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Revisiting the Golden Age of Sino-Japanese Relations, 1972-1989

Panel: Conflict Resolution 3

Given the acrimonious state of Sino-Japanese relations today, it is easy to forget that there were past periods of amity and cooperation between the two countries. This paper will re-examine the “golden age” of Sino-Japanese relations from 1972 to 1989 in light of past research and recently available primary sources. With the 1972 Joint Communiqué and the 1978 Sino-Japanese Treaty of Peace and Friendship providing basic principles, the two countries were able to minimize continuing disputes over such issues as the interpretation of history, the status of Taiwan, and sovereignty over the Diaoyu/Senkaku islands, and worked constructively for implicit strategic cooperation and the substantial expansion of economic relations and cultural exchanges for mutual benefit and understanding. Even given significant developments since 1989, including the end of the Cold War and the rise of China, may this “golden age” provide clues to and cautious optimism for conflict resolution today?