have they constantly pressed China to embrace the norm of common security in the South China dispute, but also have encouraged it to resolve the conflict in the East China Sea in a multilateral setting. Such collective efforts have materialized into concrete outcomes such as the establishment of Code of Conduct in the South China Sea and of China's adoption of the principle of peaceful resolution of territorial conflict in East China Sea.

Despite these contributions, the paper should be considered just an initial step for theorizing norm-based balancing effort by secondary or middle powers and for empirically proving the effort. Since the primary attention of the paper is on the norm-based power plays between China and ASEAN and South Korea, the future research should expand its scope of analysis into the similar balancing dynamics in other regions. In a related vein, the future study needs to develop more fine-grained theory of normative balancing. We are right now living in the world in which the norm against major war between states is a rule rather than an exception. All international institutions have founding documentations or charters in which peace and stability are clearly addressed as a major goals of the institutions. Interstate or multilateral diplomacy is filled with a rhetoric of peace and security. That means that the impact of norm in the world politics would be much stronger than we have assumed. In a contemporary world, materialistic balancing incurs too much costs to the countries engaged in the balancing and is often delayed and curtailed due to domestic political constraints. So it is time for students of international relations to pay a more explicit to normative implications of all realist concepts such as balancing, alliance, and bandwagoning.

The paper also entails some policy implication. As briefly discussed in the previous sections, the costs for hard-or soft-balancing tend to increase over time in the world in which political, economic, and military activities are inextricably intertwined. To militarily balance rising hegemon, for instance, the balancers need to use economic assets for beefing up military capability, which might have been used in more productive economic activities. Soft-balancing might be an alternative to hard-balancing but it also incurs some political and economic costs such as hostile response from a hegemon or becoming major target of hegemon's economic sanction. From this vantage point, the normative balancing can be the most cost-efficient solution to the middle powers or secondary countries. The norm of cooperative security or multilateral security has become the so-called universal norm in the world politics. The UN and NATO, and other regional economic and security institutions clearly defines their raison d'etre is to ensure world peace and stability. By evoking the sense of global justice and emphasizing the value of peace and security, the leaders in middle powers can encourage a

rising hegemon to be a constructive member of international community in which "cooperative security" and "peace" have prevailed.

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