

POWER GAMES WITHIN EAST ASIA

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ABSTRACT:

THE STRATEGICALLY NUCLEAR BALANCE IN THE EAST ASIA VACILLATES BETWEEN TWO LIMITS. THE GLOBAL POWER BALANCE DEPENDED FOR A WHILE ON THE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE USA AND THE USSR IN THE FIRST PLACE AND IN THE SECOND, ON THE EUROPEAN POWER BALANCE, THE INTEREST FOR ASIA BEING ONLY PERIPHERAL. THE ASIAN STRATEGICALLY POWER BALANCE HAS RECONFIGURED QUICKLY; UNTIL 1990 THE KOREAN PENINSULA HAD A HUGE STRATEGICALLY VALUE, GATHERING MANY POWERFUL ACTORS INTERESTED IN CONTROLLING IT - THE USA, THE USSR, CHINA, INDIA AND JAPAN - PRESENTLY THERE ARE SOME OTHER SPACES IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD THAT ARE VALUED MORE FROM A STRATEGICALLY POINT OF VIEW. THE POWER SCALE BETWEEN CHINA AND THE USA, THOUGH NOT IMPRESSED BY SMALL COALITION ANTI-CHINA IS YET SENSITIVE TO INDIA'S POSITION.

THE KOREAN PENINSULA HAS ALWAYS BEEN A GOOD PLACE FOR INVASIONS – BOTH CHINESE AND JAPANESE, MUCH TIME IN HISTORY. THE IDEA OF A UNITED KOREA ALLIED WITH THE USA, FORCES CHINA TO CONTINUE TO PREFER THE STATUS QUO, HOPING TO INFLUENCE THE THINKING OF AND, EVENTUALLY, KOREA GIVING UP ITS NUCLEAR AGENDA. ONLY THE USA WOULD BENEFIT FROM AN ALTERATION IN THE PENINSULA'S STATUS, A SITUATION NOT TO BE ACCEPTED BY CHINA.

INDONESIA AS A MILITARY POWER IN SOUTH ASIA AND INDIA AS MILITARY EQUIPMENT PRODUCER ARE THE COUNTER-WEIGHT OF CHINA'S HEGEMONY ESPECIALLY IN THE ENTRANCE POINT FROM THE INDIAN OCEAN TO THE BENGAL GULF, TO THE NORTH AND TO THE SOUTH, AND THE MALACCA STRAIT TO THE EAST.

KEYWORDS: NUCLEAR BALANCE, EAST ASIA, THE KOREAN PENINSULA, INDONESIA, INDIA

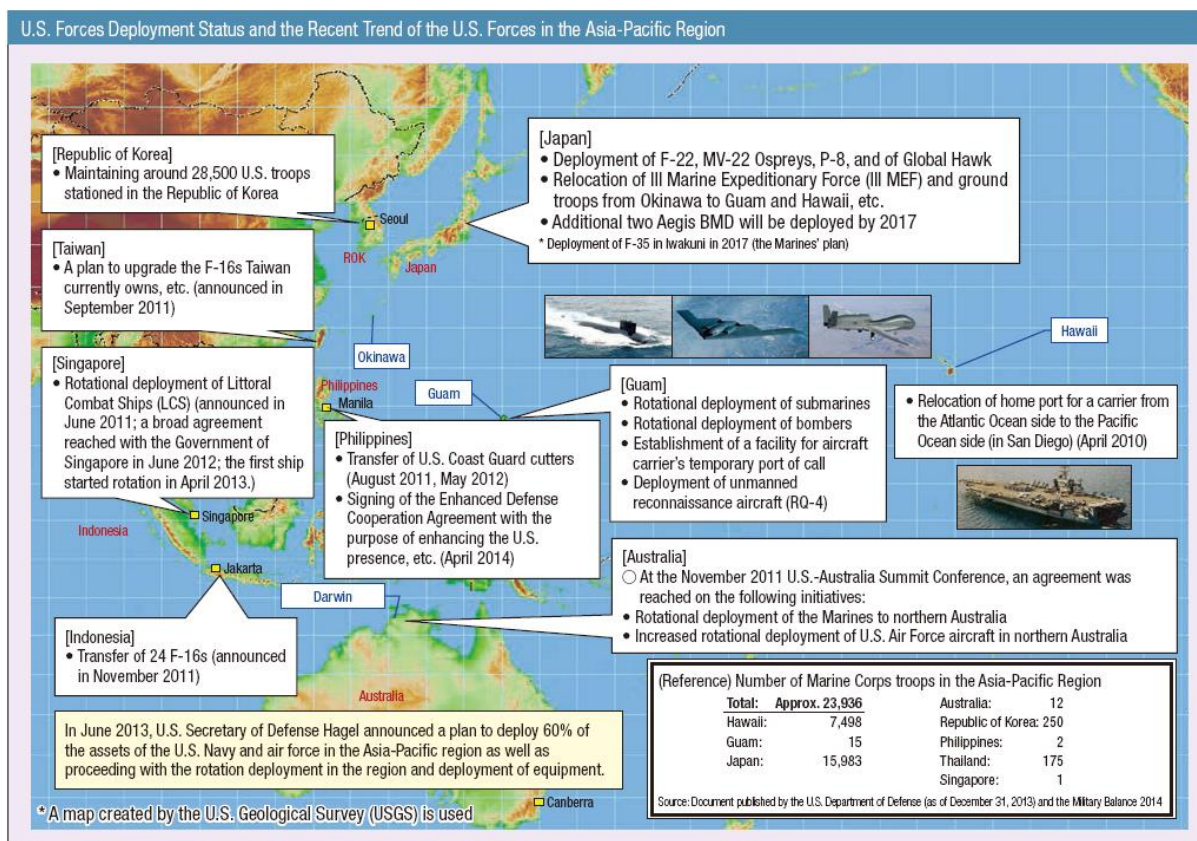
The nuclear dimension of the power scale is represented by discouragement and assertion: the discouragement specific to the Cold War developed on a base of stability and symmetry of the opposed power systems despite the dynamic balance, but only until the crises; the assertion specific to the crises or the breaking of the power balances increased its importance with the second nuclear era -transformations and nuclear developments that might affect the strategically stability.² The strategically nuclear balance in the East Asia vacillates

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² See Wilton Park Conference rapport, *Nuclear discouragement and nuclear assertion in NATO* (WP1101), 12–15 June 2011, <http://www.wiltonpark.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/WP1101-Report.pdf>, 7 June 2013, 2. (Accessed 10 January 2015).

between two limits: the discouragement is still important in the power games in the region, but the reduced dimensions of the nuclear arsenals do not support a massive disarming process.³

The global power balance depended for a while on the relations between The USA and The USSR in the first place and in the second, on the European power balance, the interest for Asia being only peripheral. Lately changes have increased the importance of assertion as compared to nuclear discouragement.



Picture no.1 – The deployment of American forces in the Asia-Pacific region⁴

The Asian strategically power balance has reconfigured quickly; until 1990 The Korean Peninsula had a huge strategically value, gathering many powerful actors interested in controlling it - The USA, The USSR, China, India and Japan - presently there are some other spaces in the neighborhood that are valued more from a strategically point of view. Japan is considered the weakest of the four actors - The USA, China, India and Japan - the only country in Asia without nuclear arsenal, respectively. Japan is not worried about the regional nuclear arsenals, but about the fact that Japanese interests are marginal in American strategies. Let's keep in mind that there is no clear perspective on the issue of The Korean Peninsula. The Chinese are influenced on this by the rivalry between them and The USA. "The USA is preoccupied by the Chinese dragon hidden behind the North Korea. We feel the same about the American eagle behind The South Korea."⁵ It seems The USA use the

³ See Rory Medcalf și Fiona Cunningham, eds, *Disarming doubt: the future of extended nuclear deterrence in East Asia* (Sydney: Lowy Institute for International Politics, 2012), 118.

⁴ See *Defence of Japan Digest 2014*, 7.

⁵ *An interview of the Group for the crises, annalists and Chinese scientists*, June 2013; Shenyang, July 2013; Changchun, August 2013.

campaign against the North Korean nuclear programme as an excuse to strengthen regional alliances useful in the future wider strategies regarding the Asian-Pacific relations. The officials repeatedly underlined to their American counterparts that "Beijing was not convinced that deploying American active defence missiles is just an answer to North Korea and not a strategically concern for China."⁶

Global power configurations depend on the challenges determined by the dramatically alterations in strategically environments; thus, if up to 1990, the most important strategically environment used to be Europe, there has been an exponential Asian increase in the last few decades - a secondary strategically environment - causing for geo-political changes that switched the positions of the two continents. These changes put Europe on the second place. Expanding the American nuclear assertion in Asia covers both Japan and South Korea. There is also Washington's possibility to use the "fulcrum" as a mean to approach the strategically issues.⁷ In the Asian perspective, the importance of nuclear weapons differs, yet it is subsumed to the principle according to which the nuclear weapons are positive factors to international stability even if the group of nuclear actors is no longer that exclusive. Nuclear weapons have been removed from the American ships, that were mobile platforms allowing mobility in the Pacific and the Tomahawk missile launchers were withdrawn from the operational stock despite Japan's protests.⁸

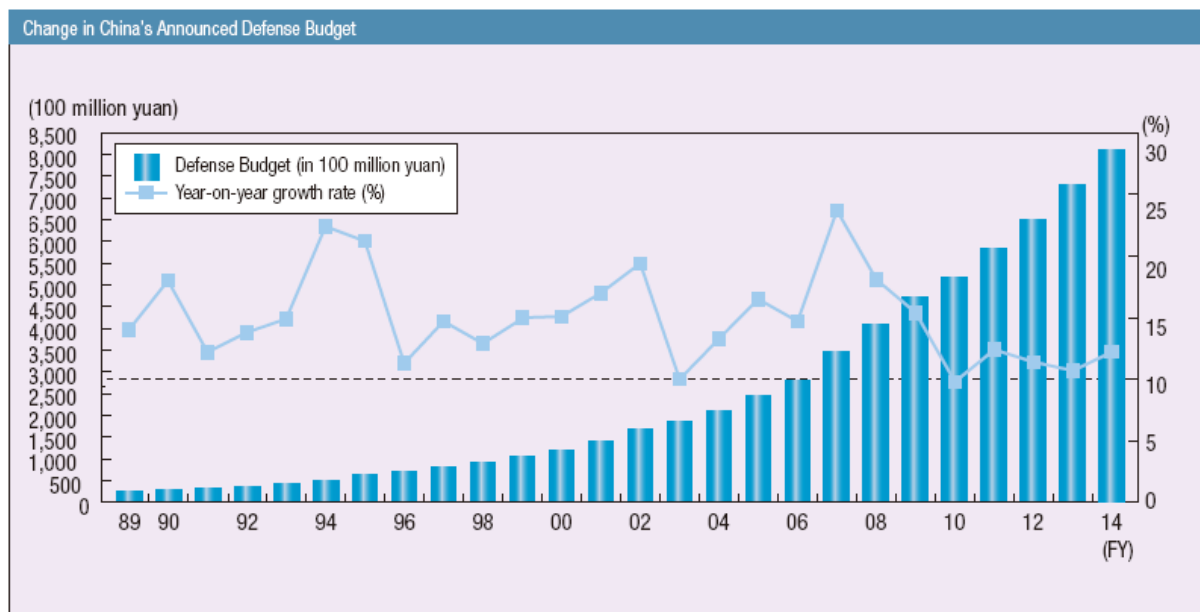


Table no.2 – The evolution of China’s defense budget⁹

China displays expanding tendencies in its strategically space, causing the smaller states in the region to worry. They might expect India to become a counter-weight to the Chinese influence, especially in the eventuality of The USA's withdrawal from the region. China's position in Eastern Asia does not allow defining the situation based on irreducible antagonisms from the riverine states, but allows questioning the equality status within the relations created with this state. Yet, China's territorial pretenses and the USA's debatable

⁶ An interview of the Group for the crises, annalists and Chinese scientists, June 2013;

⁷ See Andrew O’Neil, ‘Extended nuclear deterrence in East Asia: redundant or resurgent?’, *International Affairs* 87: 6, Nov. 2011, 1439–1457.

⁸ See Christine Leah și Rod Lyon, ‘Three visions of the bomb’, *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 64: 4, July 2010, 449–477.

⁹ See *Defence of Japan Digest* 2014, 9.

"axis" role towards Asia-Pacific to solve the regional tensions, as well as the questionable coherence of ASEAN offer India an opportunity to become a security supplier. The relations between China and India are configured by China's regional and global expansion.¹⁰ On the background of the numerous military evaluations (the Indian defence minister said that the Chinese ascension is a serious "threat")¹¹ according to which the Chinese threat is bigger than the Pakistani one, the political disagreements between China and India flourishing (the Indian prime-minister, Manmohan Singh, suggested "China would like having a point of support in Southern Asia and we should consider this reality ... It is important to be ready")¹², China being the only large power rejecting India as a developing global actor, thus creating endangering the geo-political stability.¹³

During the last years, India focused its external policy towards Eastern Asia: at the beginning of 1990, the P. V. Narasimha Rao Govern relaunched the policy to Eastern Asia; in 1995, India become a partner for the dialogue with The South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), a member of the Regional ASEAN Forum; in 1996 it became member of The East Asian Summit, launched in December 2005; in 2002, India together with China, Japan and South Korea took part in The ASEAN Summit; in December 2012 in New Delhi, (ASEAN) celebrated its 20th anniversary.

The power scale between China and The USA, though not impressed by small coalition anti-China is yet sensitive to India's position. As the oldest states person, Lee Kuan Yew, stated at Singapore, India should be "a part of the forces of South-East Asia" and a "counter-weight to China in The Indian Ocean."¹⁴

THE KOREAN PENINSULA

From an economical point of view, Asia experiments a wide transformation that will have strategically echoes in these periods in which the Western power centers are relatively weak and at a global level there are major, old disagreements. The South-East Asian environment characterized by uncertainty and re-positioning of the power cannot ignore the part played by The USA, especially that some major actors are facing major security risks. The reasons to change the terms from "expansion of nuclear discouraging" into "extended discouraging" shows The USA discourage with all their arsenal, not only with the nuclear one. More than that, the continuous improving in anti-missile defence transform "the discouraging by means of denial" in "discouraging by punishment." The distinction between "the extension of the nuclear discouraging" and "the expansion of the nuclear assertion" underlines the American interests in ensuring their allies some strategically priorities.¹⁵

The Korean Peninsula has always been a good place for invasions - both Chinese and Japanese, much time in history.¹⁶ From a strategically perspective, China considers North Korea a buffer zone to Japan and to The USA that have troops deployed in South Korea.

¹⁰ Mohan Malik, "Analizând Dragonul: Dezbaterele indiene cu referire la China," Centrul de Studii de Securitate Asia-Pacific, *Evaluări speciale*, dec. 2003, http://www.apcss.org/Publications/SAS/ChinaDebate/ChinaDebate_Malik.pdf.

¹¹ See Rajat Pandit, "Expansiunea Chinei o îngrijorare, afirmă Antony," *Times of India*, 14 sept, 2010.

¹² See "Primul-ministru avertizează asupra avanpostului Chinei din Sudul Asiei," *Indian Express*, 7 sept., 2010. "Suntem prieteni, nu rivali," a declarat premierul chinez în India. Vezi Jim Yardley, "Liderii chinezi atacă comerțul din India," *New York Times*, 16 dec., 2010.

¹³ See Harsh V. Pant, *The China Syndrome: Grappling with an Uneasy Relationship* (New Delhi: HarperCollins, 2010).

¹⁴ See P.S. Suryanarayana, "China și India nu pot începe un război: Lee Kuan Yew," *The Hindu*, 24 ian, 2011.

¹⁵ See Andrew O'Neil, "Extended nuclear deterrence in East Asia: redundant or resurgent?," *International Affairs* 87:6, Nov. 2011, 1439-1457.

¹⁶ See Roger Baker, "China and North Korea, A Tangled Partnership", *Stratfor Global Intelligence*, 16 aprilie 2013.

Even the importance of this buffer zone has decreased (the new forms of conflicts are no longer following the front lines, the importance of the ballistic missiles and of the air supremacy decreasing), North Korea remains a valuable geo-political buffer zone. Only The USA would benefit from an alteration in the peninsula's status, a situation not to be accepted by China.

China's enhanced strategic importance abates the strategically weight-center towards the South and West of the Korean Peninsula. The USA is assuring about 40 countries in the entire world, mainly in Europe, East Asia and Middle East (the list is not public); of these, probably 27 countries are NATO members thus allowing a rest of 10-12 non-NATO countries from East Asia.¹⁷ That's why China came with the idea of "a new type of large-scale relation" with The USA, characterized by: „lack of conflict, lack of confrontation, mutual respect and cooperation between the two parties." The USA didn't fully agree, but were in favor of „a new model for the relations between an existing power and a growing power".¹⁸

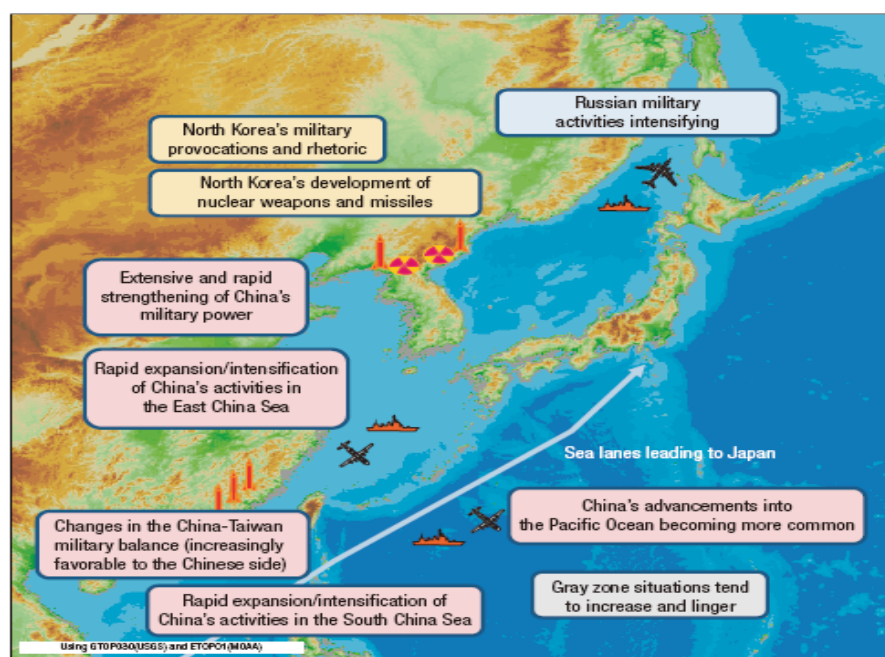
The bilateral treaty for friendship, cooperation and mutual assistance between China and North Korea says that in case one of the parties is to be attacked, the other has to offer military help, though China kept on avoiding repeatedly the specifications for the implementation.

In June 2009, when asked -after the first nuclear test made by Phenian - about the validity of the treaty in case of a war caused by the test, the Chinese Foreign Minister avoided a direct answer, offering the standard statement concerning the nuclear issue in north Korea and in July 2011, at the 50th Treaty anniversary, the foreign Minister was asked about the possibility to extend the treaty. The speaker man only repeated the standard content imposed by the nonproliferation of the Korean Peninsula. "The Alliance relation ... is kept ambiguous in the interest of both parties". China continues to have with The North Korea such relations that would not allow The USA and The South Korea a state of war with the later.

¹⁷ See Jeffrey W. Knopf, ed., *Security assurances and nuclear non-proliferation* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2012).

¹⁸ See Tom Donilon, "The USA and The Asia-Pacific in 2013". Obama said "model for a relation between The USA and China". "Observations written by President Obama and President Xi Jinping ... after their meeting", White House, 8th of June, 2013.

Recent Security Related Issues around Japan



Picture no.3 – Security incidents around Japan¹⁹

In 2002, North Korea and The USA signed a frame - agreement for the non-proliferation of the nuclear weapons. In 2003, China presided "The Group of the Six" - China, America, Russia, Japan, North Korea, where South Korea obtained a promise from The North Korea to give up using nuclear weapons . Yet, in 2006, North Korea had its first nuclear test sanctioned by the Security Council by resolution no. 1718. China was in favor, but only after clearing any military threats against the North part and after being guaranteed Chinese merchandise would not be submitted to controls in between member states.²⁰

In December 2008, The Group of the Six failed with the agreement on checking the measures for the non-proliferation. In April 2009, North Korea tested a wide range missile and announced their exit from The Group of the Six, following a declaration made by the President of the Security Council, condemning the test. In the same year, North Korea had its second nuclear test, sanctioned by the Security Council by Resolution No. 1874.²¹

The international tensions generated by the third test and especially the severe threats addressed by to The USA attracted severe warnings; the president Xi Jinping underlined: "no one should be allowed to bring chaos into a region or the entire world for egocentrically benefits."²² An editorial published in the daily *People*, belonging to The Central Committee of the Communist Party, warned China "not to misinterpret the situation", advice The USA

¹⁹ See *Defence of Japan Digest* 2014, 11.

²⁰ See Crisis Group Asia Report N°56, *North Korea's Nuclear Test: The Fallout*, 13 noiembrie 2006. See "Haggling delays N Korea sanctions vote", *The Telegraph*, 15 octombrie 2006.

²¹ See Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°91, *North Korea's Missile Launch: The Risks of Overreaction*, 31 Mars 2009; and Asia Reports N°168, *North Korea Nuclear and Missile Programs*, 18 June 2009; "DPRK Foreign Ministry Vehemently Refutes UNSC's 'Presidential Statement'", *Korean Central News Agency (KCNA)*, 14 April 2009.

²² "China Hints at Limits to North Korea Actions," *The New York Times*, 7th of April 2013. With a day before, the Foreign minister said to The UN about the issues in China". "China warns it is against "causing problems" in The Korean Peninsula", *Reuters*, 7th of April 2013. Prime-minister Li Keqiang a said to The American State Secretary John Kerry on April the 18th that the Korean Peninsula issue "is not different from lifting a stone and launching it against the toes". "RPDC sets conditions for negotiations on the background of the tensions in The Korean Peninsula ", *Xinhua*, 18th of April 2013.

”not to make things worst”, South Korea ”to keep focused” and Japan ”not to steal from a burning house.”²³

The Communist Republic of Korea out of the Chinese influence would be unbearable to Beijing: Phenian turned to Washington or a united Korea, in a strategically partnership with America. The idea of a united Korea allied with The USA, forces China to continue to prefer the *status quo*, hoping to influence the thinking of and, eventually, Korea giving up its nuclear agenda.

The cooperation between China and The USA depends on Washington's attitude. ”If America sells weapons in Taiwan, and if we have problems in the East and West of The Chinese Sea with The USA, there will no longer be a good cooperation concerning North Korea.”²⁴

In 2013, China and South Korea began ”an era of accelerated development” or ”a new starting point” for their relations²⁵, and their declaration signed during Park's visit to China expresses ”special interests for the regional instability caused by historical issues.”²⁶

PARTICULARITIES OF THE STRATEGICAL BALANCE WITHIN THE ASIA-PACIFIC SECURITY ARCHITECTURE

Validated by India and being a major player for the regional security, Japan can shape the evolution of the security architecture in Asia-Pacific by means of bilateral relations. India's not signing the ”Treaty for Nuclear Non-Proliferation” and ”The Nuclear Tests Prohibiting Treaty”, block the completion of a mutual civilian nuclear pact as well as India's coming back on the nuclear world market.²⁷

In May 1998, Japan sanctioned India for its nuclear tests; China's expansion gathered a major strategically partnership between the two states.²⁸

Both states are interested in securing the maritime routes left, in the energetically security and in the free transit of energy and commerce between the Suez Channel and The Western Pacific. Both the security of maritime routes (vital for Japan) in the Indian Ocean and the cooperation between the Japanese and Indian fleets can guarantee that no foreign powers control the regional maritime routes. Japan is the engine of the East Asian community and supports India's, Australia's and New Zealand's joining to ASEAN while China is for a free zone for trade in Eastern Asia.

In October 2011, India and Vietnam signed an agreement on prospecting oil deposits in The South of The China Sea; China had some issues with the 127 and 128 regions. India and Vietnam focused on regional security and trade (traditionally, India had a good presence in Vietnam, supporting it in getting its independence from France as well as opposing The USA's involvement in the Nam War), the two states signed ”The Mutual Declaration for Multilateral cooperation” (2003) to establish an "Arch of Advantage and Prosperity" in South Asia.

²³ ”On the Korean Peninsula Issue: Four Sentences to Four Countries”, *People's Daily*, 10th of April, 2013.

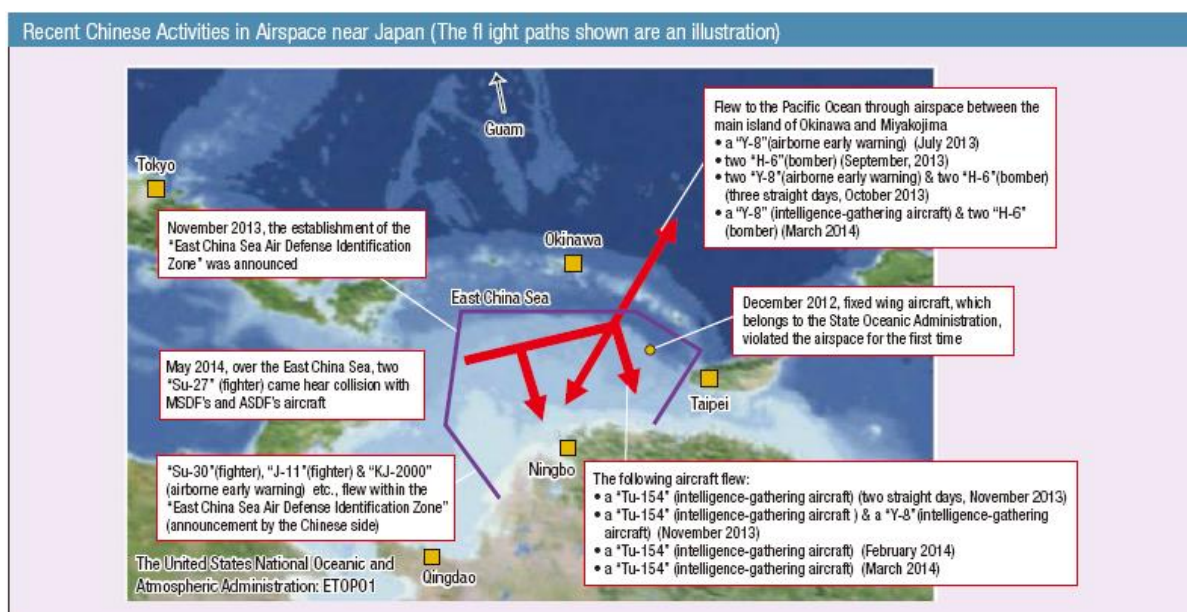
²⁴ See *Interview with The Crises Group*, Beijing, August 2013.

²⁵ ”Park Geun-hye fever sweeps China”, *China.org.cn*, 1 July 2013. Tan Ya, ”Park Geun-hye visits China: China-ROK relationship enters era of high-speed development”, *People's Daily* (online), 28th of June, 2013. Wang Muke, ”South Korean President Park Geun-hye successfully visits China. China-ROK relationship steps onto new starting point”, *Outlook*, 1st of July 2013.

²⁶ See ”Park Geun Hye prioritise the China visit. The close China-ROK relation annoys Japan”, *Global Times*, 28th of June 2013. ”Park Geun-hye's visit to China makes Japan jealous due to the hand shaking and the China-ROK hand shaking annoys Japan”, *Xinhua*, 28th of June 2013. ”China-ROK Joint Statement for the Future”, *The Foreign Affairs Minister*, 27th of June 2013.

²⁷ Harsh V. Pant, ”The Japanese obstacle for nuclear cooperation,” *Wall Street Journal*, 28 October, 2010.

²⁸ ”The Multilateral Partnership for Economical Agreement” ensures rare minerals supplies to Japan. See P. Vaidyanathan Iyer, ”Discuții din cadrul CEPA India și Japonia,” *Indian Express*, 26 Oct., 2010.



Picture no.4 – The Chinese flights over the Japanese territory²⁹

More, New Delhi and Hanoi prospected the waters of South China Sea, counterweighing China's access to The Indian Ocean and The Sea of South China. The cooperation between India and Vietnam on oil prospects was tempered by China's diplomatically offensive. India's strategies aim to build strategically pressure points against China, as in the case of Vietnam cooperation. On the other hand, Vietnam asked for Indian help to modernize its military technique of soviet made (Vietnam allowed India to use its Nha Trang harbour, strategically situated near Cam Ranh gulf).

In November 2011, China communicated India that it should have asked for permission from Beijing to export oil and gases in regions 127 and 128,³⁰ but India ignored China's objections.³¹

In June 2012, China announced an international auction for 9 exploitation regions in the waters rededicated by Vietnam. Region 128, according to Vietnam, is inside the exclusive economic zone from the nautical mile 200, but is also a part of the 9 exploiting zone at the international auction held by the CNOOC.

In July 2012, India decided to continue the commune exploitation in region 128, Vietnam stating that it was a necessary measure for the strategically regional balance. At the ASEAN Regional Forum in Phnien,³² When China's aggressive behavior was obvious in actions and declarations, India signaled that it was ready to become a serious stability factor in the region though it might not have been so well prepared to challenge China on its own

²⁹ See *Defence of Japan Digest* 2014, 11.

³⁰ The exploiting of regions 127 and 128 by the Indian Oil Company ONGC Videsh Ltd (OVL) disregarded China's demand to the countries "outside the region" to stay away from The Sea of South China, considering that OVL's activities might be illegal. See Pranab Dhal Samanta, "China auctions Indian regions," *Indian Express*, 12th of July, 2012.

³¹ Vietnam underlined the possibility to vindicate its sovereign rights on the two regions to be exploited according to The UNO Convention in 1982 on The Sea Law. China objected Indian projects in the region, claiming the territory as their. Because India states its interests are only commercial, China considered these activities were from the sovereignty area. See Rakesh Sharma, "ONGC continues exploring The China Sea," *Wall Street Journal*, 19 July, 2012.

³² See Prak Chun Thal and Stuart Grudgings, "The meeting of South Asia on the issue of the dispute with China over the China Sea," *Reuters*, 13 July, 2012.

terrain. There was a very virulent statement from the Chief of Indian Navy on December 2012, stating that, taken under consideration that the security of the national economical actives in The Sea of South China was at stake, "we [The Indian Navy] must be there and are ready for that." He clearly indicated that The Indian Navy had trained for that eventuality, even if a governmental approval would have been necessary for the case in which The Navy were to protect the Indian economical actives in the Sea of the South China³³.

In December 2012, the India-ASEAN Summit, reuniting the Prime Ministers from Singapore, Cambodia, Malaysia and Vietnam, the Presidents from Myanmar and Indonesia and the Vice-President from The Philippines³⁴ offered the frame for the talks on "The Multilateral Regional Economic Partnership," to which there called countries such as Australia, China, Japan, South Korea and New Zealand. As the Indian Prime-Minister Manmohan Singh said, India and the AESAN states "constitute a community of 1.8 billion people, representing a quarter of the world's population, with a combined IGP of \$ 3.8 billion" and, thus, "it is natural that India should annex the greatest priority in its relation to ASEAN."³⁵

China, as a permanent member of The Security Council and as a nuclear state, opposed to India and Japan becoming new permanent members in The UNO Security Council.

In 2006 at Seoul, South Korea and India signed an Agreement for Multilateral Economical Partnership, valid starting 2010, creating also a frame for security, naval and for nuclear energy cooperation³⁶ as well as for the space³⁷ with sensitive consequences for the regional power balance.³⁸ The two states with major interests in protecting naval commercial routes had commune actions against pirates in The Indian Ocean and Aden Gulf.

In January 2010 at New Delhi, India and South Korea decided to develop a "strategically partnership"³⁹ that allowed both sides a trade of more than \$15 blds in 2012. It was noticeable the trade with IT products, India's software combining with South Korea's hardware production.

The nature and intensity of the relation India-South Korea is strongly influenced on a strategically level by each countries' relations to China, a certain consonance being acceptable in this respect; the tensions in the relations India-China caused a revaluation of the relations between China and South Korea. The international investigation on the Cheonan incident, to determine the nature of its war ship sinking, in March 2010, causing the death of 46 South Korean sailors, asked for by South Korea, ended with China disappointing them. The incident caused probably by a torpedo launched from a North Korean submarine, was

³³ See Vinay Kumar, "We will send troops to protect our interests in the South of the China Sea, declares the head of The Navy," *The Hindu*, 3 Dec, 2012.

³⁴ Prime-Ministers from Singapore, Cambodgia, Malaezia and Vietnam, the Presidents of Myanmar and Indonezia and the Vice-President of The Philippines.

³⁵ See *The opening statement of The Indian Prime-Minister at the joint session from the comemorative summit India-ASEAN*, December the 20th, 2012, <http://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/20981/> (Accessed 10 January 2015).

³⁶ See Harsh V. Pant, *The US-India Nuclear Pact: Policy, Process and Great Power Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

³⁷ India launched the South Korean satellite KITSAT-3 in 1999 and invited Seoul to join the Indian venture on the Moon-Chnadrayaan-2.

³⁸ Earlier in 2005, India and South Korea signed a Memorandum for Understanding (MOU) to cooperate on defence, industry and logistics, followed in 2006 by another one for the cooperation of the coast guards of the two countries.

³⁹ See Amitabh Sinha, "Chosing the Day of the Republic as the visit day by the South Korean president, shows there's a cold message behind the friendly welcome," *Indian Express*, 25 Jan., 2010.

condemned by the declaration of The President of The UN Security Council - moderated by China – but did not hold North Korea responsible.⁴⁰

India and Indonesia were founders of Non-Aligning Movement.

India benefits from the imports of energy and raw materials from Indonesia.⁴¹ India and Indonesia signed a Strategic Partnership Agreement (2005) and in 2006 they signed an Agreement on Defence Cooperation.

Indonesia as a military power in South Asia and India as military equipment producer are the counter-weight of China's hegemony especially in the entrance point from The Indian Ocean to The Bengal Gulf, to the North and to the South, and The Malacca Strait to the East.

In 1992, Malaysia and India signed a "Defence Cooperation Agreement" to train personnel and military equipment trade and to secure the Malacca Strait. China's pretenses on Spratly Islands are a security threat for Malaysia. Indian ethnics from Malaysia asked the Indian Govern to take stand against breaking their rights.⁴²

In 2001, Malaysia adopted the same position as India on the Kashmir issue - that is for the issue to be solved by talks.

Birmania and India develop relations centered on Indian investments in energy, in exploiting gases and oil, in open trade at the frontiers and on accelerating of the building of the pipes for natural gases.⁴³ Birmania cancelled the Myitsone Dam project financed by the Chinese and Thein Sein chooses India for his first visit abroad as presidents of a civilian nominal govern.

⁴⁰ See Choe Sang-Hun, "China avoids being criticised by South Korea," *New York Times*, May, the 30th, 2010.

⁴¹ It is estimated a mutual commerce of more than \$20 blds in 2015. See Veeramalla Anjaiah, "New Indian frontiers in bilateral relations." *The Jakarta Post*, 25 Oct., 2012.

⁴² "Malaezia sets the red carpet for Manmohan Singh," *The Hindu*, October the 27th, 2010.

⁴³ See Sandeep Dikshit, "India, Myanmar agreement to solve border issues," *The Hindu*, 14 Oct., 2011.

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