Abstract: Japan and South Korea are Western-style democracies with open-market economies committed to the rule of law. They are also U.S. allies. Yet despite their common interests, shared values, and geographic proximity, divergent national identities have fractured relations between them. In this talk, The Japan-South Korea Identity Clash: East Asian Security and the United States, Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) Senior Fellow for Korea Studies Scott A. Snyder will investigate the roots of the split and its ongoing threat to the region and the world. Snyder isolates competing notions of national identity as the main obstacle to a productive Japan-South Korea partnership. Through public opinion data, interviews, and years of observation, he argues that incompatible, rapidly changing conceptions of national identity in Japan and South Korea have complicated territorial claims and international policy. Despite changes in Japan's and Korea’s leaderships and both governments' concerted efforts to encourage U.S.-ROK-Japan security cooperation, he concludes, the Japan-Korea relationship continues to be hobbled by history and national identity.

Bio: Scott Snyder is senior fellow for Korea studies and director of the program on U.S.-Korea policy at the Council on Foreign Relations, where he had served as an adjunct fellow from 2008 to 2011. Snyder's program examines South Korea's efforts to contribute on the international stage; its potential influence and contributions as a middle power in East Asia; and the peninsular, regional, and global implications of North Korean instability. Prior to joining CFR, Snyder was a senior associate in the international relations program of The Asia Foundation, where he founded and directed the Center for U.S.-Korea Policy and served as The Asia Foundation's representative in Korea (2000-2004). He was also a senior associate at Pacific Forum CSIS. Mr. Snyder has also worked as an Asia specialist in the research and studies program of the U.S. Institute of Peace and as acting director of Asia Society's contemporary affairs program. He was a Pan-tech visiting fellow at Stanford University's Shorenstein Asia-Pacific Research Center during 2005-06, and currently serves on the advisory council of the National Committee on North Korea and Global Resource Services.