

The background is a solid red color. A bright yellow crosshair is centered on the page, consisting of a vertical line and a horizontal line that intersect. The lines are of uniform thickness and extend to the edges of the frame.

# **Political Confidence and Security Building in Northeast Asia**

Russian Academy of Sciences  
Far Eastern Branch

Institute of History, Archeology and Ethnography  
of the Peoples of the Far East

**Political Confidence and Security Building  
in Northeast Asia**

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## **Preface**

These papers were presented at a conference entitled “Political confidence and Security Building in Northeast Asia” which was held in Vladivostok over 2-3 July 2009; it was organized by the Far Eastern branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences. The topic arises because of the absence of any meaningful security regionalism in Northeast Asia which has been much discussed in recent years. In the early 1990s there was the hope that an overarching regional body could be created in the Asia Pacific which could manage the security problems of the region, or at least provide the conditions for dialogue and negotiation over them. The hope was that a broad security regionalism in the Asia Pacific would engage China, Japan and the US and would mitigate the effects of their rivalry in the region. The result of the negotiations was the ASEAN Regional Forum [ARF] which first met in 1994. It involved the major players, the US, Japan, China, Russia and eventually the two Koreas, North Korea joined in 2000. Though it was intended to deal with the major security issues of the region the ARF quickly became a “talk shop” in which the issues were avoided rather than discussed. Its supporters claimed that no regional forum could succeed in conditions where the major actors themselves were unwilling to allow these issues to be discussed. China consistently refused to allow issues which touched upon its sovereignty to be discussed by the ARF which meant that the South China Sea and Taiwan were off limits for the forum. Moreover, ASEAN also ensured that Myanmar would not become a major issue for the forum and resisted the efforts of the Western powers to highlight it. The forum, at least, kept China engaged in a dialogue with the region at the cost of avoiding sensitive issues and that has often been regarded as its success. Nonetheless, the ARF could not deal with the security issues of Northeast Asia and the very disturbing problem of the nuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. Existing regional institutions were inadequate for the task of discussing

Northeast Asia and in this sense they were incomplete. Dialogue and negotiations over the Korean Peninsula have been conducted bilaterally amongst the major actors or within a limited multilateral format initially involving four parties in the late 1990s, and from 2003 involving six parties. These efforts were intended to manage the particular problem of North Korea's nuclear program and only later in 2007 was the idea of a permanent regional forum raised. Northeast Asian security regionalism then became a topic of discussion within the region.

The intention of the Vladivostok conference was to identify the difficulties, problems and also the possibilities in constructing security regionalism in Northeast Asia from various country as well as regional viewpoints. One of the first issues to be resolved in any such discussion is membership. While no one doubts Chinese or Japanese credentials in this respect the discussion becomes polarized to some extent when the issue of Russian and even American membership is discussed. There are definitions of Northeast Asian regionalism which are based on shared Sinic culture which includes the use of Chinese characters, Confucianism, and Buddhism. Culturally-based definitions of regionalism, however, fail to take into account political and economic interaction among the major players which can be more important in defining regionalism than shared culture. What is important is the willingness and ability of the major players to engage in diplomatic problem solving and to create patterns of cooperative behaviour that will reduce the likelihood of conflict. The historical record shows that shared culture may be a factor aggravating conflict and creating misunderstanding because the assumption of common understanding may be misplaced. This is particularly the case in relation to China-Japan and Japan-Korean relations where there are outstanding and often inflammatory historical issues which continue to stimulate clashes. For this reason broader definitions of regionalism based on political and economic interaction are required which will encompass the full range of possibilities inherent in common activity. As the US is a key member of the Six Party Talks and has close security and economic ties with the region it would naturally be involved. Russia, also, should be considered as a member of Northeast Asian regionalism because of its role in the Korean peninsula,

its presence in the Six Party Talks, its relationship with China, and also its potential as an energy exporter to the region.

The second issue is what would be on the agenda? Northeast Asian security regionalism would very likely follow the agenda of the Six Party Talks in which case North Korea's nuclear program and the stability of the Korean Peninsula would feature prominently. The Six Party Talks were convened for a very specific purpose as a temporary negotiating device to resolve the problem of the North's nuclear program. Something more durable and comprehensive is required to deal with the future of North Korea and stability on the Korean Peninsula. Liberals of all countries may regard North Korea with some distaste but a chaotic collapse of the regime would threaten the region with instability. Pragmatic diplomacy is necessary to avert the worst possible outcome of the current situation. On the agenda would be measures to stabilize the Peninsula including the economic integration of North Korea into the region, the promotion of economic reforms there and support for its transition towards a more stable and less threatening form of governance. This effort would be linked with changes in the policies of the US and Japan in particular, who can play a major role in promoting stability on the Korean Peninsula. North Korea has twice tested nuclear devices, in 2006 and in 2009, and it would like to be regarded as a nuclear power like India and Pakistan who also breached the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty [NPT]. There is little chance of reversing the situation unless the future economic development of the North, its integration into the international community and its membership of Northeast Asian regionalism is made conditional upon verifiable de-nuclearization. This linkage would only make political and diplomatic sense in a situation where the incentives for cooperation would outweigh the disincentives for non cooperation which would, in any case, simply perpetuate a much lamented status quo. North Korea would not be the only issue on the agenda as there are territorial disputes between regional actors which have at different times hindered the development of relations between them. There is Korea's dispute with Japan over the Dokto/Takeshima islands, China and Japan are in dispute over the East Sea and the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands; there is also Russia's territorial



dispute with Japan over the Northern/Southern Kurile islands which has also acted as an obstacle to the full development of their relations.

Paper presenters at the conference examined particular problems associated with the construction of security regionalism in Northeast Asia. John Garver noted that the simultaneous rise of multiple great powers in East Asia has never been seen before in history. Garver argues that a rising power the size of China has a certain responsibility to avoid misunderstanding of its intentions which could lead to conflict. China's problem today, he says, is similar to that of Germany following unification in 1871. Rising China today should reassure the region of its pacific intentions as did a unified Germany under Bismarck. Beijing began to embrace multilateral institutions, it conducted number of "charm offensives," and searched for areas in which partnership with the US could be realized. Garver concludes, however, that China's efforts have not gone far enough in which case neighbours concerned about China's rise are "slowly and cautiously drawing closer together". In terms of the northeast Asia regional project certain implications follow. Unless China is able to offer the desired reassurance cooperative regionalism may be shaped by concerns about Beijing which would crowd out other issues. In this situation regionalism would be viewed as a means to ensure balance against a rising China or to allow individual countries to pursue their own hedging strategies against China's rise. Tadashi Anno takes up this point in his paper. He notes that two types of multilateral arrangements are relevant for Northeast Asia. The first type includes "truly multilateral" security forums such as the ARF, the Six-Party Talks, the ASEAN plus Three, and the East Asian Summit [EAS]. The second type includes the network of bilateral or "minilateral" cooperative ties that have begun to develop among America's allies in the region which are concerned about China. Anno points to the Trilateral Security Dialogue involving Japan, US, and Australia as an example though the parties are quick to deny that their purpose is the containment of China. Japan he argues should have the benefits of both hedging against China and engaging it. It should participate in bilateral and trilateral cooperative institutions which would ensure its security and it should contribute to multilateralism which would include China to avoid the impression of containing it.

Iwashita examined the Russia Japan territorial dispute and notes that a trend towards the resolution of border disputes in Eurasia has been evident since the early 1990s. He points to the Sino-Russian border settlement in which the “fifty-fifty” principle was applied and argues that if the same were applied to the Japanese territorial dispute with Russia a “win-win” situation may result. Indeed, he stresses that “the “fifty-fifty” formula seems to be the only possible way of overcoming the current deadlock.” What would a “fifty-fifty” solution look like in this case? Iwashita suggests that the islands should be evenly divided between Japan and Russia; three islands, Shikotan, Habomai and Kunashiri would be transferred to Japan while the largest island Etorofu would stay with Russia. Iwashita comments that the idea has support within some circles in Japan which may be something for both sides to think about. Banerjee notes that despite the distance India has an interest in Northeast Asia and that New Delhi’s ties with the region have grown in past decades. He explains that relations between the Indian and Soviet Navies had developed in the past and that Indian Naval personnel spent months in Vladivostok to learn about submarine warfare. Piao Jianyi examines political disputes between China, Japan and South Korea as impediments to regionalism. He argues that the problems between them are a result of a lack of adequate mutual understanding. He proposes the strengthening of mutual exchanges, and the deepening of mutual understanding as the only way to enhance political confidence between China, Japan and South Korea.

Troublesome issues arise in relation to Russia’s role in Northeast Asian regionalism. Larin is somewhat pessimistic and doubts that political confidence between the regional actors is possible in the foreseeable future. He argues that the grievances are too heavy and the strength of inertia is just too great. Larin cannot see Russia emerging as a member of Northeast Asian regionalism because it has an image problem within the region. He says that Russia has to prove its Asian status and has to compensate for its weak economic presence and the absence of any cultural influence in region. Sevastiyanov is more optimistic though he does identify particular problems in Russia’s relations with the region that should be overcome if progress is to be made in the future. He argues that Russia has an important

stake in Eurasian regionalism and refers to the Collective Security Agreement Organization (CSAO), Eurasian Economic Community (EEC) and Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) as a means of strengthening relations in Central Asia. When it comes to North East Asia, however, there is a lapse of interest. He explains that the publication called “Russian National Security Strategy till 2020,” which was approved by the President on 12 May 2009, gave much emphasis to the Euro-Atlantic and Central Asian regions. But it did not mention the Asia-Pacific region, though there was a reference to the Korean Peninsula. He concludes that either Moscow regards the Asia-Pacific region as unimportant, or it has not yet decided on a suitable policy towards it. He tilts towards the latter view.

Russia indeed has a problem with the region in the way both Larin and Sevastiyarov have argued. It is ironic that the Soviet Union had a greater presence in the Asia Pacific during the late Gorbachev period than Russia has today. After Gorbachev gave his Vladivostok speech in 1986 there was much discussion the region about how to involve the Soviet Union in the resolution of the key security issues of the region. Today, however, the discussions about regionalism and regional cooperation usually do not involve Russia which despite Moscow’s best efforts has been effectively marginalized in the region. One reason is that Russia has sloughed off the commanding military presence that ensured that the Soviet Union was included in great power negotiations. The era of utilizing military power for diplomatic purposes in this way has passed and Russia has to find other ways of extending ties with the region to be included in regional projects. Another reason is that economics has driven East Asian regionalism and Russia’s economic presence in the region has been weak, manufacturing has declined in Russia and the kind of industrial ties that have developed between East Asian economies have not found a fertile ground in Russia. Russia may take advantage of its position as an energy supplier to be included in regionalism but over the long term modernization of its economy and private sector reforms would be required to stimulate closer integration with Northeast Asia.

# **BUILDING CONFIDENCE AND TRUST IN NORTHEAST ASIA: RETROSPECT, PROSPECT, AND JAPAN'S POLICIES**

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This paper discusses the prospects for confidence-building in Northeast Asia, and Japan's role in this effort. After a brief discussion of the concept of "confidence," "trust," and "confidence-building," this paper surveys the history of confidence-building efforts in Northeast Asia, and identifies the conditions necessary for successful confidence-building in the future. This is followed by a discussion of what Japan can do to help in this effort.

## **Trust, Confidence, and Confidence-Building: Some Conceptual Distinctions**

In general terms, confidence and trust may be defined as a belief or a mental state that allows people to act boldly despite uncertainty regarding the consequences of the action.<sup>1</sup> While risk or uncertainty is unavoidable in life, we can disregard such factors to the extent that we have confidence or trust – in ourselves, in other people, and in the things that we rely on.

In the context of international relations, confidence refers to the belief that states (and those in a position to influence their policies) have regarding other states. At a minimum, confidence of state A in state B requires A's belief that B is not likely to use force (or threaten to use force) against A, at least in the immediate future. This is confidence in the minimal sense. If confidence is understood in this sense, confidence-building consists in little more than mutual reporting of troop maneuvers and movements, and invi-

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<sup>1</sup> Many languages (including Japanese and Russian) do not make a clear distinction between trust and confidence. Sociologists use the term "trust" to refer to beliefs in other actors based on the latter's moral qualities. By contrast, "confidence" refers to more "outward" belief that the other actor(s) would not act against one's expectations. I follow this usage in this paper.

tation of observers for verification of troop movements.<sup>2</sup> But this does not amount to much. Confidence in the “thicker” sense requires the belief that the target state is unlikely to resort to force (or the threat of the use of force) in the longer term. If confidence is understood in this broader sense, confidence-building must include measures which concern the likelihood of peace and stability in the longer term: greater transparency regarding armaments, budget, and military doctrines, regular exchange of defense officials and personnel to enhance mutual understanding, joint training exercises, etc.<sup>3</sup> Trust may be defined as a deeper and more generalized (and hence less context-dependent) belief that the target state is peaceful and law-abiding in nature, and that the target state is unlikely to take advantage of cooperative relations for the purpose of gaining unilateral advantage for itself. While “confidence” involves beliefs in the behavior of other states, “trust” is a belief in some structurally-engrained characteristics of other states.

Confidence and trust allow states to cooperate with other states, and thus to derive economic and other benefits. Without confidence and trust, international relations tend to be dominated by rivalry. Even if every single state has only defensive intentions, rivalry and war may result from a spiral of mistrust, causing “defensive” policies of one state to be interpreted by others as “offensive” moves. Thomas Hobbes in *Leviathan* gives a powerful account of individuals living in a world without confidence and trust. To him, life under such conditions is “poor, solitary, nasty, brutish, and short.”<sup>4</sup> Much the same may be said of the life of nations in a world without confidence or trust. That is why scholars as well as practitioners are interested in the theme of confidence-building.

Nevertheless, it should be understood that, for most states, international cooperation is a secondary priority. While highly desirable, international cooperation – and interstate confidence that facilitates coop-

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<sup>2</sup> This is how “confidence-building” was understood when CSCE negotiations introduced the concept into diplomatic parlance in the 1970’s.

<sup>3</sup> See the *Final Document to the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly* of June 30, 1978, and the Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Gali’s 1992 report, *An Agenda for Peace*. It was confidence-building in this broader sense that was introduced to Northeast Asia after the Cold War through the instrument of the ASEAN Regional Forum.

<sup>4</sup> Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (1651), Chapter 13.

eration – is not an indispensable good. Not confidence nor cooperation, but security is the number one priority for any political unit. If states have the luxury of choice, most states would prefer to trust other states, to cooperate with them, and to prosper together. Yet states are sometimes forced to choose between their own security and “maintaining an atmosphere of international trust.”<sup>5</sup> If pushed, most states choose security over the vague promise of cooperation.

This means that it is unrealistic to expect states to pursue cooperation or confidence-building at the expense of their own security. States that already enjoy a fair measure of security are not likely to abandon comfortable security arrangements for the vague promise of building international confidence and trust. Such states should be encouraged to build confidence upon the already existing foundation of security arrangements – as long as those arrangements do not threaten the legitimate security interests of other states. Similarly, insecure states are not likely to pursue a policy of cooperation unless they are persuaded that cooperation is the best way to ensure their own security. Thus, states acting like a hedgehog out of their own sense of insecurity should be given a combination of pressure and incentives, so that they realize that cooperation is better than isolation.

What is required for states to have confidence and/or trust in other states? I would argue that there are four basic conditions. First, state A is likely to have confidence/trust in state B if state B's interests/values coincide with those of state A. While sharing interests and values may not actually guarantee cooperation (due to collective action problems), there is little doubt that shared goals and values make it easier for state A to have confidence/trust in B, because A knows that B is not working against A's basic interests. On the other hand, A is not likely to trust B if A believes that cooperation will give B a unilateral advantage that B can easily exploit to A's disadvantage. Second, even if B's interests do not coincide with A's, A is

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<sup>5</sup> For instance, state A may be unsure about the intentions behind the military buildup of a neighboring state B. B reassures A, saying it is only for defensive purposes, and tries to dissuade A from arming itself. If A builds up its own armaments, A will be destroying the “atmosphere of confidence” that existed between the two states. But if A does nothing, A's security may be threatened by B's superior force. In such a case, state A is forced to choose between security and “confidence-building.”

likely to have confidence/trust in state B if B is dependent on A for achieving its own interests. In other words, a pet dog is unlikely to bite the owner who feeds him, even when the owner is dragging him where he doesn't want to go. Third, even with shared interests or mutual dependence, states may find it difficult to have confidence/trust in other states unless they can communicate with them. Thus, more or less smooth communication with other states is another important condition for having confidence/trust. Fourth, it may be argued that states are more likely to have confidence/trust in other states if their basic security is guaranteed. Trusting in and counting upon other states can be risky. Secure states can afford to trust others, because they are secure even when confidence/trust turns out to be misplaced. By contrast, insecure states must think hard about trusting in other states. These are the basic conditions for the development of confidence / trust in international relations.

It is possible to add to these basic conditions. Liberal theorists of international relations would argue that confidence and trust between states is enhanced by the following: 1) economic interdependence among states, which expands shared interests and mutual dependence among states; 2) the enmeshment of states in international institutions, which facilitates communication and makes it more difficult for states to gain unilateral advantages; and 3) sharing a common, liberal-democratic political system, which decreases the likelihood of war and increases the scope for shared interests and values. Constructivists would add that confidence and trust are enhanced by 4) a definition of national identity that does not build upon negative images of other states; and by 5) a historically formed sense of identity that binds the states involved in a larger community. The four basic conditions for confidence and trust mentioned in the preceding paragraph are more likely to be fulfilled if the five conditions mentioned in this paragraph are present. They provide a supportive environment for the development of confidence and trust in international relations.

These conditions, however, may not always be present. States typically do not agree on the desirable state of affairs. Even if they agree on the basics, they often stand to gain unilateral advantages at the expense of other states on specific issues. Game theorists argue that expectations of repeated future

encounters tend to make states more cooperative in their behavior, since in the long run, pursuit of unilateral advantages incites negative reactions from other actors, thus penalizing selfish actors.<sup>6</sup> Yet, while some aspects of international relations may resemble the condition of iterated games, others do not. If encounters are infrequent and stakes are high, incentives are strong for states to attempt to gain maximum advantage from each encounter.<sup>7</sup> Interdependence, institutions, and democracy may mitigate states' pursuit of unilateral advantages. But confidence and trust among states are not easily attained under difficult circumstances where states' basic interests collide.

### **Confidence-Building in Northeast Asia: Retrospect and Prospect**

As noted by many students, Northeast Asia has posed difficult challenges for those who wish to see increased trust and confidence among states. Scholars have often pointed to the political diversity among regional states, increasing yet uneven degree of economic interdependence, and the relatively weak development of regional institutions.<sup>8</sup> During the Cold War era, tense relations among the great powers further complicated the effort to build confidence and trust. However, confidence-building measures were invented in Europe in the 1970's, where all of these obstacles were present. Europe was then politically diverse, economically divided, and there were no international institutions encompassing the whole of Europe, including the East and the West. Cold-War tensions ran at least as high in Europe as they did in Asia. So why did confidence-building schemes emerge and succeed in Europe but not in Asia?

The most plausible explanation on this point focuses on the structure of international rivalry. In Europe, the Eastern bloc was confronting the West in a dyad, or one-to-one relationship. For this reason, if the West wanted to improve its security environment, it had no choice but to improve East-West relations. In other words, the bipolar nature of the confrontation in Europe

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<sup>6</sup> Robert Axelrod, *The Evolution of Cooperation* (New York: Basic Books, 1984)

<sup>7</sup> Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics* (Cambridge UP, 1981)

<sup>8</sup> Aaron L. Friedberg, "Ripe for Rivalry: Prospects for Peace in Multipolar Asia," *International Security*, Vol. 18, No. 3. (Winter, 1993-1994). - P. 5-33.



increased the mutual dependence between the East and the West with regard to security issues. By contrast, international relations in Northeast Asia was multipolar, as it became clear after the onset of the Sino-Soviet rivalry. In Northeast Asia, if the US and its allies wanted to improve their security environment, one option was to talk to the USSR. But another, equally plausible option was to improve ties with the PRC, and that was the policy actually pursued by some. This improvement in Sino-American ties, however, had a negative impact on Sino-Soviet relations. While the Sino-American rapprochement prodded the USSR to pursue *détente* in Europe, it left the US and its regional allies with diminished incentive to seek common understanding with the USSR. In short, the availability of an alternative path to security (through balance of power politics) made the US and its allies less dependent on the USSR for security, and thus diminished their incentives to try to build confidence or trust by engaging in dialogue with the USSR.

Another reason why Europe was more successful in confidence building was that, by the mid-1970's, an agreement emerged among European states about state borders, and about the shape of the international order that was to be upheld. In other words, there emerged a set of shared interests in maintaining the status quo. This agreement, in turn, was facilitated by the geopolitical condition of Europe at the time. On the European front, the West faced the East along a lengthy land border, and the Warsaw Pact forces maintained a fairly clear numerical superiority in conventional forces over the NATO forces along this border. Partly because of this strategic condition, the West (West Germany in particular) was willing to accept a rather unfavorable territorial arrangement formed in the wake of WWII, in exchange for a better guarantee for peace. Besides, the relationship between East and West Germany improved greatly by the early-1970's, with the two states signing the Basic Treaty in 1972. Thus, on the European front, there was a fairly clear agreement on what kind of international order was to be maintained.

By contrast, in Northeast Asia, there was much greater uncertainty and disagreement about the desirable shape of the international order. In Northeast Asia, the "East" and the "West" faced each other mostly along a maritime boundary (except for the Korean peninsula), and the balance of

naval power was generally in favor of the US and its allies.<sup>9</sup> Since Japan did not face the immediate danger of invasion by superior Soviet forces, Japan did not feel compelled to accept the unfavorable territorial status quo in exchange for a peace guarantee.<sup>10</sup> Unlike East and West Germany, North and South Korea (as well as PRC and Taiwan), did not recognize each other as a legitimate state. Territorial issues also plagued the relationship between Japan and South Korea. For all these reasons, it was more difficult for Northeast Asian states to reach even a rough agreement on the shape of the international order to be upheld.

Some of the obstacles for confidence-building in Northeast Asia mentioned above disappeared after the Cold War. There was reduced tension among the great powers, which allowed most states in the region to feel more secure. South Korea has succeeded in developing friendly ties with both China and Russia. More cooperative ties developed between China and Russia, and between Russia and Japan. Perhaps most significant is the integration of China and later Russia into the global economy. Since the beginning of the policy of “reform and opening up” in 1978, China has made a remarkable transition from a semi-autarkic backwater to a central player in the world market. China’s economy has become interdependent with those of US, Japan, and other partners around the globe. While Russia has had a much rougher ride in its attempt to join the capitalist world economy, and while the extent of integration into the world economy is quite uneven, Russia as a whole became far more deeply integrated into the global networks of trade and finance. These changes no doubt have served as incentives for China, Russia, US, Japan, and South Korea to stay on amicable terms.

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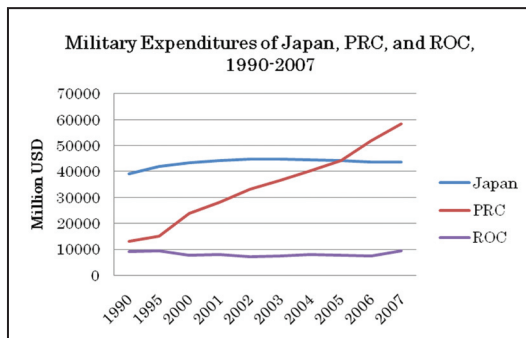
<sup>9</sup> On the Korean peninsula, where the strategic situation was not dissimilar to Europe, an attempt was made to build confidence through the 1972 North-South Joint Communiqué, which stated that “The two sides agreed upon refraining from slandering and calumniating the other side and from committing armed provocations, big or small, and upon taking active measures for preventing incidents of unexpected military conflicts, in order to ease the tension between the north and the south and create an atmosphere of trust.” The reduction of tension came to a naught, however, with the Axe Murder Incident of 1976.

<sup>10</sup> If Hokkaido was contiguous with the Eurasian continent, and if the USSR was poised to strike Hokkaido with superior land army, Japan may have had stronger incentive to recognize the Soviet seizure of the Northern Territories in return for some peace guarantee.

Yet, serious obstacles remain in the path of confidence-building in Northeast Asia. For one thing, there has been no change in the basically multipolar character of international relations in the region. This keeps open the option of pursuing balance-of-power politics instead of confidence-building measures. For instance, when Japan made a diplomatic overture to Russia in 1997, by de-coupling economic cooperation from territorial demands, observers pointed to the rise of China as the motive behind Japan's initiative.<sup>11</sup> More recently, the rise of India has further underscored the multipolar character of this region. Japan's recent attempt to strengthen its security relationships with Australia and India has once again suggested the availability of balance-of-power politics as an alternative to multilateral confidence-building in this region.<sup>12</sup>

The rise of China, particularly the very rapid increase in its military spending, constitutes another major challenge to development of confidence and trust, since a rapid shift in the balance of power tends to arouse long-term security worries on the part of other states. It also arouses the suspicion that the rising state may attempt to use cooperative arrangements for the purpose of gaining unilateral advantages. True, the PRC has repeatedly expressed its commitment to "peaceful rise" of the country. It is also true that part of the increase in China's military spending is explained by

**Figure 1**



<sup>11</sup> See, for instance, Renhard Drifte, *Japan's Security Relations with China since 1989: From Balancing to Bandwagoning* Routledge, London, 2003.

<sup>12</sup> On the development of Japan-Australia security ties, see William T. Tow, et al., eds., *Asia-Pacific Security: US, Australia, and Japan and the New Security Triangle*, Routledge, London, 2007; Brad Williams and Andrew Newman, eds., *Japan, Australia and Asia-Pacific Security*, Routledge, London, 2006.

China's long borders, and its entanglement in the Taiwan issue. It should also be evident that, on a global scale, China's military spending is no match for that of the US. Yet, on a regional scale, the increase in China's defense budget has been quite significant (as indicated in Figure 1). Indeed, China appears to be acquiring the capacity to pose a serious challenge to US naval hegemony in the Western Pacific.<sup>13</sup>

If China chooses to use its newfound wealth and power to openly challenge the existing order (especially with regard to US naval power in the Western Pacific), then all bets are off regarding regional confidence-building. International relations in the region would then be characterized by intense rivalry between China on the one hand, and US and its allies on the other. Thus, an essential condition for confidence-building in Northeast Asia is self-restraint on the part of China. China needs its own Bismarck to skillfully manage its newfound power, and to reassure other states in the region so as to prevent the emergence of a counter-balancing coalition.<sup>14</sup> Yet, this "Bismarckian" option may be difficult. Bismarck's German Empire was able to behave in an assured, restrained manner precisely because it had won the Franco-Prussian War. By contrast, today's China has just emerged from its "century of humiliation." Many Chinese still appear to be insecure about China's international status, and to be all too eager to see their country throw its weight around in the region. The Chinese leadership may face much difficulty if they wish to pursue a policy of deliberate self-restraint.<sup>15</sup>

In short, the situation in Northeast Asia is not likely to generate the kind of confidence-building schemes that characterized Eastern and Western Europe in the 1970's, or the kind of hegemonic but stable international

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<sup>13</sup> In May 2009, a report circulated regarding a proposal by a high-ranking Chinese naval officer to US Pacific Command (PACOM) chief Admiral Timothy J Keating on the "division of the Pacific and the Indian Ocean", *Indian Express*, May 15, 2009. While this may be shrugged off as fanciful, many concur with the observation in a 2008 Pentagon report that China's path of military buildup will create "a force capable of prosecuting a range of military operations in Asia – well beyond Taiwan." US Department of Defense, Annual Report to Congress, *Military Power of the People's Republic of China 2008*, p. 30.

<sup>14</sup> Avery Goldstein, "An Emerging China's Emerging Grand Strategy: A Neo-Bismarckian Turn?" in G. John Ikenberry and Michael Mastanduno, eds., *International Relations Theory and the Asia-Pacific*. Columbia UP, 2003. -P. 57-106. See also the article by John Garver in this volume.

<sup>15</sup> Peter Hayes Gries, *China's New Nationalism: Pride, Politics, and Diplomacy*, - University of California Press, 2004.

order that existed in continental Europe in Bismarck's time. Confidence-building and sustained cooperation in the region is most likely to succeed when the region is characterized by a stable if loose bipolar structure. If China behaves with restraint, and if US and its allies carefully avoid giving China the impression of containment, then it may become possible to develop regional multilateral forums and institutions. Northeast Asia is a region without clear-cut boundaries. Thus, there can be no single dominant framework of integration, equivalent to the EU or NATO in Europe. A more promising approach perhaps is to build a network of intersecting institutions, including the ARF, ASEAN plus 3, the East Asian Summit, the SCO, Six- or Five-Party Talks. It will not be easy to build a stable framework for regional cooperation, because the presence of independent great powers (such as Russia and India) in the region and its vicinity offer the alternative path of balance of power politics. Yet, if the combination of alliances and regional security arrangements succeeds in bringing about long-term peace in the region, it may become possible for the region to gradually reduce the levels of tension and mistrust, and eventually to transform itself into a security community, perhaps in thirty to fifty years.

This, however, is a highly optimistic scenario. Moreover, in the shorter term, the region is faced with more immediate security problems over the Korean peninsula and Taiwan. While North Korea's behavior has aroused grave concern among regional neighbors and their allies, the root cause of this crisis must be sought in the sense of isolation and crisis that the North Korean leadership has experienced since the end of the Cold War. Obviously, confidence-building with North Korea is out of the question unless the latter changes its behavior. The bellicosity of North Korean pronouncements, its erratic behavior and tactics of brinkmanship, and the closed nature of its political system effectively preclude the possibility of other states in the region having confidence in North Korea. Yet it is unrealistic to expect North Korea to renounce its nuclear and missiles programs unless the North Korean regime has the prospect of survival in the foreseeable future. Building confidence in the Korean Peninsula requires a concerted effort on the part of other

members of the Six-Party Talks to combine firm pressure and strong incentives for cooperative behavior.

Although China insists that the status of Taiwan is China's domestic issue, no discussion of security or confidence-building in Northeast Asia can skirt this issue. True, the relationship between Beijing and Taipei has improved since the Presidential elections of 2008. In January 2009, the government in Beijing has called for a series of confidence-building measures. However, Beijing has yet to renounce the military option in resolving the Taiwan issue. From the Taiwanese viewpoint, it would be difficult to have confidence in Beijing unless the latter renounces the use of force once and for all. Moreover, the future of Taiwan is of major concern for both the US and Japan. The US has not renounced the possibility of coming to Taiwan's help should the PRC resort to military solutions. Japan has "understood and respected" Beijing's position with regard to the status of Taiwan, and the US has "acknowledged" Beijing's position. But it is no secret that both the US and Japan prefer the status quo over unification, including a peaceful one. If Taiwan goes the way of Hong Kong, Chinese naval and air power in the East China Sea, the South China Sea, and in the Western Pacific more generally will be strengthened immeasurably. That, in turn, would place China in a better position to challenge US naval hegemony in the Western Pacific.<sup>16</sup> Thus, if China wishes to unify Taiwan, China needs to reassure the US and Japan regarding its naval strategy. Without such an effort, even a peaceful unification with Taiwan is likely to arouse negative reactions from both the US and Japan.

### **Japan's Policies for Regional Confidence Building**

What has Japan done to contribute to regional confidence-building? Japan since the end of WWII has sought to build trust and confidence in her relations with her neighbors in Northeast Asia in at least five ways: through unilateral self-restraint in its security policy, its economic engagement policy, its attempts to contain the effect of "history issues," and the building of multilateral institutions designed to promote con-

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<sup>16</sup> Okazaki Hisahiko, *Taiwan mondai wa nihon mondai*, Kairyusha, Tokyo 2008, pp. 278-294.

fidence-building, and finally, bilateral efforts in confidence-building. First, in the post-war era, Japan sought to gain the trust of its Northeast Asian neighbors by exercising self-restraint in its security policy, and by “tying itself down” through the US-Japan security alliance.<sup>17</sup> Japan’s record of colonial rule over Korea and Taiwan, and of aggression and atrocities during WWII bequeathed a legacy of mistrust between Japan and many of her neighbors. Japan had to gain the trust of its Northeast Asian neighbors. In Article 9 of her Postwar Constitution, Japan renounced 1) war and the threat of use of force as a means of resolving international disputes; 2) land, sea, and air forces as well as other war potential; and 3) the right of belligerency.<sup>18</sup> While Article 9 came to be interpreted less stringently than it was originally meant to be, and while Japan developed the capacity for “self-defense,” Japan made a firm commitment to avoid “any armament which could be an offensive threat or serve other than to promote peace and security in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter.” This idea became a keynote of subsequent Japanese security policy.<sup>19</sup> When Japan’s economic growth pushed it to the status of one of the major military spenders in the world in the 1980’s and early-1990’s, Japan sought to reassure other states in the region by re-emphasizing its commitment to self-imposed restraints in its defense doctrine and in its weapons systems. Additionally, Japan has practiced significant self-restraint in her policy by not acquiring nuclear weapons, aircraft carriers, bombers or long-range missiles.<sup>20</sup>

Second, Japan has used an economic engagement policy in order to promote a more stable and peaceful international environment. In particular, Japan’s provision of ODA to China since 1979 was designed

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<sup>17</sup> Daniel Deudney and G. John Ikenberry offer a very persuasive account of the complex character of America’s postwar alliances in Daniel Deudney and G. John Ikenberry, “Realism, Structural Liberalism and the Western Order,” in Ethan B. Kapstein and Michael Mastanduno (eds.), *Unipolar Politics: Realism and State Structure After the Cold War*, New York, Columbia UP, 1999, pp. 103-137.

<sup>18</sup> The preamble of the Constitution stated that the Japanese people have “determined to preserve [their] security and existence, trusting in the justice and faith of the peace-loving peoples of the world.” The underlying assumption here was that, since Japan had been the troublemaker in the Asia Pacific in the 1930’s and 1940’s, international relations in the region would become more peaceful if only Japan changed its ways.

to ensure the success of reformist policy in China. The underlying logic was that, through economic assistance, Japan could encourage China to pursue a policy of opening and international cooperation, which would contribute to building trust between Japan and China.<sup>21</sup> Given the outbursts of anti-Japanese sentiments in China in the recent past (and the corresponding rise in anti-China sentiments in Japan), one must be humble about the extent to which Japan's engagement policy has contributed to building trust between the two countries. However, Japanese ODA has made tangible contribution to the economic development of China, and to China's integration in the world economy. To the extent that greater economic interdependence raises the cost of resort to force, Japan's engagement policy has contributed to more peaceful relations in the region.

Third, while Japan has often been criticized for not squarely facing the "history issues," Japan has learned in its own way from the negative experiences of WWII. True, Japan's historical memory of WWII tended to focus more on the folly of wars than on the sufferings caused by Japan on her neighbors. Yet, the "lesson" of the war was taken quite seriously in Japan, and pacifism dominated Japan's public discourse on foreign and security policy for decades. Even as recently as 2005, when many foreign and domestic commentators were issuing dire warnings about the rise of "neo-nationalism" in Japan, Japan was the most war-averse country among the 24 major countries surveyed.<sup>22</sup> Clearly, postwar Japanese nationalism is more tempered than more "youthful" and vibrant

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<sup>19</sup> The Cabinet Decision of Jan. 24, 1987 established limits on Japan's (then rapidly increasing) defense budget, stating that Japan "shall not become a military power that threatens other states." This expression has since been used in every annual edition of the *Defense of Japan*.

<sup>20</sup> Given the presence on Japanese territory of US forces (with offensive capabilities), Japan's self-restraint may have sounded less than totally credible. Nonetheless, the popularity of the argument that the US-Japan Alliance is a "cap in the bottle of Japanese militarism" demonstrates that the Alliance was regarded as a stabilizing influence even by Japan's Cold War adversaries.

<sup>21</sup> Prime Minister Ohira Masayoshi explained this to a Chinese audience as follows: "The reason why countries of the world are celebrating your country's modernization policy is that this policy is built around the core of international cooperation. This gives us the confidence that a more prosperous China would contribute to the creation of a better world. While Japan has its own reasons to help China's modernization, our policy is also underpinned by the expectation of the international community [that a more prosperous China would mean a better world]."



nationalisms of China and South Korea. Furthermore, in response to criticisms, the Japanese government since the 1980's has issued a number of official apologies.<sup>23</sup> It has reaffirmed its intention never to fight aggressive wars, initiated dialogues on history with South Korea and China, and made "responding to the concerns of neighboring countries in Asia" one of the criteria for approval of history textbooks. More recently, the Japanese government (in cooperation with the Korean and Chinese governments) has established committees of scholars to study the history of bilateral relations. Whether successful or not, these policies were clearly undertaken to address the issue of mistrust of Japan in the region.

Fourth, since the end of the Cold War, Japan has played a leading role in attempting to develop institutions designed to enhance confidence and trust among states in the region. The Japanese government was not receptive to the idea of confidence-building in Northeast Asia during the Cold War.<sup>24</sup> In the late-1980's, Japan was still hesitant to apply the notion of "confidence-building" to Northeast Asia, since any multilateral agreement was regarded as potentially diluting the bilateral US-Japan security ties. By late-1991, however, Japan changed its position, with Foreign Minister Taro Nakayama proposing a multilateral forum for security dialogue in the Asia Pacific.<sup>25</sup> Since then, Japan has played a

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<sup>22</sup> According to World Values Survey 2005, only 15.1% of Japanese adults surveyed answered "yes" to the question, "are you willing to fight for your country in case of war?" The corresponding figures for PRC, ROK, Russian Federation was 75.7%, 71.7%, 60.6%, respectively. In the 1995 World Values Survey, 73.1% of adults in Taiwan gave a positive answer to the same question.

<sup>23</sup> Jane Yamazaki, *Japanese Apologies for WWII*, Routledge, London 2006.

<sup>24</sup> For instance, when Leonid Brezhnev proposed to extend the concept of confidence-building to the Far East in 1981, he met cold indifference from Japan. Japanese officials explained that Japan is not in a position to accept such a proposal, given that the USSR denied the existence of a territorial dispute, and that stationed troops on territories claimed by Japan. See Foreign Minister Ito Masayoshi's remark at the March 16, 1981 meeting of the March 16, 1981 meeting of the Budgetary Committee of the House of Councilors of the Japanese Diet. <http://kokkai.ndl.go.jp/cgi-bin/KENSAKU/>

<sup>25</sup> Statement by Foreign Minister Taro Nakayama at the ASEAN Post-Ministerial Conference, July 22, 1991, accessible at <http://www.ioc.u-tokyo.ac.jp/~worldjpn/>. In his statement, Nakayama avoided the term "confidence-building" because he understood the term in the original, European sense, and thus felt that the term was not applicable to relations among "friendly states." This suggests that Japan was slow to embrace the concept of confidence-building in the Northeast Asian context partly because Japan understood the term in the narrow sense. Once the concept was redefined in a broader, "thicker" sense, the term became more applicable to conditions of Northeast Asia.

leading role in the development of the ARF, partly because it could provide Japan with a space where Japan could play a more proactive role in regional security without arousing the specter of Japanese militarism.<sup>26</sup> The ARF lost much of its initial momentum due to the combined effects of the 1997-98 Asian Financial Crisis, the US-led “war on terror” since 2001, and the emergence of alternative regional forums--such as the Six-Party Talks and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. Yet, the ARF has achieved some tangible results in encouraging transparency in defense policy, and institutionalizing regular dialogue among foreign and security policy officials of participating states. Furthermore, if former US Assistant Secretary of State James Kelly is to be believed, the idea of Six-Party talks was initially suggested by Japan, and accepted by China at the behest of the US.<sup>27</sup> Thus, Japan has played a significant role in the creation and the development of key existing forums in the region designed to promote confidence-building.

Finally, since the end of the Cold War, Japan has intensified its confidence-building efforts in the context of bilateral relations. Tables 1 and 2 summarize the bilateral exchanges of security officials and security forces between Japan and foreign states (except for the US, with which such exchanges have been quite regular). These tables show that, though there are considerable annual fluctuations and marked unevenness with respect to partner countries,<sup>28</sup> Japan has generally intensified its bilateral exchange of security officials and forces over the past 15 years or so.

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<sup>26</sup> Kuniko P. Ashizawa, “Japan, the United States, and Multilateral Institution-Building in the Asia-Pacific,” in Ellis S. Krauss, and T.J. Pempel, eds., *Beyond Bilateralism: US-Japan Relations in the New Asia-Pacific*, Stanford UP, 2004, p. 251.

<sup>27</sup> *Asahi Shimbun*, June 18, 2005.

<sup>28</sup> Exchanges with the ROK and Russia have developed more smoothly than exchanges with the PRC. No force-level exchanges took place between Japan and China until a PLA Navy destroyer made a port call on Tokyo in November 2007. As for DPRK, there have been no exchanges of security officials or other confidence-building efforts. While the Japanese Foreign Minister spoke of the need for confidence-building in Japan-DPRK relations in 1999-2001, such a gesture has been absent from Japan's policy pronouncements in recent years. See Prime Minister Obuchi Keizo's speech at Koryo

University on March 20, 1999, and Foreign Minister Kono Yohei's speech on January 23, 2001, accessible at <http://www.ioc.u-tokyo.ac.jp/~worldjpn/>

**Table 1.** The Frequency of Japan's Bilateral Exchanges between Security Officials and Their Composition by Rank Level and by Partner State, 1993-2006

Year		93	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06
Incidence of Exchange	Ministerial	3	8	6	5	10	7	4	11	7	13	12	7	16	8
	Working level	3	7	7	7	15	12	12	16	13	14	16	13	19	15
	Total	6	15	13	12	25	19	16	16	20	27	28	20	35	23
ROK	Ministerial	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	0
	Working level	0	1	1	1	0	2	2	2	1	2	3	1	1	1
PRC	Ministerial	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
	Working level	1	0	1	2	3	2	2	2	0	1	0	3	1	2
RUSSIA	Ministerial	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	1
	Working level	0	1	1	2	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1
Other States		5	12	9	5	19	13	10	10	19	22	20	15	31	18
Total		6	15	13	12	25	19	16	16	20	27	28	20	35	23

Source: *Defense of Japan*, 2008 and 2005 editions.

The figures indicate the instances of exchange of security officials between Japan and her neighbors.

**Table 2.** Force Level Visits and Joint Exercises Between Japan and Her Neighbors, 1993-2007

Year		94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07
ROK	Joint exercises	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0
	Other exchanges	1	0	2	0	2	0	0	2	1	0	1	1	0	2
PRC	Joint exercises	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	X	0	0	X	0	0
	Other exchanges	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
RUSSIA	Joint exercises	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1
	Other exchanges	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	2

Source: *Defense of Japan*, 2008 and 2005 editions. The figures indicate the instances of force-level visits between Japan and her neighbors. "X" indicates an instance where planned visit or exercise had to be cancelled.

Japan's attempts to win the trust of her neighbors after WWII, to draw China and Russia into the world economy, and to help build regional multilateral institutions have made substantial contributions to the development of a more peaceful and stable international environment in Northeast Asia. But in today's conditions, these policies are becoming less effective than they were earlier. First, Japan's policy of unilateral self-restraint in security policy was predicated on a rather "autistic" assumption that, since Japan had been the major troublemaker in East Asia until WWII, it could remove the major obstacles to interstate trust by engaging in sincere self-reflection and by renouncing aggressive foreign policies. While Japan's postwar transformation certainly made the region more peaceful, Japan has long ceased to be the main troublemaker in regional security. Japan can no longer stick to the simplistic idea that, if it behaves well, other states will follow suit.

Second, while Japan has achieved considerable success in drawing China (and Russia to a lesser extent) into the world capitalist economy, it has proved much more difficult to accommodate China and Russia into the international political order led by the US. Unlike Germany and Japan after WWII, China and Russia have not been defeated in war, and neither is ready to adapt to fit into the modest spaces prepared for them in a US-led international order. There is a clear limit to any “engagement policy” directed toward great powers such as China or Russia. Third, while confidence-building efforts on the multilateral and bilateral levels are useful, such efforts simply help improve communication among states. They do not address fundamental problems such as conflicting interests, and the pursuit of unilateral advantages, or basic security worries.

### **Japan's Role in Regional Confidence-Building**

What, then, can Japan do? The answer very much depends on the future of Sino-US relations. If Sino-US relations deteriorate to the point of open confrontation over Taiwan for control of the Western Pacific, or some other issues, then confidence-building in the region would be well-nigh impossible. Japan in that case is likely to resort to a full range of balance-of-power policies, strengthening its alliance with the US, and trying to extend the alliance to Australia, South Korea, India, and possibly Russia. If, on the other hand, the US decides to accommodate China by withdrawing its presence from the Western Pacific, then Japan has two options. One is to become a virtual protectorate of China, and to try to secure a position within a China-dominated regional order in Asia. But it would be a very difficult and unpleasant task for Japan to try to win the confidence of a dominant and yet still angry China. The other option is for Japan to emerge as a full-fledged military power, with nuclear weapons and more offensive weaponry. While Japan may be ultimately successful in legitimizing its status as a full-fledged military power, it would cause a great amount of tension in the short to medium term.

Neither of these scenarios is very attractive, at least from a Japanese viewpoint. So the first thing that Japan should attempt would be to avoid

these scenarios. Japan should try to keep the US engaged in Northeast Asia by strengthening the US-Japan alliance, and by strengthening cooperation with other regional states that have an interest in keeping the US presence (such as South Korea, Australia, and the ASEAN). Japan should also attempt to dissuade China from openly challenging US hegemony in the region, though it is doubtful whether Japan can exert much influence on China. The following assumes a more benign scenario in which neither the US nor China come to an open confrontation, nor to an accommodation in which US leaves the Western Pacific to China's control. In this broadly bipolar environment, confidence-building is still difficult, but not impossible.

In this scenario, maintaining a close alliance with the US still remains the cornerstone of Japanese security policy.<sup>29</sup> This is a point worth emphasizing, given that the new government in Japan lacks diplomatic experience. The new majority party, the Democratic Party of Japan, is a moderate center-left party that understands the fundamental importance of US-Japan alliance, and it is expected that its foreign and security policy will not be radically different from that of the LDP. However, the public statements of some DPJ leaders sounded surprisingly anti-American, and this created worries both in Japan and in the US about the possibility of serious strain in US-Japan alliance.<sup>30</sup> Moreover, one of DPJ's coalition partners, the Social Democratic Party of Japan, has long advocated a policy of "unarmed neutrality," and still calls for the eventual transformation of the US-Japan Security Treaty into a "Treaty of Peace and Friendship." Thus we cannot exclude the possibility that the new coalition government would steer Japan's foreign and security policy away from a close alliance with the US. Such an eventuality, if it comes to pass, is likely to de-stabilize the entire region, because it may whet the Chinese appetite to challenge US hegemony, and incite a backlash in now insecure Japan.

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<sup>29</sup> While some states (particularly China) have been critical of US-Japan alliance, PRC today is a great military power, with a full range of arsenals including nuclear weapons. Thus, the US-Japan alliance is unlikely to threaten China's legitimate security interests.

<sup>30</sup> Yukio Hatoyama, "A New Path for Japan," *New York Times* (on-line version), August 26, 2009 <http://www5.sdp.or.jp/central/topics/04sanin/seisaku/s3.html>

Given the security of US-Japanese alliance, Japan would be in a better position to contribute to the further development of multilateral security dialogues, with special focus on China and Russia. The key trick here is how to “incorporate” Russia and especially China in the regional security order. Earlier, when China was still weaker, Japanese and American observers tended to assume, if implicitly, that as China integrates more closely into the West, it would occupy a place assigned to it by the established powers (i.e., by the US and Japan). By now, it has become evident that China would not simply continue to accept the position of a junior partner assigned to it by the Americans. How to give China a greater role in regional security order without compromising the legitimate security interests of other states in the region—this is an issue that requires a careful combination of bilateral and multilateral arrangements. .

Here, two types of multilateral arrangements are relevant. One is the set of “truly multilateral” security forums that have been emerging in Northeast Asia since 1999 the ARF, the Six-Party Talks, ASEAN plus Three, the East Asian Summit are examples. Another type of arrangement is the network of bilateral or “minilateral” ties of security cooperation that have begun to develop among America’s allies in the region in recent years. The Trilateral Security Dialogue involving Japan, US, and Australia is the prime example of such an arrangement. Japan should help build a network of bilateral (US-Japan alliance), trilateral (US-Japan-Australia), and multilateral (Six Party Talks, East Asian Summit, etc.) institutions in such a way that 1) ensures its own security and the security of other US allies in the region; 2) gives China a greater but constructive role in the region; and 3) avoids any impression of a containment policy.

On the bilateral front, Japan needs to strengthen its effort to build a deeper level of confidence with neighboring states, such as South Korea, Russia, and China. While Japan has territorial claims on both Russia and South Korea, the existence of territorial issues need not be an obstacle for bilateral confidence-building efforts, such as exchange of security officials and forces. It would be both possible and desirable to

further the exchange of security officials and forces with these countries, without any prejudice to Japan's position on its territorial claims. More problematic in this regard is Japan's disputes with China regarding the Senkaku/Diaoyutai islands, and the underwater resources in the East China Sea. Although China and Japan have a peace treaty in which both sides pledge to develop "perpetual peace and friendship... on the basis of the principles of mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, [and] mutual non-aggression," China's naval buildup and unilateral actions in the development of underwater resources have led to increased mistrust of China on the Japanese side. The possibility of developing Sino-Japanese confidence-building depends on the scope of China's ambitions. But it is important to continue security dialogue between the two countries, to avoid escalation of conflict based on misunderstandings.

Finally, Japan needs to contain the "history issue" which has complicated its relations with other states in Northeast Asia. While the history issue is often represented as the problem of correct or incorrect understanding of historical facts, the essence of the problem is not so much scientific as political. Political leaders' understanding of history can be a subject of public controversy in large part because interpretations of history signify certain political attitudes about the past, the present, and the future. The "ultimate truth" in history is always open to scientific research. But the "official" truth of history maintained by states at any given period tends to be the product of political compromises, both domestic and international. While each country in Northeast Asia has its own version of nationalist history, giving such histories free rein in the diplomatic arena is a sure recipe for conflict. Certainly, Japan is not the only country that needs to contain domestic nationalism. But at the very least, Japan can contribute to confidence-building and at the same time strengthen its international position by containing incendiary remarks by ministers and other high-ranking officials, which have cast doubt on the sincerity of many apologies that Japan has already issued.

Confidence-building efforts stand on weak foundations in Northeast Asia. The future of the region depends very much on the relationship

between China and the US, over which Japan has little direct control or influence. Yet, the stakes are high, and Japan more than any other state in the region depends on the continuation of a favorable international environment. The traditional combination of self-restraint and economic diplomacy no longer suits Japan's objectives or responsibilities. To ensure its own long-term security and prosperity and that of the region as a whole, Japan must adopt creative new policies to help build a stable and benign international order in the region. Such a new order must be based on a delicate balance of bilateral security ties and a variety of multilateral security forums. It is rather doubtful if the new DPJ-led government of Japan is capable of such a complex balancing act. But if it succeeds, the new government will have left a lasting legacy not only on the history of Japanese diplomacy, but on the history of international relations in Northeast Asia as a whole.





## CONFIDENCE BUILDING AND SECURITY IN NORTH-EAST ASIA - AN INDIAN PERSPECTIVE

*Major General Dipankar Banerjee (Retd)\**

### Background

Northeast Asia is a unique part of the world. Endowed with a wealth of native cultures, moral values, and religious diversity; the region has emerged in recent decades as a dynamic economic region. With the exception of North Korea, other countries and the contiguous region of China and Russia continue to grow at a fast pace. Though all economies have been adversely affected by the global economic down turn, they have demonstrated a potential for early recovery. China in particular continues to grow at a healthy pace even today. A collective regional and social identity has evolved over the region's long history, spanning several millennia. Notwithstanding the last century and more of foreign domination, intense wars and social turbulence, the region is at the forefront of growth and prosperity. Today Northeast Asia is one of the most competitive and dynamic regions in the world. Indeed, in terms of population, economic size, trade volume, capital, technology, innovation, finance and the exchange of people, the region has recently been rapidly catching up with the other two pillars of the world economy, Europe and North America.<sup>1</sup>

Yet, the last century has been hugely turbulent and full of conflict. From the late 19th until the mid-20th century, the region endured several wars and conquests. For China, the period from the opium war until the

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<sup>1</sup> Dr Han Seung-soo, President, 56th Session of the United Nations General Assembly and former Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Korea at an address to the New Zealand Institute of International Affairs. Wellington, 9 October, 2006.

foundation of the People's Republic in 1949 has been referred to as the century of shame. For Korea, the loss of sovereignty and ensuing colonization under Japan, forced partition in 1945 and then the outbreak of the disastrous Korean War that started in 1950 was indeed a very dark period for the entire peninsula and can be described in a similar vein. These are the scars that continue to resonate across the region and characterize the strategic environment even today.

Current developments in North Korea in the summer of 2009, centered around its nuclear weapons program, its testing of missiles and its irresponsible behavior in relation to its arms and nuclear technology proliferation, are a major international concern. Dr Han Seung-soo describes the problems of the region as arising from "North Korea's nuclear ambitions and missile tests, disputes over territory, distortion of regional history, and insensitivity of nationalistic political leaders to the sensibilities of neighbors who suffered at their hands."<sup>2</sup> These problems echo in many respects the experience of the Indian sub-continent. It too has experienced a history of foreign invasions from the west, which go back several centuries, though these were subsequently accommodated and assimilated and even helped in enriching the region, its scars could not be entirely forgotten. There is also a shared history of foreign occupation, again different, but also similar in several ways. The British Empire lasted over two centuries in the Indian sub-continent and when it departed under mounting pressure at the end of the Second World War in 1947, it left behind a divided civilization with roots of conflict embedded in its partition. In several respects these are comparable to the recent history of the Korean peninsula. Even though nothing can compare with the brutal, prolonged and intense conflict of the Korean War from 1950-53, the artificial partition of the Indian sub-continent, with its mass migrations and repeated wars, bear resemblance to many developments in the peninsula. Besides, South Asia too shares the issue of nuclear weapons. In addition South Asia is at the centre of the current major global confrontation earlier described by President George Bush as "the global war on terror". While there are major differences, these

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

commonalities also lead to the possibility that some lessons may be learnt from each other's efforts at confidence building over the years.

### **India's Relations with Northeast Asia**

Northeast Asia is geographically far away from India, yet historically and culturally the Indic civilization has influenced the region through its many interconnections. Even though the Russian Far East does not find mention in common historical records or any early connection with India, New Delhi's ties with the region have been high in recent decades. Relations were based on cooperation with the Soviet Navy at Vladivostok when large numbers of Indian Navy personnel spent months familiarizing themselves with the intricacies of submarine warfare. Since the emergence of Russia, relations have diversified. A consulate was established by India in Vladivostok in 1992 and from that time trade and commerce have increased. Several companies were established by Indians in the Primorye region of Russia and trade, though still very low in comparative terms, is picking up gradually. Vladivostok naval base has for some years been associated with naval cooperation with India. Among security related developments, of particular importance is the likely lease of a nuclear submarine of the Nerpa class to the Indian Navy by the end of 2009.<sup>3</sup> In nearby Sakhalin, the Indian Oil Company ONGC (Videsh) has invested significant amounts of money for gas and oil exploration in its many potential fields. With the emergence of the Indian economy, many possibilities are beginning to open up to develop strong economic links with the Far East of Russia in the near future.

We need not dwell here on the deep and abiding historic relations between India and China. These are covered in numerous historical records, best exemplified in recent years in Chapter 8 of Nobel laureate Amartya Sen's book *The Argumentative Indian*.<sup>4</sup> This provides a fascinating ac-

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<sup>3</sup> Though the Nerpa met with a major fire accident resulting in the loss of 20 Russian seamen on Nov 8, 2008, the deal still remains on board. This is likely to be the first of two nuclear submarines to be leased to the Indian Navy.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. For more details see, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russian\\_submarine\\_K-152\\_Nerpa](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russian_submarine_K-152_Nerpa). Accessed on 14 May 2011. "Atomic Submarine Nerpa will be leased to India anyway"

count of exchange and visits of scholars from China to India in search of Buddhist documents and to learn astrology, medicine and mathematics; of Indian scholars to China to translate Sanskrit documents into Chinese and to learn mathematics and science.<sup>5</sup> The focus of intellectual activities in this era was centered around the world's first global university at Nalanda, in eastern India. Buddhist in character, the university incorporated modern teachings in all the known sciences of that era. It flourished for a thousand years till the thirteenth century CE and attracted students from around the then known world in Asia, including from China, Japan and Korea.<sup>6</sup> Sen's schooling was at Shantiniketan, also the name of the university established by Rabindranath Tagore, which had a special China department. For a thousand years, till the middle of the last Century, India-China relations and contact were limited. Under the British Empire, India was often the region from where many military expeditions to Asia were launched. These included excursions to Tibet in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and to mainland China during the opium wars.

Tensions developed in India-China relations only in late 1950's and led to the short, but bitter 1962 War. This and the subsequent period in this relationship has been captured brilliantly in John Garver's book *Protracted Contest: Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Twentieth Century*.<sup>7</sup> Though the title alludes to a sense of conflict and tension, relations have actually evolved positively in the last few years. Bilateral relations were normalized in 1976 with the reinstatement of ambassadors and were given a boost with Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's visit to China in 1988. Since then through numerous treaties, agreements and confidence building measures, particularly in 2003, 2006 and 2008, the state of mutual relations at the end of the first decade of the new century is cooperative and

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<sup>5</sup> Amartya Sen, *The Argumentative Indian – Writings on Indian Culture, History and Identity*, Penguin Books, New Delhi, 2005, pp.161-192.

<sup>6</sup> A symbol of the rise of Asia is also reflected in the recent efforts to revive the Nalanda University.

<sup>7</sup> John W Garver, *Protracted Contest; Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Twentieth Century*. Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2001.

tranquil and is expected to remain so in the future.<sup>8</sup> Recently, the Indian Foreign Minister, Shri Pranab Mukherjee expressed his confidence that “our Strategic and Cooperative partnership” with China will mature and steadily develop in the years ahead.<sup>9</sup>

India’s relationship with Korea also has a long history. Legend has it that an Indian princess from the Kingdom of Ayodhya in eastern India travelled to Korea in 48 AD and married Emperor Suro of Korea.<sup>10</sup> On her trip to Korea she is supposed to have carried gold, silver and a tea plant, which reflects the not inconsequential trade that existed between the two regions even as early as two thousand years ago. According to legend, the princess had a dream about a heavenly king who was awaiting heaven’s anointed ride. After her dream, the princess asked her parents for permission to set out and seek the man, which the king and queen gave, convinced that God had orchestrated fate. Tagore also visited China and Korea and in its darkest hour in the early 20th Century had prophesized Korea’s re-emergence as the ‘light of the east’. He wrote:

*“ In the Golden days of the East  
Korea was one of its lamp-bearers  
And that lamp is waiting to be lighted once again  
For the illumination of the East.”*<sup>11</sup>

In the Korean War India provided the UN Force with the 60th Field Ambulance of the Indian Medical Corps that offered medical help and sustenance to the wounded. Even as the War drew to a close, India was asked to chair the United Nation’s Neutral Nations Repatriation Contingent and contributed a brigade of about four thousand soldiers to separate the prisoners of war of the contending forces and facilitate their repatriation, a process that was then holding up peace negotia-

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<sup>8</sup> These are listed below:

- April 2003 during Prime Minister Narasimha Rao’s visit to China; *Declaration on Principles for Relations and Comprehensive Cooperation Between the Republic of India and the People’s Republic of China*.
- Nov 2006 – between Manmohan Singh and Hu Jintao in Delhi on the Strategic and Cooperative Partnership.
- 14 Jan 2008 between Manmohan Singh and Hu Jintao in Beijing on A Shared Vision for the 21st Century.

<sup>9</sup> <http://meaindia.nic.in/mystart.php?id=530113151>; accessed on May 14, 2011.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

tions. This was a delicate mission, essential to bringing the war to an early close. At the end of their task Anthony Eden, the British Foreign Minister, commended the Force and said on 22 Feb 1954; "I should like to take this opportunity to pay a tribute to the manner in which the Indian forces and their commanding officers have discharged a very difficult task. They have justly won world-wide respect."<sup>12</sup>

During his visit to Korea in 2007 the Indian Foreign Minister Pranab Mukherjee referred to the "Long Term Cooperative Partnership for Peace and Prosperity", which India has concluded with Korea and which according to him was "a corner-stone of India's Look East policy". Both countries are presently working towards a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement as mutual trade is out-performing the targets laid down.<sup>13</sup>

India-Japan Relations too have a long history going back at least to the 6th Century AD when Buddhism was first introduced in Japan. This established a strong trilateral relationship between "India, where Buddhism was born, to China where it spread and Japan where Buddhism perhaps flourished in its truest and most pure form."<sup>14</sup> Indian gods and goddesses too had their impact on Japan and in particular the Goddess Lakshmi (of wealth and prosperity) was much revered in her Japanese incarnation. There are no bad memories in India of Japan related to its Second World War aggression in Asia. The limit of Japan's penetration was up to the borders of India, from where it was pushed back. Even though very large numbers of Indian Army soldiers confronted the Japanese Army in Southeast Asia under the British flag and were captured as prisoners of war, memories of this do not linger to the present. On the other hand Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose, the noted freedom fighter was supported by the Japanese in his war against Britain and formed the Indian National Army. Judge Pal, who

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<sup>12</sup><http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1954/feb/22/repatriation-commission-korea-cessation>. Accessed on 14 Jun 09.

<sup>13</sup> Mukherjee, footnote 8.

<sup>14</sup> Refer to Indian Ambassador Ronen Sen's remarks at a luncheon meeting of the Japan Society in New York on February 15, 2008. At [http://www.indianembassy.org/newsite/press\\_release/2008/Feb/7.asp](http://www.indianembassy.org/newsite/press_release/2008/Feb/7.asp) Accessed on 17 Jun 09.

was a member of the Allied War Crimes Tribunal in Tokyo, gave a dissenting opinion at the judgment, which made him a hero in Japanese eyes and he is remembered there to this day. Bilateral relations have remained very strong since independence. Even though the economic content of this relationship was and still is not up to its potential, there are over five hundred Japanese companies operating in India and Japan remains the largest contributor of Overseas Development Assistance to India in recent years. Japanese investment particularly in India's infrastructure is growing and there are many major cooperative projects between both countries.

Two important agreements, signed during Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's visit to Japan in October 2008, exemplify the state of relations between India and Japan. These were the "Joint Statement on the Advancement of the Strategic and Global Partnership between Japan and India", which promotes cooperation in a wide range of fields. Secondly, the "Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation between Japan and India", which relates to security cooperation.<sup>15</sup>

### **India's Interests and Concerns**

In recent years India's relations with Northeast Asia were linked to its "Look East Policy", which according to Pranab Mukherjee means that "India must find its destiny by linking itself more and more with its Asian partners and the rest of the world. We believe that India's future and our own best economic interests are served by greater integration with East Asia."<sup>16</sup> He went on to say that; "Our interest in engaging with East Asia has domestic roots. We are a vibrant democracy, quickly transforming ourselves into a vibrant economy with growth on an ascending trajectory. The current economic growth is around 8 % and we hope to achieve a 10 % sustainable growth in the coming years."<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Joint Statement on the Advancement of the Strategic and Global Partnership between India and Japan signed on 22 Oct 2008, Tokyo, Japan by PM Manmohan Singh and Taro Aso available at <http://meaindia.nic.in/mystart.php?id=530514278>. Accessed on May 14, 2009.

<sup>16</sup> Mukherjee, footnote 8.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid. The expectation of economic growth was made at a particularly optimistic moment, but in spite of that India's economy is poised to recover among the earliest in the world.



This economic reality makes it imperative to develop wide ranging and comprehensive relations with North East Asia. It was with this objective that India participated in the ASEAN +3+3 meeting in 2006, in which Dr Manmohan Singh, the Indian Prime Minister envisaged the creation of a broader Asian Economic Community, a theme to which he returned again at the recently concluded inaugural BRIC Summit (Brazil, Russia, India, China) held at Yekaterinberg in the Russian Far East on 16 June 2009. A dynamic Northeast Asia has to be an integral part of this strategy. India believes that substantive confidence building measures within the region will contribute to ensure that Northeast Asia, an integral part of India's larger policy relationship, remains peaceful, stable and economically prosperous

It is true that till recently India was uninterested in strategic developments in the region. Two factors have changed this perspective. First, is North Korea's substantial arms sales links with India's neighbor, Pakistan. It is now widely known that the network under A.Q. Khan, which specialized in illegal nuclear and missile technology peddling around the world, relied on North Korean support to carry out many of these activities. In turn the transfer of missiles from North Korea to Pakistan and then to the world played a major role in global missile proliferation. What was exchanged for this supply, and the extent to which both Pakistan's and North Korea's nuclear establishments benefited from this mutual cooperation will never be known fully, not until the rogue scientist is adequately interrogated by neutral international authorities. A second factor is that North Korea's nuclear capability, unless removed, will inevitably impact on the regional order and on the world. Given these factors India remains keenly interested in the region.

### **Major Security Issues in North Korea**

In hindsight it appears to be clear that North Korea had all along decided on developing its nuclear weapons capability. Measures taken by it earlier as part of the several dialogues and agreements now appear

to have been part of a well crafted and deliberate cover up. It may be that the international community interpreted some decisions to suit its interests rather than strictly sticking to the wording and deadlines.<sup>18</sup> But the overall direction of measures adopted by North Korea does point to its single minded commitment to nuclear weapons and delivery means to ensure that it had the minimum capability to deter the possibility of outsiders imposing any sort of policy change in the country. Rudimentary though its present nuclear weapons capability may well be, the world today has to accept that North Korea can possibly strike its neighbors with missiles carrying nuclear warheads. This does pose a serious dilemma and a major challenge to the world.

In any case North Korea's motive for acquiring this capability is less relevant than what needs to be done to meet this challenge. Several dangers arise as a consequence of these developments. A leading East Asian expert from the US, Douglas Paal, has recently opined that many scenarios may emerge out of this situation. One is that the regime remains in control and even as it weakens it continues to defy the world through its nuclear strike potential. The possibility that Kim Jong-il is seriously ill and may be near death cannot be ruled out. Several alternative scenarios may evolve as a consequence of the succession struggle. There may be conflict between the military and the chosen successor, a struggle for succession between various centers of authority, details of which we may not be fully aware of, and finally the possibility of state disintegration. Would China remain a passive observer as these situations unfold? Given its many linkages and support for the regime and the state, it seems unlikely. Will it be tempted to step in and preempt others by taking over the country? The reason offered may be to avoid being swamped by starving migrants from North Korea. But, the realpolitik objective may well be to prevent Korean reunification and to prevent its nuclear facilities falling into Seoul's hands. Certainly, a nuclear armed and unified Korea may well be a nightmarish situation for Beijing, which would have five nuclear

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<sup>18</sup>Leon V. Sigal, "Punishing North Korea won't work", *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*, 28 May 2009, at <http://www.google.com/search?client=safari&rls=en&q=Sigal+Punishing+North+Korea+will+not+work&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8>. Accessed on May 14, 2011

states (the US, Russia, India, Pakistan and unified Korea) on its periphery. Should China attempt to intervene what would be Seoul and Tokyo's response? What would be the US position in all these contingencies? How would Russia react? The short answer to prevent this possibility coming about is to ensure that North Korea disarms peacefully.<sup>19</sup> This is possible only through substantive confidence building measures addressing the concerns and anxieties of all affected parties. This is not an easy course by any stretch of the imagination, but perhaps the only way out of this devilish conundrum. Before we look at possible confidence building measures and steps to stabilize the situation and disarm North Korea of its nuclear weapons, let us review India's position on the North Korean situation.

### **India's Position**

India has taken a clear and firm stand against North Korea's nuclear tests. The Indian cabinet had just been formed after elections to a new Parliament when news came in of the North Korean nuclear test of 25 May 2009. The new Foreign Minister SM Krishna unequivocally condemned it. Speaking to assembled journalists, the new Minister said; "We've heard the claims of North Korea that they've carried nuclear test on May 25. This is in violation of its international commitments. It's unfortunate. We are concerned at the adverse impact it will have on security in the region". The Defense Minister A.K. Antony said that, "It is a development of serious concern" and that India was against nuclear proliferation. He also said that this concern was "for not only India but to the world".<sup>20</sup>

No useful purpose will be served by examining again all the different ramifications of recent developments in Northeast Asia. This has received sufficient attention in recent weeks and has been discussed more thoroughly elsewhere. The regional security order is of great significance to India, as it will impact on the larger Asian strategic environment. Of particular interest to India are two issues; one is Japan's future nuclear posture and second, is the prospect of Korean reunification. Should either

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<sup>19</sup> Douglas H Paal, "A Nuclear Test of China ". *Washington Times*, June 2, 2009.

<sup>20</sup> "India condemns North Korean Nuclear Test". <http://ibnlive.in.com/news/india-condemns-north-korea-as-nuclear-test/93318-3.html>. Accessed on May 14, 2011. IBN Live on 25 May 09.

of these events come to pass then it will surely be to the detriment of the region as well as to Indian interests. It is in this context that confidence-building measures in the region are of international concern.

### **Confidence Building Measures in North East Asia**

In choosing a model for Korean CBMs, South Asia is not a good example. The conditions are vastly different in both environments. There is no prospect of unification in South Asia, whereas this must be the ultimate even though a somewhat distant objective in Korea. The Kashmir question is again distinct in South Asia, with no other reasonable parallels, even though it has been addressed through various multilateral and bilateral means. While bilateral negotiations may well be the most suitable approach in South Asia, the six-nation format for the Korean issue is most appropriate in that environment. Again, religious extremism is a principal factor in the South Asian security paradigm with its entire extremist potential. The divide in Korea is over political ideology, an equally divisive situation but altogether of a different kind. Eleven years after both India and Pakistan became nuclear weapons powers in May 1998 there has been no situation which has threatened the use of nuclear weapons in South Asia. We cannot expect the same on the Korean Peninsula. Here, the only aim must remain to disarm North Korea's nuclear weapons through peaceful and cooperative means. Having said this, however, several CBMs in South Asia have universal value and should be considered in the Koreas. For example, the several communication hot lines, frequent border meetings, structured bilateral dialogue processes, meetings of heads of government at different international forums and others.

Ralph Cossa, until recently President of the Pacific Forum, suggests that the European Helsinki process may instead be more suitable, of course with major variations. He had made some very useful suggestions a few years ago, which still remain relevant. Let us identify the outlines of some of these recommendations:

w The CBMs must be preceded (if possible) by the introduction of a “multi-lateralization mechanism,” for the purpose of creating a coor-

minated institutional structure. This will be the first call for stabilization and multi-lateralization.

w More specifically, the CBMs must form part of a “measures package”, already identified in the aforementioned Basic Agreement of 1991 between the two Koreas, which must contain at least the following points:

I. Reconciliation measures;

II. Incentives to co-operate within the international community;

III. The setting up of a joint military commission which must implement the CBMs;

IV. Arms control agreements, arms reduction and “transparency” (very important) with regard to military maneuvers and in general with regard to all “defense policy initiatives”.

w In the particular case of North Korea, due to the situation of the near-collapse of its economy, CBMs must be accompanied by powerful measures of economic support and the normalization of relations with the DPRK on the part of the international community.

w A spirit of reciprocity must be embraced and the security concerns (real and perceived) of both sides must be addressed, even if this requires outside security guarantees.

w Additional CBMs may consist of an “open skies” agreement and the setting up of a Monitoring Zone to reinforce the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ).<sup>21</sup>

It may well be true that the above is out of date, due to the actual nuclear weaponization of North Korea and hence the priority now should shift to crisis management, de-weaponization and later to other measures. It will indeed be a long haul to put in place any of these recommendations given the reality of the post May 25 2009 situation and the imposition of additional sanctions by the United Nations.

### **The UN Sanctions**

Responding vigorously to the North Korean nuclear and missile tests, the United Nations unanimously passed Resolution 1874, which

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<sup>21</sup> Ralph Cossa paper presented at Como, Italy, October 25, 2000.

imposes more stringent sanctions than previously.<sup>22</sup> This was possible due to strong support shown by both Russia and China who until recently were seen by many in the west as supporters of the DPRK regime. It may be that these sanctions are more recommendatory than mandatory. Even while demonstrating the firm opposition of the international community to these actions of the DPRK, it should be noted that the Chinese Ambassador, Zhang Yesui, noted afterwards that all parties should solve the problem through political and diplomatic means rather than through coercion. Zhang went on to emphasize that “all parties should refrain from any words or deeds that may exacerbate the conflict.”<sup>23</sup> However the sanctions are implemented, the bottom line remains that North Korea is unlikely to be persuaded through economic coercion. The critical question then in respect of implementation of these measures is China’s cooperation. While it may be true that for the first time in the case of the DPRK China has shown determination to pursue punitive options, it is not yet clear as to what length it is willing to go to impose these measures.

The ultimate purpose of all these measures against North Korea is to bring it around to the conference table to develop and implement meaningful CBMs in order to allow denuclearization. This will still take many rounds of discussions and exchanges of views as well as the development of alternate strategies. India is prepared to remain committed to this process in support of the international community.

## Conclusion

The strategic environment in Northeast Asia remains turbulent and disturbed, made much worse by the recent nuclear and missile tests carried out by North Korea. The United Nations Security Council is seized of the process and it remains the body through which measures must evolve to resolve the situation. Ultimately, the countries most affected by these developments, including the leading players in Asia, must of

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<sup>22</sup> Neil MacFarquhar, “U.N. Security Council Pushes North Korea by Passing Sanctions”, *The New York Times*, June 12, 2009.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

necessity initiate the measures. Given the peculiar conditions in the region this will never be easy, but at the same time the conditions are critical enough to merit an extraordinary response.

# **CONFIDENCE BUILDING AND SECURITY IN NORTHEAST ASIA; TRENDS, DEVELOPMENTS AND OBSTACLES**

*Leszek Buszynski*

## **Introduction**

There is no doubt that Northeast Asia requires a security organization which would bring peace and stability to a troubled and divided region. In the past it was often remarked that in Northeast Asia the interests of the four major powers intersect in a divided Korea; the US, China, Japan and Russia each had different interests in the Korean peninsula and attempted to minimize the influence of adversaries. The result was a pattern of rivalry and a search for advantage over potential adversaries, which contributed to the region's insecurity and unpredictability. Relationships between the major actors have changed since then, which have exacerbated past rivalries and stimulated new tensions. Japan may still be the world's 2nd largest economy it is swiftly being challenged by China. The US has strengthened its alliance relationship with Japan, which is now developing its own naval and missile interdiction capability. Russia has become an important energy producer for the region's actors, China, Japan as well as South Korea. In the past there was the tendency to gloss over South Korea as a passive actor in the region and one which simply responded to the moves of the larger powers. South Korea has become the fourth largest economy in Asia and 13th largest in the world. It has emerged as an actor in its own right, one that could shape and influence the policies of the major actors. Moreover, while North Korea was always an uncertain factor in the region it has emerged as a potential de-stabilizer with a nuclear weapons and limited ballistic missile capability. North Korea has become a global proliferation issue as



well as a regional problem which demonstrates that that Northeast Asia has become a much more complex region than was the case in the past.

### **Conditions for successful regionalism**

It is ironic that regionalism has been successful in Southeast Asia, which comprises comparatively less developed and smaller states, than Northeast Asia where the three economic powerhouses China, Japan and Korea are located. Regionalism in Northeast Asia has been still born and remains retarded. ASEAN has been the pivot of East Asian regionalism, the coordinator of the ASEAN + 3 meetings [ASEAN plus China, Japan and Korea], the organizer of the ASEAN Regional Forum [ARF] which has 27 members including North Korea, and the ASEAN plus one meetings with individual dialogue partners, the US, Japan, China and Korea. ASEAN has indeed become the meeting point for East Asia and has served to bring together actors who otherwise would not meet because of bilateral difficulties or outstanding disputes. The problem is that that Northeast Asian security issues cannot be effectively dealt with in this arrangement and they tend to be neglected. The Korean peninsula was placed on the agenda of the ARF but the inherent difficulties assured it of only passing and unsatisfactory attention in a forum which quickly moved on to other issues. Northeast Asia requires its own security regionalism and should not allow itself to become an appendage of Southeast Asian regionalism, or a component of some wider concept of East Asian regionalism which would downgrade its importance.

There are two conditions for the creation of regionalism. The first is the absence of a hegemon; negotiations to promote regionalism can be thwarted by concerns over the hegemonic aspirations of a state. The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation [SAARC] was created on August 1983 and conducted its first summit in December 1985. SAARC has six members-India, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, the Maldives and Bangladesh-yet it has failed to develop. Smaller states such as Nepal and Sri Lanka resent what they regard as India's blatant hegemonic aspirations and desire to dominate the region. In addition, the conflict

between India and Pakistan blocks cooperation between the two major members. ASEAN's creation in August 1967 required that Indonesia abnegate the aspiration for regional dominance, which was expressed in Sukarno's Konfrontasi campaign over 1963-65. ASEAN was made possible when a new regime in Indonesia terminated this campaign and agreed to be bound by the norms and procedures of regionalism. In a situation where several major actors compete for influence there should be a balance between them to ensure that hegemony of any group would be prevented. Balanced relations between France, Germany and Britain were essential for the EU to develop, to provide the assurance that neither France nor Germany would dictate the terms of regionalism. Secondly, there has to be an agreement on the territorial status quo and the absence of major territorial disputes between the major actors, which could otherwise stimulate conflict. ASEAN was created in the aftermath of the Konfrontasi campaign when the Suharto regime endorsed the post colonial borders, thereby accepting the existence of Malaysia as well as the smaller states of Singapore and Brunei. The development of the EU similarly required Germany's acceptance of its post World War two borders in the East as well as the West.

Without these two conditions those governments concerned about the hegemonic aspirations of larger states would involve external powers in their own security, and would be skeptical of the promises of regionalism. The absence of a consensus on the territorial quo would similarly prompt smaller states to seek security support from external powers, particularly if they are involved in a territorial dispute with a potential hegemon. Alliances then become assurances of external support particularly for smaller actors dependent upon the prevailing regional order and stability. Alliances may make possible the development of regionalism and need not be incompatible with it, as commonly assumed by the proponents of regionalism. The EU overlapped with NATO which provided it with the assurance of American military support during the Cold War, and was an essential support for its development. ASEAN's development required that the avowedly non aligned state Indonesia tolerate Thailand's alliance with the US in the 1954 Manila Pact and the

Philippine bilateral American alliance. Malaysia maintained the Anglo-Malaysian Defence Agreement which dated from 1957 as revised in 1963, as well as the Five Power Defence Arrangements of 1971. Small states, which feel threatened by a potential regional hegemon, may call upon security support from external great powers in the form of an alliance, as the above cases illustrate. The potential hegemon may react to this situation where the great powers intrude into its own preserve by creating trust in the security benefits of regionalism and promoting cooperative policies with small states. The security of smaller members would become assured in which case alliances may gradually lose their significance through the progressive institutionalization of regionalism. Indeed, Indonesia acted in this way to ensure ASEAN's success and to minimize regional fears about its own ambitions.

These two conditions are absent in Northeast Asia and explain why multilateral dialogue over security issues there has been coordinated within the ARF. There are unresolved territorial disputes the most salient being the division of the Korean Peninsula as a remnant of the Cold War. Other disputes concern Russia and Japan over the Northern Islands/Southern Kurile Islands, the Japan-South Korea dispute over the Dokdo/Takeshima Islands, the Japan-China dispute over the Sengoku/Diaoyu Islands and the East Sea gas Field. Moreover, there is the troubling issue of North Korea's nuclear and ballistic missile programs which threaten its neighbours who have vowed to ensure that the peninsula remains free of nuclear weapons. The issue of a rising China and Sino-Japanese suspicions also complicate relationships in the region and point to a contest for regional leadership which would determine the shape of Asian regionalism. China's economic expansion and the development of its military may ensure it an overwhelming presence in the region, strengthening its claim for regional leadership which Japan would naturally contest. Japan cannot be a candidate for regional leadership in view of its militaristic past but it would act to prevent China from claiming this position. Japan's fear is that China has a hidden agenda to control Asian regionalism and to direct it against its economic and security interests. Japan's concern with China has

prompted it to strengthen the alliance with the US and to create the conditions for extended rivalry with China. Under Junichiro Koizumi Japan negotiated the realignment agreement with the US on 1 May 2006 which was a significant step in the broadening of security cooperation with the US. America's intention of transforming the alliance into a global partnership dovetailed with the Koizumi government's purpose in integrating Japanese security more closely with the US. Basically, it allowed the US greater flexibility to use forces currently deployed in Japan for missions in other regions such as the Persian Gulf and Middle East.<sup>1</sup> Japan and the US have also considered plans for coordinating forces in the event that China attacks Taiwan which would allow Japan to provide rear area support for US forces.<sup>2</sup> Japan has pursued defence cooperation agreements with Australia in March 2007 and December 2008 and has explored the possibility of involving India more closely in defence cooperation. While Japan strengthens its security options against a rising China in this way the Chinese suspect that a new version of containment is being formed which brings together the US, Japan and India, and possibly Australia as well.

This polarization between China and Japan has been the determining factor of East Asian regionalism. In this situation of mutual rivalry both conceive of regionalism as an extension of their foreign policy interests with the prime purpose of minimizing the influence of the other. China has been promoting the ASEAN + 3 arrangement which was created during the Asian financial crisis of 1997-98. Its purpose was to stabilize the region financially and to prevent a repeat of the crisis by obtaining China's commitment to exchange rate stability. Similarly, China's proposals for ASEAN or ASEAN plus 3 free trade are a means of directly integrating the region into a China-centered economic order, these proposals may offer trade benefits to the regional economies but they come with political costs. Regional states, anxious about China's rise and uncomfortable with expressions of Chinese nationalism, will search

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<sup>1</sup> "Cabinet Oks Plan to Realign U. S. Military Presence, Skips Details," *Nikkei*, 30 May 2006; Reiji Yoshida "Japan, U.S. finalize forces plan", *Japan Times*, 4 May, 2006.

<sup>2</sup> "Japan, US, mull plan for Taiwan crisis", *Japan Times*, 5 January, 2007.

for external balance in the form of a security relationship with the US or its allies. Japan cannot compete with China in terms of presenting of a free trade alternative while its leaders are obliged to protect their agricultural sector and lack the authority to impose their priorities upon the often autonomous ministries. Japan struggles to find an appropriate response to China and its leaders have called for an ill defined East Asian Community and economic partnership agreements [EPA] with the region including ASEAN. To counter Chinese influence Japan has proposed an “economic zone” for East Asia which was to include 16 members, the 13 members of the ASEAN plus 3 as well as India, Australia and New Zealand; economic ministers from the 16 countries met in Kuala Lumpur in August 2006 to examine the proposal.<sup>3</sup> Two forms of regionalism are concurrently being considered in the region. There is the Chinese-supported East Asian variety which is based on the ASEAN plus 3 reflecting an ideological interest in a purely Asian grouping called the East Asian Community [EAC]. There is the Japanese-supported version of extended Asian regionalism in the form of the East Asian Summit [EAS] which brings together the ASEAN plus 3 group with India, Australia and New Zealand as a balance against China.

### **The Six Party Talks**

The absence of the fundamental conditions for regionalism will militate against any effort to establish an overarching regionalism in Northeast Asia of the kind which would match ASEAN in Southeast Asia for the time being.<sup>4</sup> The effort would be premature in the absence of those conditions and would be derailed by competitive assertion of state interest and accusations. What is possible, however, is an interim grouping which could influence the attitudes of the governments concerned towards dialogue and discussion, which could in time

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<sup>3</sup> “Asia-Pacific Nations Agree to Consider 16-Nation Economic Pact”, *Nikkei*, 25 August, 2006: “Japan, ASEAN Hammer out Basics for Economic Partnership Pact”, *Nikkei*, 5 May 2007.

<sup>4</sup> Scott Snyder, “prospects for a Northeast Asia Security Framework,” Paper prepared for the conference “Towards a Northeast Asian Security community’ Implications for Korea’s Growth and Economic Development” *Korea Economic Institute*, 15 October, 2008.

contribute to the creation of the essential conditions for regionalism. Creating habits of dialogue and reducing suspicions could be the function of an interim grouping, which if successful, could then be extended in scope and function to become a more permanent body. The only existing body in the region which could serve this interim purpose is the Six Party Talks [SPT] which were first conducted over 27-29 August 2003 in Beijing with the specific purpose of resolving the North Korean nuclear weapons issue. They brought together North and South Korea, the US, China, Japan and Russia in an ad hoc meeting which had never been conducted before. Inherent in the efforts of the SPT was the recognition that the achievement of the specific purpose of resolving the North Korean nuclear weapons issue would serve the long-term goal of bringing peace and security to Northeast Asia. In the joint declaration which emerged from the fourth round of the SPT on September 19, 2005 it was noted that "the parties will negotiate a permanent peace regime on the Korean Peninsula at an appropriate separate forum." The Six Parties also "agreed to explore ways and means for promoting security cooperation in Northeast Asia."<sup>5</sup> This declaration was recognition that the purpose of the SPT could not just be limited to the immediate purpose, and that the full resolution of the North Korean nuclear program and the removal of the conditions which gave rise to the problem would require a regional security mechanism. On 13 February 2007 the SPT reached agreement on the resolution of the North Korean nuclear issue which called for the dismantling of the North's nuclear facilities and a full accounting of all nuclear programs. Five working groups were created under the terms of the agreement which were to deal with the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, the normalization of North Korea-U.S. relations, the normalization of North Korea-Japan relations, economic and energy cooperation. Most significant was the fifth working group on a Northeast Asia peace and security mechanism

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<sup>5</sup> "Joint Statement of the Fourth Round of the Six-Party Talks," Beijing 19 September 2005 *The Office of Electronic Information, Bureau of Public Affairs, U.S. State Department*. <http://www.state.gov/p/eap/regional/c15455.htm>

which indicated that the parties were ready to institutionalize their meetings in a permanent regional grouping.<sup>6</sup>

The difficulties in institutionalizing the SPT have since become more apparent. First and most important is that the SPT has not succeeded in its aim of divesting North Korea of its nuclear weapons program.<sup>7</sup> After the North dismantled the nuclear facility at Yongbyon in July 2007 it seemed that it was ready to comply with the demands of the 13 February agreement but it failed to meet the deadline of December 2007 for a full accounting of its nuclear facilities. After some negotiations US envoy to the SPT Christopher Hill on 1 July 2008 declared that SPT was just beginning to show results over the denuclearization plan. He also revealed American interest in a “framework” for the future,” or a “lasting mechanism for peace and security” which would “transform the process into a future body of Northeast Asia states to address other pressing challenges.”<sup>8</sup> That optimism was unjustified and when the SPT met in Beijing in December 2008 the North again refused to accept verification of its nuclear facilities. Negotiations ground to a halt. After the UN condemned the North’s test of a Taepodong missile on 4 April 2009 Pyongyang boycotted the SPT. On 25 May 2009 the North tested a nuclear weapon for the second time and it became clearer that Pyongyang had little intention of complying with the demand for nuclear disarmament at the present time. Reports suggest that the test was a demonstration of resolve to allow the North to prepare for the succession to Kim Jong-il. Kim’s youngest son Kim Jong-un is being groomed for leadership by a supporting coterie within the decision-making system, which has unleashed a purge of officials close to the eldest son Kim

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<sup>6</sup> Stephen Kaufman and David McKeeby, “North Korea Nuclear Deal a ‘Breakthrough’ Rice Says Agreement hailed as first step toward nuclear-free Korean Peninsula,” *America.com*, U.S. Department of State, Bureau of International Information Program 13 February 2007 <http://www.america.gov/st/washfile-english/2007/February/20070213150224esnamfuak0.8298456.html#ixzz0INzElNhK&C>

<sup>7</sup> Keun-Sik Kim, “the prospects for institutionalizing the Six party Talks,” Policy Forum on line, the nautilus Institute, 12 July 2007, [www.nautilus.org/fora/security/07051Kim.html](http://www.nautilus.org/fora/security/07051Kim.html)

<sup>8</sup> David I McKeeby, “America’s Envoy Offers Insider’s view of Korean Peninsula’s path to Peace,” *America.gov* 2 July, 2008. [www.america.gov/st/peacesec-english/2008/July/20080702160638idybeekcm0.9695246.html](http://www.america.gov/st/peacesec-english/2008/July/20080702160638idybeekcm0.9695246.html)

Jong-nam.<sup>9</sup> . If the nuclear test was a product of the succession issue in the North it reveals the importance of the nuclear weapons program to the leadership, and that the SPT's efforts have been in vain. The failure of the SPT may have repercussions for the future as pressure mounts for the Obama Administration to accept direct negotiations with the North, which is what Pyongyang has wanted from the beginning of the crisis. Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi declared that China would welcome bilateral talks between the US and North Korea as a means to break the logjam in negotiations, and to get the SPT started again.<sup>10</sup> If the Obama Administration decided on bilateral negotiations the SPT would lose importance and its function would be transformed into a rubber stamp. The SPT would endorse agreements reached between the US and the North and would be dealt a death-blow from which they would not recover. As well as losing the ability to deal with the North over the nuclear program the SPT would also lose the incentive to prepare the path for a permanent regional body.

Moreover, even if the SPT eventually succeeded in managing the current crisis it is unlikely that its transformation into a permanent security body could be effected without considerable difficulty. The SPT members may agree over the North's nuclear program but they have different interpretations of the composition and function of a permanent security body. Efforts to establish a permanent regional organization would trigger the political pressures and maneuvers that have been outlined above. China and Japan would intensify their efforts in competition for regional leadership. China would seek to minimize the role of the US and the alliances it sponsors while the US would maneuver to strengthen their position. China seeks a trilateral arrangement which would embrace South Korea and Japan, but without the US.<sup>11</sup> Japan seeks a different form of trilateralism which would include the US and China, for the Japanese it is critical that the US be involved but China would hesitate. China's view of the American role

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Alex Martin, "Pyongyang Purge Seen Speeding Helm Change", *Japan Times*, 5 June, 2009.

<sup>10</sup> "China Seeks Bigger U.S. Role in Breaking Nuclear Logjam", *Nikkei.com*, 17 April 2009.

<sup>11</sup> Wu Chunsi, "The Six Party Talks: A Good platform for Broader Security Cooperation in North-east Asia", *Korean Journal of Security Affairs*, Vol. 12, No. 2 - December, 2007.



in Northeast Asia has softened over the years but there is still suspicion within conservative circles in China in relation to the US military presence in Japan and South Korea. Russia is simply left out and in most discussions about security cooperation in Northeast Asia it does not find a place. Russia was excluded from the four party talks that were conducted in Geneva from August 1997 to August 1999 between the US, China and the North and the South. The three party talks which comprised China, the US and North Korea in April 2003 excluded Japan as well as Russia and South Korea. Russia was included in the SPT at the insistence of the North as a balance against the US which was one result of Putin's cultivation of a personal relationship with Kim Jong-il.<sup>12</sup> The Americans had opposed Russia's inclusion and resisted the expansion of the talks with the North but eventually came round to accepting the diplomatic benefits. Assistant Secretary of State James Kelly declared that the six party format would deny to the North the opportunity to play one party against another.<sup>13</sup> The US then switched to the SPT format to avoid bilateral negotiations with the North where it would face unwelcome pressure for concessions.

### **Institutionalizing security dialogue in Five Party Talks**

The conditions for constructing a regional grouping have not been satisfied in Northeast Asia and their absence will hinder any effort to establish a permanent security body based on the SPT. In this situation attempts to institutionalize the SPT would result in further political maneuvering by members to further their own interests which could undermine its composition and function. This does not mean that efforts to move along the path of regionalization would be entirely wasted. The

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<sup>12</sup> Alexander Vorontsov, *Current Russia-North Korea Relations: Challenges and Achievements*, Center for Northeast Asian Policy Studies, The Brookings Institution, February 2007, <http://www.brookings.edu/fp/cnaps/papers/vorontsov2007.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> "Ensuring a Korean Peninsula Free of Nuclear Weapons: James Kelly, Asst. Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Remarks to The Research Conference - North Korea: Towards a New International Engagement Framework, February 13, 2004," DPRK Briefing Book, the *Nautilus Institute*.

[http://oldsite.nautilus.org/DPRKBriefingBook/multilateralTalks/Kelly\\_NKChanceforRedemption.html](http://oldsite.nautilus.org/DPRKBriefingBook/multilateralTalks/Kelly_NKChanceforRedemption.html)

SPT could initiate discussions on security issues which would prepare the ground for their later transformation when conditions would be more conducive. South Korean Foreign Minister Yu Myung-Hwan has mentioned the possibility of establishing Five Party Talks [FPT] as a way of circumventing the North's boycott of the talks.<sup>14</sup> The mention of this possibility may prompt the North to re-join the SPT and to desist from its confrontational and ultimately self-defeating actions. If, however, the North fails to respond the way would be clear for the parties to continue with Five Party Talks, which would offer an alternative basis for the development of regionalism. The FPT could then initiate multilateral dialogue over arms sales, maritime security, and other nontraditional security issues, which would create patterns of dialogue amongst the parties and make them more familiar with each other. Dialogue of this nature may induce them to propose specific confidence building measures [CBMs] over these issues which would maintain an interim security discussion group in being for a later time when it may be transformed into something more permanent.

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<sup>14</sup> "Foreign Minister hints at Five-Party Talks", *The Korea Herald*. 15 June, 2009.



# FINDING A SEA BORDER SOLUTION: THE CASE FOR JAPAN IN THE CONTEXT OF LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE EURASIAN BORDERLAND EXPERIENCE\*

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## Introduction

Sino-Russian and Sino-Central Asian border disputes were defused by the early 2000s which enhanced the stability and security of Central Eurasia. None could predict that Sino-Soviet border disputes, which triggered military clashes at the end of the 1960s and pushed the Soviet Union and the PRC to the brink of nuclear war, would be completely resolved by the early 21st century. Many observers were astonished when Vladimir Putin and Hu Jintao announced the final resolution of the Sino-Russian dispute in October 2004.

The trend to defuse border disputes in Eurasia has prevailed since the early 1990s. A 1991 agreement on the Sino-Soviet eastern border was the first step towards resolving some 98 percent of the 4,300 kilometer long border. The demarcation process was concluded on the basis of a “fifty-fifty” solution in 1997 after some political disturbances and setbacks in the mid-1990s. Following the Sino-Russian border arrangement, China and Kazakhstan signed border agreements in 1994 and 1998. Likewise, China finalized border agreements with Kyrgyzstan in 1996 and again in 1999, and with Tajikistan in 1999 and 2002. Fortunately, the widespread pessimistic view of border negotiations in Eurasia was dramatically shown to be unwarranted, especially in the light of the “fifty-fifty” solution.

\*The views expressed in the essay belong solely to the author and do not represent the official position of any organizations to which the author is permanently or was temporarily affiliated.

The solution was developed through a long process of negotiation which resolved the most seriously-disputed territories. To summarize, the formula included the following elements; partition on the basis of balancing all parties' interests, face-saving compromises to deal with economic disputes, careful and thoughtful consideration of historic heritage sites, security guarantees for the remaining interests of the concerned parties including central governments and locals on the border area and the surrounding region. In adopting the formula, the concerned countries could declare a "win-win" solution and eventually reach a fair compromise on the basis of partition of the disputed territory in a manner that takes into consideration all parties' interests. There will also be those that voice their opposition to the "fifty-fifty" solution, such as nationalistic politicians and the media. Nonetheless, locals living on the border could develop full-scale economic cooperation with their counterparts on the other side of the border. Eventually, governments also could realize their national interests by securing the border and by establishing and maintaining good ties with neighboring countries.

More elaborate and advanced versions of the "fifty-fifty" solution must be soon identified and applied to problematic areas, where countries are struggling to find appropriate solutions to realize border stability. Maritime borders, such as the East and West China Sea, the Sea of Japan, and the Pacific Ocean require urgent examination. Could the solution for land borders be adopted and applied to maritime borders? If this is possible, how and when could it be done?

New developments in the resolution of land borders can be seen to some extent in other areas as well. China and Vietnam recently adopted a "fifty-fifty" formula for resolving not only their land border but also for resolving the conflict over jurisdiction of the Tonkin Bay. It was truly amazing that they could adopt the "fifty-fifty" formula and divide jurisdiction over the bay in half. It is also well-known that one solution for resolving disputes over territorial waters and exclusive economic zones between sovereign states is "parting the sea in the middle." This may often more difficult to do in the case of maritime borders than land borders because of the problem of overlapping claims. Japan

and Russia, whose relations have been hampered by problems of maritime sovereignty since the end of WWII, recently agreed to pay closer attention to the successful results of the Sino-Russian border settlement. The Japanese side has suggested that a fifty-fifty solution would be appropriate. This would entail evenly dividing the disputed area (When Taro Aso was Japanese foreign minister he alluded to this solution in 2006. Also, some foreign policy elites and politicians support this idea regardless of their party's official stance). In this paper, the author examines Japan's border issues with the purpose of seeking a future model for the resolution of maritime border disputes.

### **Tedious Conventional Wisdom on the Japan-Russian Border Dispute**

The reason why Russia and China had a stake in resolving the border issues is because of their geopolitical situation. Looking back at the history of Chinese negotiations vis-à-vis neighboring countries, China has long struggled with border stability. China has long borders of some 22,800 kilometers with Mongolia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar, Laos, Vietnam, North Korea, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan. In short, China's security and foreign policy truly depend on border stability.

Border politics also work for Russia as well as China because Russia is also a large country that has borders of a total length of 20,000 kms. For Russia, with the exception of the borders with China and Japan, all of the disputes were with former Soviet Republics. Particularly, resolving the 7,000 kilometers of disputed territory with Kazakhstan and the 1,500 kilometers of disputed territory with Ukraine were critical to the interests of Russia. Of course, Russia still has challenges to overcome. Even though a border treaty was signed with Estonia in 2005 after almost a decade of negotiations, Russia refused to ratify the agreement because of Estonian resistance to parts of the agreement. Russia's unresolved border dispute with Japan still remains, however.

If Russia has a stake in resolving its territorial dispute with Japan,

then why is it so challenging? After the declaration of a final settlement of the Sino-Russian border dispute, Russia and Japan started to place their hopes on the possibility of applying the Sino-Russian model to resolving the Japan-Russia territorial disputes.

Both sides officially pointed out the differences between the Sino-Russian and Japan-Russia territorial disputes. A lack of political will appears to be a major obstacle that needs to be overcome before any territorial dispute can be resolved. Following World War II, the shared border between the Soviet Union and Japan was reduced from 4,300 kilometers between the Soviet Union and Manchukuo to only the channels between Sakhalin and the Kurile Islands. When compared to Sino-Soviet relations, there was little potential for border conflict to develop into geographic hot spots between the Soviet Union and Japan.

In addition, the territorial disputes seem to be of little importance for Japan-Russia relations in the sense that even if a peace treaty or border demarcation agreement were signed, it might not be of much consequence for either side. Russia and Japan had peacefully coexisted for the past forty years even during the Cold War period but they have not been particularly good neighbors. Not that they have been great enemies in the traditional sense. In the post-Cold War period, Japan-Russia relations have slowly but gradually developed. Neither government feels an acute need to compromise with the other concerning the disputed islands. This is in great contrast to Sino-Russian border negotiations. If Russia and Japan had threatened to go to war over the territorial issue, they would have already resolved the conflict.

Nevertheless, the Cold War ended 20 years ago, Russia and Japan can now express their will freely and have more opportunities to realize that will. In fact, Japan and Russia have also declared their will to resolve the border dispute and to conclude a peace treaty on numerous occasions over these past years. President Putin officially announced the possible transfer of two islands, Habomai and Shikotan, to Japan after signing a peace treaty according to the Soviet-Japanese

joint declaration in 1956. Japan showed little interest in accepting the offer but sometimes vaguely suggested that it might depart from its official position of demanding the return of all four islands (Habomai, Shikotan, Kunashiri, Etorofu). This position dates back to the 1960s after Soviet-Japanese border negotiations broke off in the mid-1950s.

How should this “vacuum” in the Japan-Russia negotiation process be filled? Both sides tried to formulate an answer. In Kawana in 1998, Japan proposed that the four islands be returned at a later date, but no date was fixed (Russia likened it to a kind of “Hong Kong” method). Russia rejected Japan’s proposal, but did propose a treaty of peace and friendship, in which border dispute negotiations would continue using a different framework. Other suggestions were advanced but not endorsed.

In October 2004, it was reported that the mostly successful Sino-Russian deal on the border could provide some new insights for resolving the current territorial dispute between Japan and Russia. Some Japanese specialists on Russia, who had maintained a hard stance on the border dispute with Russia, commented that Japan should also make some concessions to Russia. The Russian side reacted in a similar manner. Both countries officially remain indifferent, though. Indeed, a plausible formula for resolving the Japan-Russia case is the “fifty-fifty” formula. One possible scenario, if the “fifty-fifty” formula were applied, is a transfer of three of the four islands to Japan while the largest and most strategic island, Etorofu, remains a part of Russia forever. The time has come to challenge the conventional wisdom of Japan-Russia negotiations and to look at other ways at resolving the dispute.

### **Relocating Fragmented Issues for a Mutually Beneficial Package: Security, Sea Management, Economics and Locals**

If Russia and Japan were to seriously consider the “fifty-fifty” resolution, what would a “win-win” situation look like?

a) **A diplomatic face saving device:** Russia had never planned to hand all of the disputed islands to Japan even during the early Yeltsin years.



Russia would never accept the Japanese demand to return all four islands. This would be interpreted as a total defeat for Russian diplomacy, and a reversal of Russia's victory over Japan following WWII. Japan, in turn, has difficulties accepting the two island option that Russia recently proposed in line with the 1956 joint declaration. If Japan were to agree to the "two island" option, Russia may be targeted by Japanese nationalist circles which would denounce the time lost— fifty years since 1956—as a total waste. The important thing to remember is that the two islands, Habomai and Shikotan, occupy only 7 % of all the disputed territory. If the "fifty-fifty" formula were adopted, with Kunashiri Island handed over to Japan, then 38 % of the total disputed territory would belong to Japan.

**b) Security:** From a strategic point of view, Etorofu Island looks more important for its geo-strategic value than the others. Hitokappu (Kasatka) Bay is famous for being the starting point for Japanese warships en route to Pearl Harbor in 1941. Tennei (Burevestnik) Airport is also well equipped. The most favorable benefit of keeping Etorofu is that the island has a 1,000 meter deep northeastern strait where nuclear submarines could freely navigate. Therefore, Russia's control of Etorofu would be of great benefit to its security. In contrast, Kunashiri has less strategic value. The straits between Kunashiri and Etorofu are 400 meters deep and narrower than the former. In addition, if Shikotan is transferred to Japan, Japan could easily check submarine navigation through water surveillance sites situated in the eastern coast of Shikotan. The strait could be controlled by Japan. Therefore, if Russia prepares the two island option, then the importance of Kunashiri for Russia would be reduced.

**c) Sea Management:** the law of the sea does not necessarily present a solution to disputes over maritime jurisdiction a priori, but some guidance is possible. If a maritime border, namely, an exclusive economic zone (EEZ) is drawn, Japan would receive 40 % of all "disputed" sea areas, even if Japan were to receive only the two islands along with the surrounding sea. Some Russian specialists recognized this fact, and nevertheless recommended the two island option. After I proposed a three island option as being inspired by the "fifty-fifty"

formula for resolving the territorial disputes between Russia and Japan at a conference held at the Asia Pacific Center, Honolulu in December 2003, the Russian newspaper “Izvestiia” (on Feb. 4, 2004) criticized it because it believed it would result in a loss of sea benefits if the three island option were accepted but I easily rebuffed this criticism. If Russia were to accept the two island option, the actual loss of sea area, if Kunashiri were transferred to Japan, would be quite small—one-tenth of all “disputed” sea area. This means that the three island option would not significantly hurt Russian interests in the area. In contrast, Japan would also incur benefits from this. The Shiretoko Peninsula, a recently elected world heritage site, is naturally part of Kunashiri. The straits between Shiretoko and Kunashiri are 6.3 meters in depth and twenty kilometers in width. How can the two places be divided? If Kunashiri were handed to Japan, Japanese opinion and sentiments over Russia could be calmed to Russia’s benefit.

**d) Local opinions:** One notable difference between the Sino-Russian and the Japan-Russia case is that a local population resides on the disputed islands. The residents should be categorized as either old residents, Japanese who have been living on the islands even before Soviet control, or new residents, Russians who moved there after the old residents were expelled. One of Japan’s reasons for the four island option is concern for the old residents living mostly in Nemuro City, close to the disputed islands. Japan argues that the four islands belong naturally to Japan proper, and have never been controlled by a foreign country during its history. Therefore, the will of the people including the old residents provides legitimacy to Japan’s official line. Recently, local opinion, including the old residents, has changed. I conducted an opinion poll on the “northern territorial issue” in Nemuro City in July 2005, and found that more than 60 % were in favor of revising Japan’s official line of “returning the four islands.” Most of them supported the two islands plus alpha option: “the two islands first and the remaining islands left for further discussion,” or “two islands and some of the remaining two islands.” Relatives of the old residents follow this same tendency. In Nemuro City, a difference between ordinary citizens and the relatives of

the old residents is no longer apparent. How about the new residents? It is well-known that a divergence of opinion and stances among the islanders appears to have grown. Shikotan residents have prepared for a political decision to have the island returned to Japan. Etorofu rejects the transfer, while Kunashiri stands in the middle. Locals living near the border area have waited a long time for a marked compromise by Russia and Japan on the basis of the “fifty-fifty” formula.

### **Overriding the hesitancy of the actors and Focusing on a “Win-win Scenario”**

Why do Russia and Japan hesitate to take that step forward? One reason may be the following: both countries worry about possible results of applying the “fifty-fifty” formula. The experience of past cases suggest that a “fifty-fifty” formula could easily turn a “win-win” situation into a “lose-lose” one for both concerned parties.

For Japan, the official position of “returning the four islands” was created during the Cold War, and reviewing previous policies vis-à-vis Russia would be risky. Particularly, political leaders are afraid of how voters would react if old policies were revised. They are inclined to follow the old line—which Russia would never accept—and feel safe by maintaining the status quo. This sort of thinking, resulting from a business-as-usual attitude and bureaucratic indecision, fails to take the initiative and move forward.

For Russia, despite Putin’s strong will to resolve the border dispute, a tide of patriotism prevents any reasonable solution from defusing the current conflict. Russians often worry about the next concession to foreign countries, following deals with China and Kazakhstan. Latvia’s sudden and revived claims over disputed territory, which should have already been settled, have provoked further unease among Russians. It seems difficult for Russian leaders to manage border disputes if the disputed territory in question was acquired as a result of Russia’s “great history,” particularly if related to WWII.

These concerns are understandable in examining the cases in Eurasia. Negotiations toward a final deal proved to be tougher than previous

negotiations. The public may criticize a “mutually acceptable compromise” as a unilateral concession. Following a “fifty-fifty” formula may result in the loss of some portions of disputed territories, so a declaration of a “win-win” solution could just as easily be interpreted as a “lose-lose” result. In the case of the Sino-Central Asian border disputes, despite a relatively more open Central Asian media when compared to China, they did hand over some disputed places to China, showing that the governments acted in the way claimed by the opposition.

The Sino-Kyrgyz case was the most contentious. Anti-president demonstrations, fanned by the political opposition against Askar Akaev, were fueled by a campaign against transferring any of the disputed territories in Badkhih to China. Owing to this opposition the 1999 agreement repeatedly failed to be ratified by parliament. In 2002, a massive movement against the president around South Kyrgyzstan heated up. They argued for the release from jail of political opposition leaders, the resignation of the President, and the annulment of the 1999 agreement. In May, President Akaev ratified the agreement, but Premier Kurmanbek Bakiev was forced to resign and take responsibility for the disorder. This was a rehearsal for the coming “Tulip Revolution” in March, 2005. The Kyrgyz case suggests that there is a risk in attempting to resolve a border dispute along the lines of the “fifty-fifty” formula.

However, it is also important for a negotiator to learn from the lessons of the past. China and Tajikistan keenly watched the Kyrgyz situation. Coincidentally, both governments declared the finalization of the border dispute in May 2002. The flow of information was tightly controlled. The author discovered that Tajikistan had agreed to hand about 3.5% of the disputed territory over to China, which amounts to approximately 1,000 square kilometers. Although the author can make an educated guess about the locations of these places, they have yet to be mapped out precisely. Even now, it is officially veiled in secrecy and no map of the area has been issued because the demarcation work is not yet finished.

Lessons were also learned from the final stages of the Sino-Russian negotiation process. Information about the negotiation process was well

controlled as mentioned above. Just after the Putin - Hu declaration in October 2004, few details were officially announced. Some groundless rumors concerning the status of Heixiazi Island and Abagaitui Island were widespread in the Russian media. Chinese scholars were not allowed to discuss the issues even after the declaration. China ratified the supplementary agreement a few weeks before Russia, but it was only publicized after Russia had ratified the supplementary agreement. The details are just now being made public following the transfer of territory to China in August 2008.

The gulf to be bridged between Russia and Japan seems impassible, but when both sides fully consider the objective benefits that would follow once their territorial disputes are resolved, and promote a “win-win scenario” in public, the results would be apparent. The “fifty-fifty” formula seems to be the only possible way of overcoming the current deadlock. Although resolving the territorial disputes between Japan and Russia may take time, the trend prevailing in Eurasia will have a definitive impact on the foreseeable future. In turn, Russian and Japanese adoption or rejection of the formula would be a clear indicator of its applicability to other disputes, particularly, in a maritime context.

### **Conclusion: Tactics for the “Win-Win” Scenario**

To conclude this paper, the author will shed light on some practical proposals for a “win-win” solution on the basis of the “fifty-fifty” formula.

**a) Media management:** For democratic countries, how the media reacts to a border issue is often a decisive factor. A democratic government is not able and mostly unwilling to silence the media as some authoritarian countries are able to do. If the mainstream media fans a nationalistic mood in the public, positive proposals will be rejected. How to manage the situation? Although the exact details of a probable solution should be hidden from public view, frequent allusions to the solution could prevent the spread of sensationalism. Getting the public used to a coming solution is a necessary condition to realize a solution.

This is because border demarcation is a long and drawn-out process. If a deal were suddenly and unexpectedly announced, it would become extremely vulnerable to criticism. Another way is to involve high-ranking news editors in the process. If they share a “common” goal of working toward a viable solution, they could encourage the public to accept a more constructive way (as opposed to criticizing the approach as “spineless”). In contrast, the right wing media, whose essential feelings are more emotional than rational (such as “Russia is bad because it is Russia”), must be disengaged. When the right wing media is isolated from the mainstream media, a more conducive atmosphere for realizing a solution will be created.

**b) Depoliticized Association with Officials and Politician:** Researchers are often tempted to maintain good ties with foreign policy elites, particularly those belonging to a policy making community such as the foreign ministry, the defence ministry and the national intelligence agencies. They will benefit if they obtain unpublicized information and let their ideas influence government policy through them. However, if they are involved in policy making circles and are privy to unknown facts regarding the border negotiation process, they may become “supporters”, consciously or unconsciously, of the government. In the context of a border dispute, they may show their “opportunism” without academic reflection. Bureaucracy never takes responsibility for political decisions and always needs an excuse to make policy changes which are normally forced by the top or by a politician. A researcher who has different ideas but keeps good pragmatic ties with the bureaucracy seems valuable when the time has come for a policy change. It is true that risks should be taken not only by officials but by politicians as well. Only the latter can take risks and persuade the public to understand that the “fifty-fifty” deal is in their best interest. However, politicians are easily voted out of office. A researcher, fully dependent on a politician, may also lose the effectiveness of policy advocacy once her/his “boss” is out of office. Keeping a safe distance is the key to effectively managing such a relationship.

**c) Using the External Pressure and Comparative Analysis:** Sometimes

external factors influence the border negotiation process. In the Japan-Russia case, the US factor is of decisive influence for historical reasons (because of its role in the birth of the “territorial issue” at the Yalta conference and the breakdown of the Japan-Soviet normalization process in the 1950s) and for military reasons as well. US support of the “fifty-fifty” deal is a necessary condition not only for Japan but for Russia. If the US expands its military influence to current Russian-controlled territory, Russia will never make any concessions to Japan. A “China card” may work in a different way. Lessons from the Sino-Russian border dispute give us valuable hints for how Japan should negotiate with Russia. With Chinese expertise, Japan could identify and learn more positive approaches for overcoming border challenges.

Border research must be conducted adopting broader and comparative perspectives. All border problems have their unique profile. However, when people unnecessarily cling to the uniqueness of a particular border dispute, then challenges become insurmountable. Countering the uniqueness of the border discourse should be considered a top priority of border studies. In conclusion, discourse management is important in resolving these issues and border negotiations cannot move forward in a positive direction without consideration of local people’s views of the border region.

## **SECURITY BUILDING AND POLITICAL CONFIDENCE IN NORTHEAST ASIA: HISTORY, PSYCHOLOGY, POLITICS AND CULTURE**

*Victor Larin*

Let us begin from definitions: what is “political confidence”? Contemporary political theory treats this term as people’s confidence in political leaders, their attitude towards specific political institutions and the government in general. Business communities use “the political confidence index” to estimate the reliability of a certain government. The theory and practice of international relations utilizes the concept of “confidence-building measures” primarily considered in military terms. None of these interpretations can be applied to estimate relations between states, which to a substantial degree are determined by the perceptions that peoples and governments have of each other. In these perceptions the degree of confidence (or distrust) these governments demonstrate to each other plays an important role.

In this context “political confidence” can be interpreted as the skill and readiness of the political elites of the various countries to trust foreign leaders and governments, to shape the country’s domestic and foreign policy in terms of the predictability of their behavior in bilateral relations and in devising solutions to international problems. Undoubtedly, these elites should have sufficient foundation for such level of confidence. I do not apply the expression “political trust” to this category of international relations as the word trust means, to my mind, indistinct psychological faith while the word “confidence”, though it has some irrational roots, also includes understanding and knowledge. Political confidence is one of the core sources of a country’s foreign policy as well as one of the basics of present day international interaction. Mutual political confidence ensures stability in bi-



lateral relations while the absence of confidence threatens to provoke complications and conflicts.

### **The bases for confidence and distrust**

The shape of bilateral relations in Northeast Asia [NEA], if examined through the prism of political confidence/distrust, was formed under the influence of two factors: The first factor was the historical experience behind these relations. This experience resulted in the presence or absence of unresolved inter-state problems, which give rise to contradictions, conflicts, non-communication and distrust; The second factor was the experience of cross-cultural interaction. The greater the difference in the cultures, in the mentality of the peoples concerned, the greater their reasons to harbor disbelief and suspicions. The first factor played a determining role in relations between the states of the region. The second has had great significance for relations between Asian and European cultures, first of all for Russia and the USA.

Naturally, the presence or absence of confidence in a partner state is related to many variables. In particular, they include the nature of the political regime and the ruling authority (its tolerance, openness and publicity); its desire to establish relations of confidence with other countries; its skill and readiness to trust others; the formulation of national interests and estimations of the threats to national security; public opinion and public moods, and so on. Clichés of the kind that are found in the mass consciousness of people such as the “China threat”, “American hegemony”, or “Russian expansionism” seriously undermine the possibility of creating political confidence between the states of the region.

Adequate theoretical and empirical support for foreign policy decisions is very important also. This support furthers the ability of the relevant authority to understand the motivations and the “algorithm” of its partner state’s behavior. The absence of clarity about these motivations gives rise to maxims about “the unpredictability” of the country and its political leaders; the presence of the latter indicates an ability to influence the future actions of these leaders in a desired direction.

Must confidence be mutual? The basic truth is that distrust towards adjacent states generates a tendency toward the strengthening of one's own state, which in turn, strengthens suspiciousness and distrust amongst those neighboring states. In the world generally, and in NEA in particular, there are more reasons for mutual suspicions, than for faith in the sincerity of partner. As a result the security of each and all is threatened. The direction of global and regional politics also effects the formation of confidence/distrust relations between states. Both the world and the region demonstrate multi-vector tendencies. On one hand, the scale of economic, political and humanitarian interaction is growing. The volume of trade increases. Cross-border investments have developed to an unprecedented level. Bilateral and multilateral institutions (in NEA they include "strategic", "promising" and other partnerships such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the Six-Party Talks on North Korea) appeared. More than 20 million people yearly travel from country to country across the borders of North East Asia alone.

On the other hand, globalization and regionalism affect the deep layers of national cultures and traditions and create in nations and peoples an instinctive desire for self-preservation in defense of their identity. The measures the states have undertaken to protect their cultures, languages, traditions, as well as to defend their right to their own interpretation of history have had dual results. They have strengthened national self-consciousness but they have also resulted in growing feelings of national selfishness and nationalism in their most extreme forms. This has entailed aggravated relations between countries and mutual irritation, suspiciousness and distrust. These processes help to overcome the economic and political boundaries between countries and peoples, but simultaneously they preserve and at times even strengthen ideological and psychological barriers. The repulsive forces in the region are as strong as the forces of mutual attraction. Individualism, personal and local selfishness, ethnic ambitions, historical grievances and religious prejudices frequently prevail over trends to peace and mutual prosperity. Distorted perceptions predominate in the region. They arise from

differences in cultures, social and political systems, economic models of development, and also from the predominantly negative historical experience people have of each other in the region. The politics of the region together with propaganda and the mass media work not for regional integration but against it. Channels of information are distorted, and clogged by political clichés.

## 2. Historical factors

Historical memory was always one of the key components of the public consciousness of East Asian peoples. In China, Japan, and Korea history is not so much a field of knowledge, as a way of public thinking. Leszek Buszynski wrote about, “collectivist Asian cultures, with their strong emphasis upon group cohesion, the memory of the past shapes group identity”.<sup>1</sup> An appeal to the historical past traditionally was influential and even decisive in political and philosophical discussions. Today it is one of the regulators of bilateral relations. It is no wonder that history becomes a powerful ideological weapon and simultaneously an insurmountable obstacle to the development of political confidence among the states of the region.

Actually, in East Asia a new “Cold War” is on the way, which takes historical and ideological form, and sometimes with economic and political influences. The war is conducted over the right to have one’s own view of history, which is related to the quest for national self-identification. This means the education of the younger generations in the spirit of patriotism, self-esteem, national pride. Ultimately, it is about the right to sovereignty and leadership in the region. And these are in no way inoffensive scientific discussions. Conflicts to a considerable degree arise from different treatment of the historical past and they give rise to the larger threats to the stability of the region, more so than territorial disputes or economic friction.

At the end of the 20th century the Japanese quest for national identity was stimulated by a series of political actions, which pro-

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<sup>1</sup> Leszek Buszynski. *Asia Pacific Security - Values and Identity*. London and New York: Routledge-Curzon, 2004, p. 2.

voked extremely negative reactions from Japan's neighbors, primarily China and South Korea. Prime Minister Koizumi's visits to the Yasukuni shrine, the Japanese Ministry of Education's approval of new historical textbooks, prepared by the members of conservative Japanese association for the reform of textbooks, were among these actions. The "China-Japan joint declaration", signed during the Obuchi-Jiang Zemin summit of 1998, included an agreement to create a joint commission for preparing a shared version of East Asian history, acceptable to both sides.<sup>2</sup> However, in 2001 the Japanese Ministry of Education once again granted official approval for a school textbook produced by a conservative group called Japan's Society for Textbook Reform (Tsukuru Kai) which attempted to rewrite and "whitewash" Japanese history. It did not provide any material related to the atrocities committed by Japan in China and Korea and made Japan's national victimhood during the Asia Pacific War the dominant theme in this narrative.<sup>3</sup> Afterwards, Japan's relations with China and South Korea entered a dangerous phase. Tight economic interdependence between Japan and China and their fear of damage to their own economies has become the only barrier to prevent escalation of a serious conflict.

However, the Chinese people's discontent erupted in April 2005. There were spontaneous anti-Japanese demonstrations in more than 30 Chinese cities. Hundreds of thousands of people participated in these demonstrations. The Chinese government had to exert a big effort to suppress this wave of dissatisfaction. Relations between two countries seriously deteriorated. Some experts had reasons to conclude "that China and Japan are becoming rivals... and this rivalry has also partly resulted from past interactions. Both sides felt frustrated because of their previous encounters. The Chinese feel resentful that Japan has not owned up to its past aggression, despite China's best efforts to be a friend. The Japanese feel frustrated that China has not

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<sup>2</sup> Japan-China Joint Declaration On Building a Partnership of Friendship and Cooperation for Peace and Development - <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/China/visit98/joint.html>.

<sup>3</sup> Bukh Alexander. "Japan's History Textbooks Debate. National Identity in Narratives of Victimhood and Victimization", *Asian Survey*. 2007. Vol. XLYII, No. 5. September/October, pp. 683-704.

changed its mind about Japan, despite its repeated apologies and generous economic cooperation packages”.<sup>4</sup>

At that time similar anti-Japanese demonstrations arose in South Korea also. Prior to these events, in March 2005, the South Korean National Security Council (NSC) accused Japan of "anachronistic history distortion" and proclaimed new principles in the ROK-Japan relationship based on "universal merit and human common sense." South Korean Unification Minister and the Chairman of the NSC's standing committee, Chung Dong-young, who announced these new principles, urged Japan to change its "unrepentant attitude" and proclaimed the Korea government's intention to build a new South Korea-Japanese relationship on the basis of a "thorough investigation of history", and Japan's "sincere apology" for war crimes and "self-reflection".<sup>5</sup>

Meanwhile, Japanese conservatives, who attempted to rewrite history and redirect the collective memory of the Japanese towards their own view, kindled the conflict. The Chinese version of history has its special features also. Not by chance that April 2005, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Japan Michimura stated that it would do no harm to examine the Chinese textbooks to identify their anti-Japanese content. He accused the Chinese government of kindling anti-Japanese moods in the country.<sup>6</sup> Henceforth, "the perverted version of war history has become a fundamental issue between China and Japan. It prevents any rational discussion and has become the major obstacle to building a solid foundation for peace in East Asia".<sup>7</sup> Today "Beijing's policy towards Japan has not been driven by popular nationalistic sentiments, but rather has displayed visible signs of both pragmatism and flexibility."<sup>8</sup> nevertheless, anybody can see the stiffening

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<sup>4</sup> Ming Wan. *Sino-Japanese Relations: Interaction, Logic, and Transformation*. Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 2006, pp. 338-340.

<sup>5</sup> "S. Korea issues new principles over ties with Japan", *People's Daily Online*. March 18, 2005 - [http://english.people.com.cn/200503/18/eng20050318\\_177349.html](http://english.people.com.cn/200503/18/eng20050318_177349.html).

<sup>6</sup> Chan Che-po and Bridges Brian. "China, Japan, and the Clash of Nationalisms", *Asian Perspective*. 2006. Vol. 30. No. 1, 2006. p.147.

<sup>7</sup> Yung-deh Richard Chu, "Historical and Contemporary Roots of Sino-Japanese Conflicts," In James C. Hsiung [editor] *China and Japan at Odds: Deciphering the Perpetual Conflict.*, Palgrave, Macmillan, 2007, p. 31.

<sup>8</sup> Zhang Jiang. "The Influence of Chinese nationalism on Sino-Japanese relations," In Michael Heazle and Nick Knight [editors], *China-Japan Relations in the Twenty-first Century. Creating a Future Past?* Edward Elgar Publishing, Cheltenham, Northampton 2007, p.16.

of Beijing's position with respect to Japan. Some experts find an explanation in the fact that, "the CCP has increasingly responded to public opinion and firmed up its position toward Japan, thereby earning support from popular nationalism".<sup>9</sup>

The history of the World War II is by not any means the only subject of discussion between neighbors in the region. Chinese and South Korean scholars have similar interpretations of the history of the Russo-Japanese war which is different from the Japanese or the Russian versions. At the same time they bitterly debate the origin and history of the Kogurye and Bokhai states as each regards them as part of the history of their own country.<sup>10</sup> Territorial disputes between the countries of the region are certainly supported by historical arguments which are used to maintain the positions of the parties participating in these disputes. Some people on Korean Peninsula try to use nationalist feelings and historical narratives to construct a platform for Korean reunification. They exploit the idea of Korean Peninsula and Manchuria as the cradle of world civilization.

In 1993, South Korean President Kim Young Sam proposed that as far as "the center of world civilization is moving toward the Asia-Pacific region", the Koreans "must waste no time in taking this golden opportunity... to advance into the new world as a leading player. If and when we can stand as a unified nation in the world with a cultural tradition stretching back 5,000 years, the world community will look at us with new admiration."<sup>11</sup> The Pyongyang Museum of History displays relics and documents which prove that civilization arose on the Korean Peninsula, and that the ancestors of the Koreans excelled other peoples in

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<sup>9</sup> Chan Che-po and Bridges Brian. *China, Japan, and the Clash of Nationalisms*, p. 134.

<sup>10</sup> Korean scholars consider China's attempt to incorporate Kogurye into China's history, the so called The "North-east Project" declared in 2002 by the academic Center for China's borders history studies and supported by the Chinese government and media, was regarded "as the gravest of all potential problems between two countries", Taeho Kim. Sino-ROK Relations at a Crossroads: Looming Tensions amid Growing Interdependence - The Korean Journal of Defense Analysis. Vol. XYII. No. 1. Spring 2005. P. 142-143). It is not surprising as the Chinese "Kogurye Theory" states that the ancient Korean nation of Kogurye was actually just a Chinese Province and the most of the Korean Peninsula is the rightful historical legacy of the Chinese.

<sup>11</sup> Kim Young Sam. Report, delivered to National Assembly on the APEC Leaders Economic Meeting and official visit to U.S., Seoul, November 29, 1993 - Korea and World Affairs. Vol. XYII, No. 4. Winter 1993. P. 772.

their achievements in culture and in the military field.<sup>12</sup> Chinese scholars reply that “the approach to East Asian history demonstrated extreme nationalism in the two Koreas and contradicts the Chinese view of history... (it) can provoke conflict with China’s national interests”.<sup>13</sup>

The short list of facts and events mentioned above demonstrates that people’s moods and growing nationalism play a key role in shaping relations of political confidence (and also distrust) in East Asia. Historical experience and historical arguments are widely used to inspire patriotic feelings among young people, to explain and justify domestic and foreign policy. In this, every country follows its special interests and plays its own game. Unfortunately, the results are always the same and include growing nationalism and intolerance of other countries. Moreover, negative images of neighboring nations, like the “aggressive Russians”, the “brutal Japanese”, the “artful Chinese”, became one of the means to stimulate patriotic feelings in the people. The result is that predictable negative reactions arise amongst neighbors. It is no wonder that all attempts to form regional organizations in East Asia have failed and regional integration has not developed beyond the level of theory and political declarations. National selfishness has deeper roots than the ideas of cooperation and regionalism. These days political power derives from the people and its exercise has to take its bearings from this fact. Conflicting public moods in Japan and Russia are major obstacles to the resolution of the territorial dispute between these two countries. Negative American public opinion on North Korea is one of the main barriers to the resolution of the Korean nuclear issue. The list may continue with other examples.

### 3. Cultural factor

Whereas historical background plays an important role in relations between Asian cultures (in the context of political confidence or its absence), cultural and civilizational differences were paramount in interchanges between the East and the West and for centuries fueled mutual

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<sup>12</sup> Zadornaya E.C. "Cultural Identity Influence of inter-state relations on the Korean Peninsula", *Rossia I ATR*. 2008, № 3, pp. 156-158.

<sup>13</sup> Zhao Lianzhong, "Ezhi jiduan minzuzhuyi zhongsu dongya heping tixi,"(Restrain the extreme nationalism influence on the peace system in East Asia), *Dongbeiyi yanjiu*, № 4, 2007, p. 6.

distrust and political conflicts. All East Asian nations considered European moves to the east to be a threat to their national identities and way of life. The Japanese did not trust the Russians long before the “Kuril islands issue” appeared, and the territorial dispute merely intensified Russia’s negative image amongst the Japanese. “For a weak but independent Japan, Russian expansion in the Far East was felt to represent a profound threat. Actions like Russia’s development its Far East infrastructure, the laying of the Trans-Siberian Railway and building of port facilities at Vladivostok were all seen by Japan as tangible expression of this threat...”<sup>14</sup>

The ideological conflicts of the Cold-War period (between communism and liberal democracies as well as the USSR and China) have poured oil in the flames also. The existence of an anti-communist regime in South Korea resulted in the creation of a prejudice against Russia amongst South Koreans who tend to think that at the edge of 19th century Russia had territorial claims on Korea and aspired to make it a colony.<sup>15</sup> In a similar way the Russians do not believe their Asian neighbors. The deep difference in cultures and mentality is the reason for this distrust. In spite of long and active cooperation with East-Asian cultures – over more than one century and a half – the Russians still have very fearful and strongly mythological images of them. Russian citizens living in the Far East have the longest and diverse experience in dealing with their Asian neighbours. Nonetheless it would be risky to allege they have better understanding of these nations and their cultures. Their images of China, Japan, and two Koreas, being relatively stable for decades, are based on a compound mixture of historical, cultural, and political as well as very subjective private and emotional factors. It is not knowledge but rather old and relatively new clichés and stereotypes which determine the sympathies and antipathies of the population.

One of the oldest and determinant clichés is so called “yellow peril” syndrome, which for the first time become apparent in Russia more

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<sup>14</sup> NNakano Junzo, Japan’s Security and the Russian Far East – In: *Siberia and the Russian Far East in the 21st Century: Partners in the “Community of Asia, Crossroads in Northeast Asia*, Vol. 1. Sapporo: Slavic Research Center, Hokkaido University, 2005, p. 39.

<sup>15</sup> See: Simbirtseva T.M. “Korean scholars about Russia-South Korea relations”, <http://www.korea-forum.org/krf.html>.



than 140 years ago. Superficially the feeling of the “yellow threat” was produced by the Russian fear of all eastern nations but in fact it is identified exclusively with China, not with Korea or Japan. Different sources have been nourishing the distrust of China amongst the Russians and have provided sustenance for the notion of the “China threat” in the past.<sup>16</sup> More recently, amongst the Russians there has been the complex assumption and belief that China “has an interest in expanding in a northern direction”, that it intends to “rapaciously exploit Russian natural resources” and plans to “systematically resettle its superfluous population in Siberia and the Far East”. But the real roots of these fears and distrust lie in the long-standing vulnerability of Russia’s position in East Asia as seen in its history, geography, traditions of foreign policy, and its subconscious realization of its outsider status in the region. For the last two decades these worries have become stronger and more acute because of the growing economic and military power of China and the activities of the Chinese in Russia. All this supports the idea of a “yellow peril” in Russia.

A misrepresented notion of East Asian cultures and countries strongly influences the attitude of Far Eastern politicians, bureaucrats, businessmen and the population of the East Asian nations as a whole, and China and Japan in particular. In spite of the fact that for the last twenty years, after the destruction of the “iron curtain”, millions of Russians had the opportunity to visit Asian countries, they still have very distorted and partly mythological images of them.

As for China, every year millions of Russians enjoy travelling to this country for business, tourism and the shuttle trade. Most of them possess an image of China, the Chinese people and Chinese culture which has been created through the prism of their experience of border cit-

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<sup>16</sup> For details see: Victor Larin. “Yellow Peril” Again? The Chinese and the Russian Far East,” In: *Rediscovering Russia in Asia. Siberia and the Russian Far East*. London. 1995, pp.290-301; Larin V. L. “Yellow peril” syndrome in Russia Far Eastern policy at the beginning and at the end of XX century (Синдром “Желтой опасности” в дальневосточной политике России в начале и конце XX в.) – In: *Proceedings of Russia State Archive of the History of the Far East (Известия Российского государственного исторического архива Дальнего Востока)*. Vol. 1. Vladivostok.- 1996., pp. 34-52, and republished in Chinese in: *Dongou Zhongya yanjiu (Eastern Europe and Central Asia Studies)*. № 1, 199, pp.87-96.

ies like Heihe, Suifenhe or Harbin at the best.<sup>17</sup> They represent neither real Chinese culture nor the intelligent strata of Chinese society. At the same time, the last and largest part of the Far Eastern population drew its impressions of China from the local media which is full of anti-Chinese sentiments. The third source of knowledge about China is their own contact with Chinese traders in the markets of Russian cities. The strength of the impressions received from these very specific sources was quite enough to realize a huge difference between two cultures but was not the proper way to understand and come to love the country and its people. So this experience of China only stimulated feelings of misunderstanding, suspiciousness, enmity and sinophobia. Consequently, attitudes towards China in the Russian Far East were not only ambiguous, but also even double-faced to some extent. Officially people called for Russian-Chinese friendship and used slogans about the inevitability of collaboration, but in reality, fears, hopes and disappointments ruled over the hearts of a majority of the politicians and the ordinary citizens.

Japanese culture and Japanese people are less known in Russia than China and the Chinese. More than a century ago the Russian image of Japan was that of country of geishas, chrysanthemums, hara-kiri, tea ceremonies, and a multitude of religious festivals.<sup>18</sup> Since the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-1905, this image began to change. Now for most Russians Japan is a double-faced phenomenon. On the one hand, it remains an exotic and therefore an attractive country of polite people, ikebana, karate, high level economics and a desirable economic partner and investor. On the other hand, it is a strong political competitor with claims on Russian territories, a country of brutal warriors and insidious politicians who cannot be trusted if one turns one's back.

Nevertheless, past heritage and the level of bilateral relations be-

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<sup>17</sup> In 2008 roughly a half of Russian citizens (1.5 million of more than 3 million) visited China and came there from the Far East and most of them limited their tours to border cities. 870,000 Russian tourists came to China from Primorye, while Japan attracted only 6,200 tourists from this territory [Primorsky krai. Sotsialno-economicheskiye pokazateli 2009 (Primorye territory 2009. Social and economic indicators). -Vladivostok. 2009, p. 141.

<sup>18</sup> Semiyon I. Verbitskii, "Russian Perceptions of Japan," in James E. Goodby, Vladimir I. Ivanov, and Nobuo Shimotamai [editors] *Northern Territories" and Beyond: Russian, Japanese and American Perspectives*. Praeger: Westport, Connecticut, 1995, p. 63.

tween Russia and China and Russia and Japan have less influence upon the formation of Japanese and Chinese images than these stereotypes. This conclusion may be well seen in the results of public opinion polls. According to the survey conducted by the Institute of History in 2000, 65 per cent of Far Eastern residents said that they were friendly to the Japanese and only 32 per cent friendly to the Chinese. 6 and 23 per cent confessed they were unfriendly to the Japanese and Chinese correspondingly.

At the same time, emotionally and psychologically the people of the Far East remained European-focused and poorly prepared for integration into the cultural space of the region which they perceive as in many respects as murky and alien. When they compare themselves with the Chinese, Koreans, or the Japanese, the Russians subconsciously show their European nature and mentality. This psychology and the public values cardinally distinguish them from the East Asians.

After working on Chinese affairs for many years, I cannot miss a chance to pay special attention to Russia-China relations in the spirit of political goodwill. Formally there is very high level of political goodwill between the countries at the highest level. In 1989, Mikhail Gorbachev and Deng Xiaoping laid the corner stone in the foundation of this relationship. Their political efforts and Boris Yelt'sin and Jang Zemin's personal sympathies have broken down the wall of animosity and deep distrust between Russian and Chinese leaders. And though in some places remnants of this "wall" not only remained, but were even re-constructed by "hawks" and "hurrah-patriots" from both parties, Moscow and Peking have good reasons to call their relationship "the best ever in their history".

Nevertheless, the warm atmosphere at the highest level has no strong administrative and political support at the lower levels so that many decisions which had been made at the top "in the spirit of political trust" have remained unrealized. Both Russia and China have difficulty in perceiving and adapting to each other. Old templates and the stereotypes inherited both from pre-revolutionary and from Soviet periods of bilateral relations continue to exist. At the same time new stereotypes have been generated.

The results of a public opinion poll conducted by the Institute of History in the southern part of the Russian Far East confirm the existence of some serious obstacles to the building of real political confidence between two countries. Opinion polls of 2003 and 2008 in the Southern part of the Russian Far East show that 28-29 percent of respondents felt superiority over the Chinese, 38 percent answered that they did not, and 32 percent did not think of whether they did or did not. Every third respondent (34 percent in 2003 and 29 percent in 2008) had "feelings of repulsion" in dealing with the Chinese. 39 percent of those questioned were not familiar with this feeling; 26 percent did not notice such feelings in themselves. We should take into account that not every individual is ready publicly to admit his/her aversion towards other culture or a haughty attitude towards its representatives. There is a certain feeling of inner shame which forces some to avoid a truthful answer even if the questionnaire is anonymous. Anyway, the results of opinion polls give some ground to conclude that at least one third of the population of the Far East is infected by the virus of xenophobia mainly because people do not understand China and the Chinese and are afraid of them.

There is a group of Russian "patriots" who since the beginning of 1990s have been broadcasting their fears that China has "secret plans" to conquer Siberia and the Far East. The internet is the most inviting place for these prophets to express their dark predictions. "In 5 years China would assault Russia," Ya. Grekov convinced the readers of the "Russian Magazine"<sup>19</sup> According to A. Khamchikhin, the head of analytic department of Political and Military Analysis Institute, "there is a great possibility that China will annex Taiwan by 2010 and then begin the policy of general expansion towards Russia and Kazakhstan."<sup>20</sup> "The Kremlin has no choice. Its choice is between joining the NATO and the loss of sovereignty and "Sinicization of the country" – the author of "Russia and China in the 21st Century" V. Kamenetsky summarized.<sup>21</sup>

The basis for such fears is not knowledge derived from a zealous

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<sup>19</sup> [http://russ.ru/politics/lyudi/kitaj\\_napadet\\_na\\_rossiyu\\_cherez\\_5\\_let](http://russ.ru/politics/lyudi/kitaj_napadet_na_rossiyu_cherez_5_let)

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.apn.kz/opinions/article634.htm>

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.headway.us/read.php?i=674>

study but the personal views of the “analysts”. None can demonstrate any document where these plans could be described, and they simply assume that these plans exist “because they should exist”. Thus historical maps, displaying “the territories sawn-off by imperial Russia from China” are presented as being modern ones which are used to demonstrate “Beijing’s concealed intentions”.

Widespread disbelief in Chinese sincerity and goodwill in different strata of Russia society has encouraged inappropriate behavior in politics and has resulted in the sabotage of mutual agreements already achieved at the highest level. Here are several examples: in spite of more than 10 years of declarations, the Chinese and Russian General Consulates in Vladivostok and Harbin have not been opened yet, construction of the bridge across the Amur River has not begun yet, commercial and industrial complexes on the Russia-China border look like still born projects, and have not attract serious investment from either the Russian or the Chinese side.<sup>22</sup>

From its side, Beijing also cultivates anti-Russian feelings amongst the people of the Middle Kingdom. Beijing continues to stimulate a patriotic way of thinking amongst Chinese schoolchildren presenting them with materials about “Imperial Russia aggression against China”. Chinese politicians implant feelings of victimization in the consciousness of their citizens which may in the future give rise to powerful shoots of anti-Russian nationalism. And they are surprised when the Russians, who have been observing this development, talk constantly about the potential threat from China.

While being suspicious and distrustful towards the Chinese, the Far-Easterners demonstrate a considerably different attitude towards Koreans and Japanese. 14 percent of people questioned in 2008 admitted they felt superior over the first while 9 percent said that they had the same feeling towards the second. Only 10 and 6 percent correspondingly declared that they had feelings of repulsion towards them.

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<sup>22</sup> Some Russia-China agreements were signed; on the bridge construction across the Amur river – in June 1995, on the commercial and industrial complexes on the Russia-China border – in February 1998

Relying upon these different perceptions of the three Asian nations that the Russians have I can argue that the real reason for Russian aversion of the Chinese is not the color of the faces or the shape of their eyes, nor is it racial intolerance or “great Russian chauvinism” as some Chinese scholars say. The real reason for these feelings is cultural incompatibility. According to respondents, the main reason for this repugnance of Chinese was their behavior (27 percent of respondents), appearance (11 percent) and language (7 percent). Every fifth respondent (19 percent) admitted that these feelings were felt subconsciously.

The image of East Asia in the mind of the Russians is not just a product of their Eurocentric education as well as a consequence of Russia's long isolation from the outside world. Actually, in the Russian mentality racial and cultural consciousness dominates over geographical and territorial self-identification. The people of the Far East consider themselves to be a part of Russia, and a part of European culture. They see themselves as bearers of European culture who have brought “the light of civilization” to the indigenous peoples of the Far East. The surrounding Asian world is perceived by them not only as culturally different, but also as politically hostile and dangerous which poses a threat to the interests of Russia and Russians in the region.

Negative past heritage and cultural differences between Russia and NEA nations are not being overcome by the often vague and general foreign policies of these states. From this point of view Russia is an example. As a result the mood of the people in the region embraces such ideas as “expansionistic intentions of Peking”, “the revival of the militarist appetites” of Tokyo, the “hegemonic aspirations” of Washington, “energy blackmail” by Moscow, the “nuclear missile intentions” of Pyongyang, etc. Everybody is searching for hidden plans and projects amongst neighbors; they are looking under stones for these things. General distrust is the rule and not the exception. Most of all people do not trust in political declarations of the leaders.

In June 2009, about 300 people were asked in Primorye territory, mostly in Vladivostok, about their trust or distrust in the foreign policy declaration of some leaders of Pacific countries including Russia, China,

Japan, US, North and South Korea.<sup>23</sup> The impressive results are seen in the table 1.

**Table 1.** Level of confidence in the foreign policy declarations of political leaders (in percentage)

State leaders	Trust	Somewhat distrust	Distrust	Don't know
Russia	34	24	22	15
Japan	24	30	22	20
China	19	26	30	22
South Korea	17	27	20	31
U.S.	7	28	53	9
North Korea	6	21	50	19

The answers to the question demonstrate that:

1. The level of distrust in every political leader is substantially higher than the level of confidence.

2. The U.S. and North Korea are two countries with the least level of political confidence among Russians.

3. Disbelief in US policy shows that the cultural factor in trust/distrust in foreign leaders is less important than political stereotypes with their roots in strategic and ideological rivalry. The survey was conducted soon after the second North Korean nuclear test of May 25, 2009 which highlighted people's fears of an escalation of the conflict on the Korean peninsula and American military intervention.

The answers to two other questions support this conclusion. Asked about which countries threaten Russia's security, 69% of respondents mentioned the US (strongly agree 38% and somewhat agree 31%) and 65% – North Korea (strongly agree 38% and somewhat agree 27%). The threat from China exists for 52% of respondents (correspondingly, 28 and 24 percent) and from Japan for 45% (16 and 29 percent).

Asked about the main threats to Russia's security in East Asia, the respondents placed "North Korean nuclear weapons" in first place (53% of respondents) and "the U.S. search for hegemony" in second place (41%); "international terrorism" was next (31%), the "absence of a peace treaty between Russia and

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<sup>23</sup> Actually as the number of those questioned was relatively small the results of this poll provide a way to view tendencies in the people's mood and the results cannot be considered authoritative for the entire country.

Japan” with (29%) while “China’s growing economic and military power” followed with (25%), it seemed less urgent for many people than the first two.

Public disbelief in Russia’s policy is relatively high also. At present Russia does not have territorial claims on any country in NEA, and does not claim economic, political and cultural leadership in the region. Russia also does not demonstrate any military ambitions there. Russia maintains a rather neutral position in the various historical discussions between the countries of the region and does not compete with them in the economic field. Nevertheless, old stereotypes are still alive. Russia is thoroughly examined for the traces of “Soviet expansionism,” as though it were under the microscope. So Russia attempts to strengthen its economic position in the region through energy projects and if it protects its national interests its actions will be labeled as “recidivist nationalism”.

My conclusion may be very pessimistic: political confidence between the nations of the region is impossible in the foreseeable future. The weight of mutual grievances is too heavy and overloaded. The strength of inertia is too great. The forces ready to close the door on the past and to move into the future are too weak yet. These reasons by themselves prescribe that the goal and “algorithm” of Russia’s actions in NEA are different from those of the East Asian states. Russia has to prove its Asian status, to compensate for its weak economic presence and cultural influence in region. It also should eliminate its negative image of an aggressive and dangerous empire which has taken root in the consciousness of a considerable number of East Asians. Russia should also fight against the efforts of certain influential political circles in the region to maintain this image. Russia should create an attractive cultural niche for itself among the peoples of NEA. Is this possible in the foreseeable future? There are more reasons to say “no” to the above question than “yes”. However, the chance to rectify this situation exists. The right diagnosis of the illness creates a chance for recovery. The major difficulties are in the mind. Europe and the European community provide examples of what can be done. Not all in the European experience can be useful for Asia, but widening the contacts and deepening mutual understanding between nations would be the first priority.





**RUSSIA-CHINA-INDIA TRIANGULAR RELATIONS AND  
THE UNITED STATES  
INTERNATIONAL ALIGNMENTS AND PROSPECTS FOR  
PEACE IN NORTHEAST ASIA**

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This study will reflect broadly on shifts in national capabilities and patterns of alignments current in East Asia in an effort to think about how those alignments might be conducive to cooperation among nations in Northeast Asia. The focus will be on relations among the great powers. Realist assumptions will underpin the analysis.

**The Simultaneous Rise of Multiple Great Powers in East Asia**

A key trend in contemporary East Asia is the simultaneous rise of several East Asian great powers, China, Japan, India, and Russia. “Rise” here refers to a rapid, sustained growth in national capabilities, combined with an attempt by the state to translate those increased national capabilities into both greater status in the international hierarchy of states and greater influence on events in areas of vital interest to the state.

Never before in modern history has Asia witnessed the simultaneous rise of multiple indigenous powers. During the 19th century, European powers and the United States pushed into East Asia, while East Asian states struggled to survive and adapt in the face of Western onslaught. In the first half of the 20th century, Japanese power waxed, while Chinese power waned and Russia struggled to defend its Far Eastern possessions against Japan. After 1949,

while China “rose” under Mao Zedong, Japan slumbered under comfortable American protection and India under equally comfortable Soviet protection. Now, China, Japan, India, and Russia are all rising at the same time. This elemental fact is certain to have important ramifications which this paper will explore.

### **Rising China**

The most important trend is the growth of China’s national capabilities. The high rate of growth of the Chinese economy over the past thirty years is remarkable, literally unparalleled for a large economy. China with its continental-size economy has achieved rates of growth comparable to much smaller earlier East Asian industrializers—South Korea, Taiwan, and Japan. In the process, China has acquired and assimilated vast quantities of advanced technology. It has effectively marketized its economy and harnessed Hong Kong and Taiwan’s dynamic economies to the modernization of the Chinese mainland. As a result, China’s GDP is already the 2nd largest in the world measured by Purchasing Power Parity (PPP).<sup>1</sup> Extrapolation of recent development trends into the future show per capita standards of living comparable to Taiwan or Hong Kong in the 1980s, this would give China an aggregate economy several times the size of the United States, which will make China the world’s largest economy sometime in the next two decades. China’s government has proven itself able to extract large revenues from its economy, and has invested heavily in scientific and technological development, including space with its immense military relevance. The modernization of the People’s Liberation Army takes the U.S. military as the standard to be met or surpassed, and it pays close attention to the latest trends in warfare, and aims ultimately for parity with the United States in the Western Pacific.

The rapid growth of Chinese capabilities is wedded to a deep-rooted national pride, to a sense that China is by right one of the leading

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<sup>1</sup> PPP data of the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the Central Intelligence Agency are compared at, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_countries\\_by\\_GDP\\_\(PPP\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_GDP_(PPP)) China is number three if the European Union countries are considered as a unit.

countries of the world. The dominant psychological complex of contemporary China, the complex underlying modern Chinese nationalism in its various guises, is a conviction that China underwent a “century of national humiliation” at the hands of imperialism during the period between 1839 and 1949. With Liberation, the Chinese people “stood up,” and waged bitter struggle to force various powers to respect China, accelerating the drive to reestablish China in its rightful position in the world. Different Chinese nationalists have different ideas about just what China’s rightful position is, but there is a broad consensus that China’s civilizational achievements over several millennia suggest that China should be at or near the apex of the international power hierarchy.

Great question marks loom over China’s development (environment, political brittleness combined with accumulated social discontent, the continued mixing of political power and market, etc), but the same is true of all countries. China’s “rise” over the past half century has been remarkable, and it is a good bet that the world is now witnessing the emergence of a new global power, one that may well become over the next 30-40 years the world’s most powerful state.

### **Japan’s Rise**

Japan began inching toward playing a larger international political and even military role in the 1980s out of concern over securing the uninterrupted flow of energy, mineral resources, food imports and exports.<sup>2</sup> This was twinned with concern about the reliability of the Japan’s ally, the United States, and the growing capabilities of the Soviet Union. By 1990 Japan was the world’s number one distributor of development aid—a position it held until 2001, when it was surpassed by the United States. In 2006 Japan fell to third place (being surpassed by the U.K.), but third place still represents considerable international activism.<sup>3</sup>

The process of Japan’s “rise” accelerated in the 1990s with the em-

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<sup>2</sup> Richard J. Samuels. *Securing Japan; Tokyo’s Grand Strategy and the Future of East Asia*, Cornell University Press, 2007..

<sup>3</sup> Hisane Masaki, “More proof of the rising Sun’s eclipse,” *Asia Times*, 17 July. - 2007.

barrassment Japan suffered from its “checkbook diplomacy” during the 1991 Gulf War, and from China’s adamant continued push for nuclear weapons development in the face of Japanese protests. Following the Taiwan Straits crisis of 1996, Japanese leaders concluded that failure to stand by the U.S. in the event of a war over Taiwan would probably destroy Japan’s alliance with the United States. Rather than face this, they decided to move toward closer security cooperation with the United States. Japanese were also shocked by the harshness of China’s rhetoric and sometimes its diplomatic treatment of Japan. A sense that Japan should move beyond the guilt of World War II inspired many Japanese leaders, including successive Prime Ministers, and this fueled a drive to transform Japan into a “normal country.” By the 2000s Japan was lobbying to become a permanent member of the U.N. Security Council. Following the 11 September 2001 attacks, Japan dispatched a naval squadron to support coalition anti-Taliban military efforts in Afghanistan, and following the ouster of Saddam Hussein in Iraq in 2003, Japan dispatched a small military force to participate in Iraq’s reconstruction.

The “history issue” hangs over Japan’s drive for greater international status. It is widely believed in Japan, however, that China uses the history issue instrumentally, as a way of thwarting or slowing Japan’s re-emergence to international prominence. By harping continually on Japan’s “war guilt,” by fanning anti-Japanese sentiment with sometimes vicious propaganda, by refusing to inform the Chinese people of the vast economic assistance given to China by Japan and by refusing to credit Japan’s repeated and heart-felt expressions of regret for the 1930s and 1940s, Beijing attempts to undermine Japan’s quest for higher international status. At least that is a common Japanese view of things.<sup>4</sup>

## **India’s Rise**

The dissolution of the USSR left India without a backer among the major powers and with a sense of dangerous isolation. By the mid-1990s India

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<sup>4</sup> Emperor Akihito, for example, in October 1992 during the first-ever visit by a Japanese emperor, said: “In the long history of relationship between our two countries, there was an unfortunate period in which my country inflicted great sufferings on the people of China. I deeply deplore this.”

found itself as the target of combined U.S.-Chinese pressure to renounce the quest for nuclear weapons and accede to the Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT) as a non-nuclear-weapon state. International pressure on India mounted during the negotiations over the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and the NPT Extension and Review Conference, and in the aftermath of India's nuclear weapons tests in May 1998. International pressure forced Indian cancellation of a planned atomic bomb test in 1995, and was, at least from the Indian perspective, an attempt to force India to permanently "close the door" on the acquisition of nuclear weapons. New Delhi viewed the division of nations into two classes, nuclear weapons states and non nuclear weapons states, as intrinsically unfair -as nuclear apartheid. If some states insisted on keeping nuclear weapons, India too would have to acquire them. India would not accept second class status.<sup>5</sup>

At the same time India was grappling with its new isolation, a debate was unfolding among India's elite about the nature of foreign policy. Traditionalists maintained that the object of Indian foreign policy should continue to be a just world order, and that in furtherance of that objective, India should continue to look toward the Non Aligned Movement and represent the interests of the developing countries against the imperialist behavior of the rich countries of the West. An increasingly powerful realist perspective emerged in the 1990s, however, to challenge this traditional moralistic approach. According to this realist critique, India had frequently sacrificed its national interests by pursuing the chimera of global justice. It was time, these realists said, for India to begin hard-headed maneuver among the powers, including the United States, to further India's interests. In 1998 when the Bharatiya Janata Party took power, this realist perspective began guiding Indian foreign policy. It was continued when the Congress Party returned to power in 2004.

The need for Indian diplomatic maneuver was reinforced by India's loss of Soviet support and the looming prospect of China-U.S. cooperation to lock India into "nuclear apartheid." It was reinforced too by the gradual opening of the Indian economy under the leadership of Finance Minister

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<sup>5</sup> Jaswant Singh, "Against Nuclear Apartheid," *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 77, No. 5, September-October 1998, pp. 41-52.

Manmohan Singh beginning with India's balance of payments crisis precipitated by India's loss of remittances from the Persian Gulf in late 1990. Indian advocates of India's entry into the global economy understood that no nation during the post-1945 period had grown economically prosperous through hostility to the United States, the power that, for better or worse, dominated the global capitalist system. Step by step India ventured into the global economy, and its rate of development accelerated, leaving far behind the "Hindu rate of growth" of India's earlier autarkic period. According to the World Bank's World Development Indicators, India's growth rate rose from an annual average of 4.34 percent for the years 2000-2002, to an average of 8.95 for the five years 2003-2007. Even during the recession year of 2008, India's economy grew at a rate of 7.10 percent. By 2009, India's economy ranked as the world's twelfth largest.

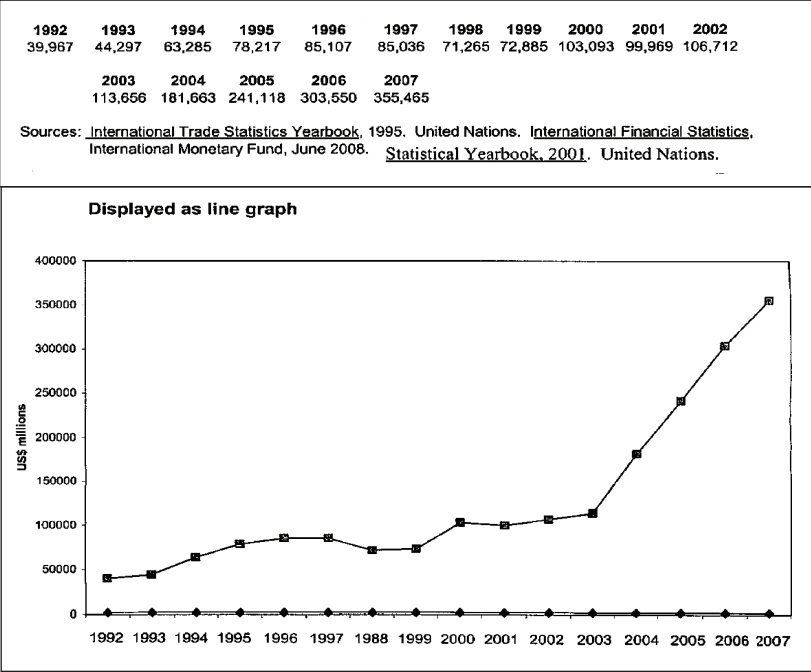
India too, like China and Japan, aspires to translate its national capabilities into greater international prominence and influence. The clearest manifestations of this are India's unequivocal decision to "go nuclear" in 1998, its quest for permanent membership on the Security Council, its newly invigorated diplomacy toward the United States, Japan, and China, and its late 2000s drive to modernize its military forces, both in terms of equipment, doctrine, and training.

### **Russia's Reemergence as a Major Power**

Russia too is asserting growing national power. Greater East Asia has not, however, been a major arena for Russia's growing national assertiveness. The revival of the Russian economy under Putin after the decline of the 1990s increased Russian capabilities. The devaluation of the Ruble in 1998 also increased (after a lag of about a year) the competitiveness of Russian exports, and those grew steadily during the 2000s -as indicated in Figure 1. Of even greater importance for Russia's export earnings, once the global price of oil began to grow about 2004, Russia's strong oil production and exports generated far greater revenue for Russia, and the renationalization of the oil industry put much of that revenue in the state treasury. By 2005, Russia had emerged as the

world's second largest exporter of petroleum (after Saudi Arabia), and the largest exporter of natural gas (with exports over double those of the second ranked exporter, Canada).<sup>6</sup>

**Figure 1.** Russian Exports



In the political sphere, the relative re-centralization of power under President Putin gave greater coherence to Russian politics. In terms of guiding philosophy, once becoming President in March 2000, Vladimir Putin laid out an effort to reverse Russia’s post-Soviet decline and reestablish Russia as a great power both in Russia’s vicinity and globally. This effort resonated with growing Russian nationalism and helped legitimize Putin’s effort to strengthen the coherence of the Russian state.

A major thrust of Putin’s effort to reestablish Russia as a great power has focused on the former-Soviet areas of Central Asia and the Caucasus. In-

<sup>6</sup> CIA World Fact Book, at U.S. News University Directory. <http://www.photius.com>



creased diplomatic effort in Central Asia has drawn on Russia's considerable soft power in much of that region: long-standing links with civilian and military elites including inter-marriage with ethnic Russians; the presence of large and highly educated ethnic Russian minorities in many regions; persistence of Russian as lingua franca; common legal systems; similar secular and authoritarian political preferences, and common concern with Islamic terrorism. It may also be that the ability of Russian criminal organizations to function effectively in Central Asia give Russian businesses protection not available to Chinese or European competitors in that region.

Aside from soft power, Russia under Putin has more actively used military supply and (in several cases) security support, plus energy supply and/or transport, to draw former-Soviet states closer to Russia. A major Russian effort has been to block the construction of petroleum and gas pipelines that would deliver former-Soviet-area energy to global markets via non-Russian pipelines. In at least one case, that of Kyrgyzstan, Moscow used economic inducement, and in another, Georgia, military intimidation, in an effort to induce former-Soviet states to distance themselves from the United States. An important Russian objective has been to persuade Washington that the road to effective activity in the former-Soviet area goes through Moscow.

On the global stage, Russia under Putin has used its Security Council position more vigorously to counter U.S. policies. Moscow's effort to thwart Washington's 2003 regime-change war in Iraq, and its efforts to water down sanctions against Iran over the nuclear issue are cases in point. Moscow's commitment to expanded commercial relations and continuing nuclear cooperation with Iran also run counter to major U.S. policy thrusts. The Russian-instigated "trilateral" meetings of Russian, Indian, and Chinese foreign ministers is also an effort to boost Russia's ability to counter U.S. global influence. Long-ranging military activities i.e., the resumption of patrols by Russian nuclear-capable long range bombers in August 2007 or the visit by a Russian naval squadron to Venezuela in November 2008 are also part of Russia's effort to increase its global stature and influence. Speaking in Venezuela during a visit coinciding with the

visit by the Russian naval squadron, Russian President Dmitri Medvedev described the naval visit as a sign that Russia “is returning to superpower status” and as a “counterweight to U.S. influence.”<sup>7</sup>

Significantly, East Asia does not seem to have been a major area of increased Russian effort, or at least effective influence. Moscow has moved to rebuild the much-frayed Russo-Indian relationship. In October 2000 during a visit by Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Bajpayee to Moscow, Russia and India declared a Strategic Partnership --- an important component of which was increased cooperation in countering the Taliban in Afghanistan. In May 2003 the Russian navy conducted its first joint exercises with the Indian Navy in the Bay of Bengal. This was the first large-scale Russian naval exercise since the end of the Soviet Union, and involved units from Russia’s Black Sea as well as the Pacific fleet. Russia has sought to revive its traditional arms supply relationship with India. In spite of these efforts, India has found expanded cooperation with the United States far more attractive. Russian ties with India are increasingly vestigial and overshadowed by Indo-U.S. ties that developed swiftly during the 2000s.

Nor has Russia been able to build a significant relation with Japan. Moscow’s long-running effort to play Japan against China in terms of development and export of Siberia’s oil and gas resources, perhaps reinforced by economic nationalism, has prevented realization of a substantial Russo-Japanese energy relationship.

The sole mechanism of significant Russian influence in the Far East seems to be the Strategic Partnership with China. This relationship undoubtedly boosts Russia’s international stature and influence, and as discussed elsewhere in this paper, serves other important Russian interests. But it may be that as Indian and Japanese apprehension of China’s growing power mounts, and as those two powers draw closer together and toward the United States in response, Russia’s strong commitment to its Chinese partnership will reduce its influence with Tokyo, New Delhi, and Washington. It will also increase Russia’s dependency on Beijing.

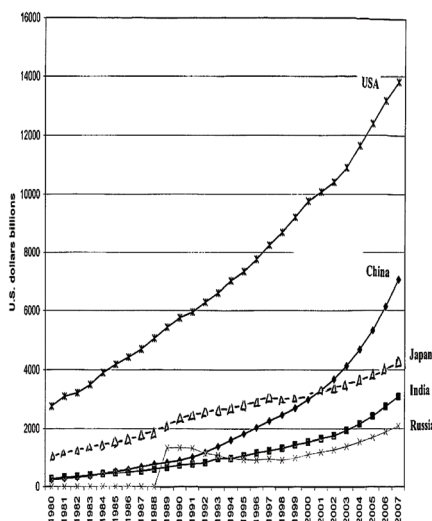
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<sup>7</sup> Gustavo Coronel, “Russian Navy’s Visit to Venezuela Filled with Mishaps,” *Human Events*, 18 December 2009. <http://www.humanevents.com>

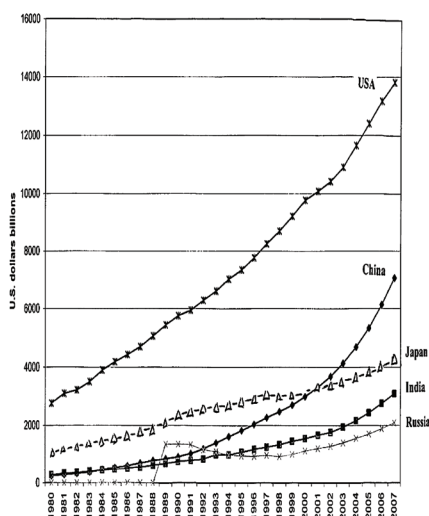
## Beleaguered Incumbent Paramount Power the United States

The power that has dominated East Asia since 1945, the United States, is increasingly beleaguered, but is still the incumbent paramount power in East Asia. This writer does not subscribe to various “declinist” theories of U.S. power, and believes that the American republic still retains the ability to address its difficulties. According to IMF statistics, the U.S. economy measured by PPP is slightly less than the EU, while according to the World Bank the U.S. is slightly larger. As Figure 2 shows, the relative gross economic capability of the United States is substantially ahead of other powers being considered here (China, Japan, India, and Russia), even if the gap between leading countries is diminishing somewhat. One should not conclude from the diminishing gap between the U.S. GDP and that of other nations, that the U.S. has “failed” in some sense. Fostering the economic development of Japan, India and, after 1972, China, were key U.S. foreign policy objectives. Still, the diminishing relative economic capabilities of the United States mean that partnerships with other countries will become more important to Washington.

**Figure 2.** GDP's of East Asian Powers in Purchasing Power Parity, 1950 – 2007



**Figure 3.** GDP's of East Asian Powers in Constant U.S. Dollars



Severe inter-related weaknesses confront the U.S. economy: a massive trade deficit; high levels of personal debt and low savings; and a massive and, since late 2008 a rapidly ballooning federal budget deficit. On top of these long-standing and steadily deepening difficulties, came the severe economic recession of late 2008. Dealing with these difficulties will require substantial investment of U.S. fiscal resources and leadership attention. Parallel with these severe economic problems, the U.S. continues to be locked into a war against a clandestine trans-national terrorist organization, al Qaida. This “war on terror,” including the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, detracts from the ability of U.S. intelligence and leadership to focus on problems associated with maneuver among the East Asian powers.

On the other hand, the U.S. position in East Asia has important strengths. U.S. alliances remain strong, with Japan, Australia, and South Korea. The U.S. has many strategic partners in East Asia; the Philippines, Thailand, Singapore, and more recently, India. Taiwan remains a friend and potential partner. U.S. military power remains vastly superior; indeed in this area the U.S. lead may well have increased over recent years. U.S. high tech manufacturing and agriculture remain strong. The U.S. remains a major exporter, the world’s third largest exporter, after Germany and China (who surpassed the United States in mid 2006). U.S. spending on research and development far outdistances that by other countries, 3 times the level of Japan, 4.7 the level of Germany, and 1.8 times the level of China in 2004, when U.S. R&D spending constituted about 22 percent of the total for developed countries.<sup>8</sup> The U.S. leads the world in patent applications. U.S. higher education continues to produce world leaders in science and technology, and recruits faculty from among the best and the brightest from around the world. Science and engineering faculties of U.S. universities are filled with prize people from Egypt, Brazil, Germany, China, India, France, and Russia from every country in the world. The United States retains a strong sense of patriotism and national cohesion. Perhaps most importantly, U.S.

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<sup>8</sup> R&D Spending worldwide. <http://scrbd.com/doc/62785/RD-Spending-Worldwide>

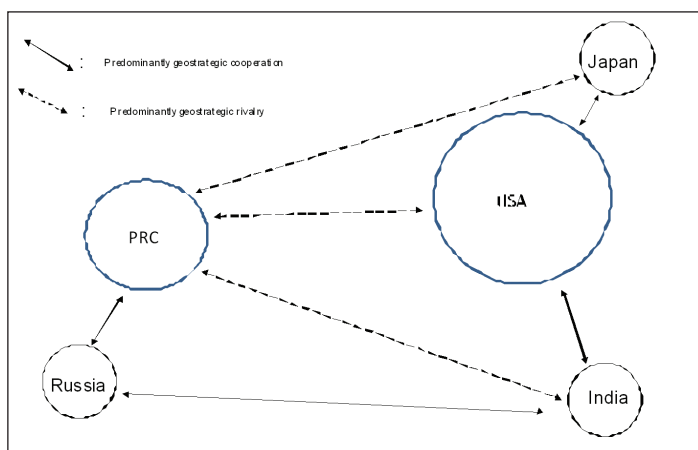
society is extremely open and dynamic, encouraging and supporting enterprise and risk-taking by ambitious individuals of every social rank and ethnic group.<sup>9</sup>

Given this balance of weaknesses and strengths, it is unlikely that the United States will withdraw from East Asia, at least in this writer's estimate. Most American voters are proud of their nation's role in the world, including East Asia, and tend to vote for leaders who manifest similar sentiments. Yet the United States will necessarily accommodate to the rise of new and ambitious great powers in East Asia.

### Current Patterns: Evolution of Two Coalitions

There exists at present two broad alignments in East Asia. On the one side are the United States, Japan, India, and several lesser powers including Australia. On the other side are China and Russia. Figure 3 depicts these alignments. I do not mean to suggest that these are rigid alignments, or that relations between the countries across the two camps are necessarily tense or hostile. "Loose coalition" might be a better term than "alignment." Only the Japan-U.S. link is based on a formal treaty and mutual security obligations. Moreover, most of these countries are

**Figure 4.** Current Great Power Alignments in East Asia



<sup>9</sup> Jay Mathews, "Bad Rap on the Schools," *Wilson Quarterly*, 22 March 2008, pp. 15-20.

determined to maintain friendly and cooperative relations with one another. None seeks confrontation. Yet the alignments do seem clear as evidence regarding developments in U.S.-India, Japan-India, and Russo-Chinese relations offered below will seek to make clear.

Starting with India-U.S. relations, a new India- United States military and security partnership developed with great speed during the 2000s. In both capitals, there were governments deeply apprehensive over China's burgeoning power, and viewing partnership with the other as one important mechanism for dealing with a rising China. Forging of the new India-U.S. relationship began under the Clinton Administration, and the in-depth talks between Jaswant Singh and Strobe Talbott from mid-1998 through 2000 allowed the two sides to reach an understanding of the two countries' common interests in the world.<sup>10</sup> Common concerns about China's growing power were not the only aspect, of the new Indo-U.S. understanding, but it was one important aspect. The budding partnership with India was embraced with enthusiasm by the Bush Administration. Successive U.S. strategy statements during the 2000s manifested deep apprehension over possible Chinese resort to confrontation and force, while viewing India as a partner in maintaining peace and stability in Asia.<sup>11</sup>

The new India-U.S. relationship blossomed especially rapidly in the military and security area. The Bush administration quickly dropped the sanctions on arms sales and military contacts imposed by the Clinton administration after India's 1998 nuclear tests, and a robust schedule of military exchanges, including frequent visits by defense ministers, chiefs of staff, and service heads, plus security dialogues and working groups unfolded. By late 2002 the two countries were discussing China's role in South and Central Asia and the Persian Gulf, and exchanging views and coordinating policies in Myanmar, Nepal, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka and

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<sup>10</sup> Strobe Talbott, *Engaging India: Diplomacy, Democracy, and the Bomb*, New York: Penguin, 2004.

<sup>11</sup> Quadrennial Defense Review Report, 30 September 2001. Department of Defense. Nuclear Policy Review [Excerpts]. Submitted to Congress 31 December 2001. *GlobalSecurity.org*. <http://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/library/policy/dod/npr.htm> Accessed 11 October 2007; National Security Strategy of the United States of America, September 2002. Office of the President. The National Security Strategy of the United States of America, March 2006. Office of the President. Quadrennial Defense review Report, 6 February 2006. Department of Defense

other areas.<sup>12</sup> In Afghanistan, the U.S. and India undertook quiet but effective cooperation in post-Taliban reconstruction. Weapons sales were an important dimension of the new Indo-U.S. partnership. The sale of U.S. weapons to India began in 2002. U.S. and European arms sales to China ended after the 1989 Beijing massacre, and when European countries moved in 2004-05 to end the arms embargo on China, Washington acted vigorously and effectively to abort that move. Under strong U.S. pressure, Europe agreed in early 2005, to maintain indefinitely the China arms embargo.<sup>13</sup> Israeli arms sales to China ended under sharp U.S. pressure in 2001, while similar sales by Israel to India skyrocketed, establishing Israel as India's second largest weapon supplier for the 2001-2007 period.<sup>14</sup> Japan also lobbied Israel and Europe to end arms sales to China.

Joint India-U.S. military exercises of all types burgeoned: joint naval exercises, air combat and warfare, command post exercises, high altitude operations, and (according to the U.S. ambassador to India) exercises in covert warfare.<sup>15</sup> India and the U.S. agreed in 2005 to a ten-year program of expanded military cooperation, including joint research and development, in space and other high-tech areas. Finally, Washington completed its retreat from Security Council Resolution 1172 that the U.S. and China had sponsored jointly in 1998 demanding that India abandon nuclear weapons. In March 2006 during a visit by Bush to India, he and India's new Prime Minister Manmohan Singh signed a nuclear cooperation agreement dramatically reversing long-standing U.S. policy punishing India for its nuclear programs and its non-membership in the Non-Proliferation Treaty. The India-U.S. nuclear cooperation agreement allowed India to strengthen its civilian nuclear capabilities even while building a credible minimum nuclear deterrent aimed in large part at China, as Vajpayee explained in his famous letter of May 1998 to President Clinton.

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<sup>12</sup> Josy Joseph. "India, U.S. to discuss China formally for first time," *India Abroad*, 11 October . - 2002, p. 13.

<sup>13</sup> Joseph Kahn. "Europe's shift on embargo places Taiwan at center stage," *The New York Times*, March 2005, p. 6.

<sup>14</sup> SIPRI Arms Transfers Database. [http://armstrade.sipri.org/arms\\_trade/values.php](http://armstrade.sipri.org/arms_trade/values.php)

<sup>15</sup> Robert Blackwill, "Talk on U.S. -Indian relations," *Heritage Foundation*, Washington, D.C., 4 June 2003; Blackwill was U.S. ambassador to India from July 2001 through July 2003.

Missile defense was an early and important area of new India-U.S. cooperation, and one that Beijing viewed as a direct challenge to its, and its good friend Pakistan's, nuclear deterrent. Pushing forward with the development and deployment of missile defense was a major priority of the Bush administration, and New Delhi quickly embraced cooperation with the United States in that regard. Cooperation in this area was discussed and agreed on in the Policy Defense Group that resumed operation in November 2001. By January 2004 a long-term program for expanded Indo-U.S. cooperation called "the Next Steps in the Strategic Partnership" identified missile defense as one area targeted for increased cooperation. India conducted several successful missile interception tests in 2007 and early in 2008 announced plans for an integrated missile defense system to be constructed with U.S. assistance and which will be operational by 2011.<sup>16</sup> Beijing was strongly opposed to missile defense, viewing it as eroding its nuclear deterrent, thereby rendering China more vulnerable to U.S. threat, attack, or intervention. To reiterate the point made earlier, this burgeoning India-U.S. security partnership cannot be explained entirely by "China." But making less likely a Chinese turn toward hostility, or defeating such hostility should it occur, was clearly one major factor driving that new relationship.

Regarding Japan, by the mid-1990s Japan began a pronounced movement toward what Richard Samuels calls *de facto* collective defense with the United States, incrementally assuming a more active military role in Asia. Concerns about possible Chinese resort to force over territorial disputes with Japan, or against Taiwan, were a central factor in Japan's new orientation.<sup>17</sup> The Taiwan Strait confrontation of 1996-97 convinced Japanese leaders of three things: 1) that Japan's security would be injured by PLA attack on Taiwan, 2) there was a significant likelihood of such an attack, and 3) Japanese failure to assist U.S. military forces in the event of a U.S.-China clash over Taiwan would effectively destroy the U.S.-Japan alliance. Occurring in the

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<sup>16</sup> Animesh Raul, "India: Missile Defense Dreams," *IntelliBriefs*, 27 March 2008. <http://intellibriefs.blogspot.com/2008/03/india-missile-defense-dreams.html>

<sup>17</sup> Richard Samuels. *Securing Japan, Tokyo's Grand Strategy and the Future of East Asia*, Cornell University Press, 2007, pp. 86-108. Regarding Japan's drive for increased international influence see, Gilbert Rozman, "Japan's Quest for Great Power Identity," *Orbis*, Winter 2002, pp. 73-91.



context of the broader trend toward de facto collective security discussed earlier, Tokyo began to take clearer stances against Chinese use of force against Taiwan in alignment with the United States.

Post-1945 Japan began playing a security role in the Indian Ocean area for the first time following the 11 September 2001 attacks. Tokyo dramatically broke long-standing anti-military taboos by deploying a small naval squadron to the Indian Ocean to support anti-Taliban military operations in Afghanistan. Following the 2003 ouster of Saddam Hussein, Tokyo again broke precedent by sending 600 troops (protected by British and Dutch forces) to Iraq to participate in that nation's reconstruction. Beijing watched Japan's growing military role with dismay.<sup>18</sup> In December 2004 Japan issued new "national security guidelines" that for the first time explicitly named China as a country that needs "careful watching" and a source of security concern for Japan.<sup>19</sup> Two months later Japan and the United States agreed on "common strategic objectives" that explicitly included, for the first time, security for Taiwan.<sup>20</sup> Meanwhile Chinese submarines continued their frequent intrusions into Japanese waters.<sup>21</sup>

Turning to Indo-Japanese relations, military ties with India soon became a component of Japan's new collective security approach. In 2003 the head of the Japanese Defense Agency (i.e., Japan's ministry of defense) visited India for the first time. While there he urged both countries to be "vigilant" about China's rise. Service-to-service exchanges and a "comprehensive security dialogue" began the next year. India supported Japanese warships in the Indian Ocean as part of the anti-Taliban campaign in Afghanistan.<sup>22</sup> The development of a new Japan-India defense relationship accelerated, and took on even

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<sup>18</sup> B. Garrett, B. Glaser, "Chinese apprehensions about revitalization of the U.S.-Japan alliance," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 37, No. 4, pp. 383-402; Gilbert Rozman, "China's changing images of Japan, 1989-2001: the struggle to balance partnership and rivalry," *International Relations of Asia-Pacific*, Vol. 2, No. 18 (2002), pp. 95-129.

<sup>19</sup> "Tokyo's defense review names China and North Korea as security threats," *Financial Times*, 3 December 2004

<sup>20</sup> "US and Japan in security pact," *Financial Times*, 20 February 2005

<sup>21</sup> Joseph Ferguson, "Submarine Incursion Sets Sino-Japanese relations on Edge," *China Brief*, - Vol. IV, issue 23, 24 November. - 2004.

<sup>22</sup> Samuels, *Securing Japan*, p. 170.

more sinister aspects from Beijing's perspective, following the tsunami disaster of December 2004 when the United States invited India to join a "core group" including India, Japan, Australia, and the United States to coordinate emergency relief efforts in the Indian Ocean. India agreed, but the group was dissolved after only a week because of objections from China.<sup>23</sup>

Bilateral Indian-Japanese defense cooperation nonetheless continued to advance. When Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi visited India in April 2005, the two sides agreed to reinforce the strategic focus of the Global Partnership agreed to in 2000. A visit by Defense Minister Pranab Mukherjee to Japan the next year discussed "regional and international issues of mutual interest" and "focused in particular on deepening the dialogue and cooperation in the areas of security and defense cooperation."<sup>24</sup> A visit to Japan by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh resulted in a joint statement on "new dimensions to the strategic and global partnership."<sup>25</sup> The two countries were "natural partners," who shared common universal values of democracy, and common interests in promoting peace, stability, and prosperity in Asia and the world. The "roadmap" laid out a program of expanded strategic dialogues, exchanges of military leadership, and joint naval and coast guard exercises. During an August 2007 visit to India by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, declared that Japan was committed to forming an "arc of freedom and prosperity" "along the outer rim of the Eurasian continent." Eventually the United States and Australia would be incorporated into this network, Abe declared. Proposing that the Strategic Global Partnership of Japan and India "is pivotal" for the realization of this vision, Abe said, "The question of what Japan and India should do cooperatively in the area of security in the years to come is one that the officials in charge of

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<sup>23</sup> "U.S. dissolves tsunami 'core group' of nations," *Xinhua*, 6 January 2006. <http://english.people-daily.com>: Praful Bidwai, "Tsunami Impact: Loss of Innocence in Politics of Aid," *India Press Service*, 5 June 2005. <http://www.commondreams.org>

<sup>24</sup> Joint Statement, Visit of Mr. Pranab Mukherjee, Minister of Defense to Japan, 5 May 2006, <http://meaindia.nic.in/speech/2006/05/25js01.htm>

<sup>25</sup> "Joint Statement on the Roadmap for New Dimensions to the Strategic and Global Partnership between India and Japan," *Ministry of External Affairs*, India. <http://meaindia.nic.in/declarstatement/2007/08/21js02.htm>

diplomacy and defense in our countries must consider jointly. I would like to put that before Prime Minister Singh for his consideration.”<sup>26</sup> A step in that direction came in October 2008 during a visit by Manmohan Singh to Tokyo with the issue of a Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation that, inter alia, initiated navy-to-navy talks, a regular defense policy dialogue, and bilateral and multilateral military exercises.<sup>27</sup> While expanding cooperation with India, Japan was rapidly modernizing its military capabilities, predicated in part on increased apprehension of conflict with China over Taiwan, Korea, or territorial disputes in the East China Sea.<sup>28</sup>

While Japan-India ties were deepening, China’s ties with Japan remained sour largely over symbolic issues related to the status of the two countries in Asia; the text book treatment of W.W. II, Japanese prime ministerial visits to the Yasukuni shrine, and China’s refusal to publicly acknowledge Japan’s large aid to China’s development, etc. Only in 2007 with a visit by Premier Wen Jiabao did Beijing begin acting to defuse tensions with Japan.<sup>29</sup>

Washington for its part encouraged the deepening Japan-India security partnership. The U.S. perspective was well laid out by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice during a 2005 visit to Tokyo. Asked whether she viewed China as a strategic partner or competitor, Rice replied:

*When I look at China’s role in this region, I think it’s a very important thing that China plays an increasing role. It is nonetheless, a good thing that China plays that role in the context of democratic alliances like the United States and Japan ... I really do believe that the U.S.-Japan relationship, the U.S.-South Korean relationship, the U.S.-Indian relationship, are all important in creating an environment in which China is more likely to play a positive role than a negative role. These alliances are not against*

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<sup>26</sup> “Confluence of the Two Seas,” speech by Prime Minister Abe before Indian Parliament, 22 August 2007. *Japan Foreign Ministry*. <http://www.mofa.go.jp>

<sup>27</sup> “Joint Statement on the Advancement of the Strategic and Global partnership between India and Japan,” 22 October 2009. *India Ministry of external Affairs*. <http://meaindia.nic.in/declarestatement/2008/10/22js01.htm>

<sup>28</sup> Samuels, *Securing Japan*, pp. 166-171.

<sup>29</sup> “Wen ready to address Diet during ‘ice melting’ Tokyo visit,” *Financial Times*, 19 March 2007; “China Leader Pledges Amity, but Warns Japan,” *New York Times*, 13 April - 2007.

*China; they are alliances that are devoted to a stable security and political and economic, and indeed, values-based relationship that put China in the context of those relationships ... than if China were simply untethered, simply operating without that strategic context.*<sup>30</sup>

From Beijing's perspective it looked like U.S. instigation of Japan and India joining with Washington in some sort of combination to contain China. Australia too was possibly part of this emerging containment structure. In March 2007 Japan and Australia signed a joint security declaration providing for joint military exercises and close intelligence sharing.<sup>31</sup> This was only Japan's second bilateral security agreement, the other being with the United States. Later that year, Australian warships joined those from India, Japan, and the United States for unprecedented "quadrilateral" naval exercises in the Bay of Bengal, exercises that led to queries about their from China's ambassador to New Delhi. Australia, at least, did not share a deep conflict of interest or memories of historic conflict that India and Japan did with China.

Regarding the Russo-Chinese entente, this new alignment began as a mere mutual desire for normal inter-state relations under the aegis of Michael Gorbachev and Deng Xiaoping in the late 1980s. Both men sought to cut heavy military budgets and focus attention on domestic economic modernization. The new Sino-Russian relationship assumed geopolitical significance following the Beijing massacre of 1989, when Beijing found itself the target of strong Western opprobrium and feared that emerging post-Communist Russia might move into alignment with the West. Beijing courted Russia at that point to keep it from drifting into the West's anti-China chorus and leaving China completely "encircled" by hostile countries. Beijing's desire to ensure Russian non-association with Western-contrived anti-China schemes was reflected in the foundational Russo-Chinese communiqué of December 1992: "Neither party should join any military or political alliance directed against the

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<sup>30</sup> Remarks at Sophia University, 19 March 2005. U.S. Department of State. <http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2005/43655.htm>

<sup>31</sup> Hisane Masaki, "The emerging axis of democracy," *Asia Times*, 15 March 2007. <http://www.atimes.com.atimes/Japan/ICI5Dh01.html>

other party, sign any treaty or agreement with a third country prejudicing the sovereignty and security interests of the other party, or allow its territory to be used by a third country to infringe on the sovereignty and security interests of the other party.”<sup>32</sup> A similar obligation was posited in Article 8 of the Russo-Chinese treaty of friendship of July 2001.<sup>33</sup>

During the 1990s Russia and China found common objection to a number of U.S.-Western moves; initiation of military interventions and peace keeping operations (in former-socialist Yugoslavia) without Security Council authorization; the use of military force and/or economic sanctions (for example against Serbia and Iraq); “interference in the internal affairs” of other states (e.g. Chechnya and Taiwan); continuation and even expansion of the “Cold War alliances” NATO and the U.S.-Japan alliance; and “Cold War mentality” and “hegemonism” which led Western countries to condemn other countries because they did not comply with Western values and expectations.<sup>34</sup> The two countries also saw eye-to-eye in opposing the U.S. push toward missile defense systems.<sup>35</sup>

Alignments vis-à-vis China are best illustrated by varying positions on Taiwan. While the U.S. and Japan carefully qualify their statements regarding Taiwan, Russia unequivocally endorsed China’s claim to that Island. Article five of the Russo-Chinese treaty of 2001, for example, reads: “The Russian side affirms ... The government of the People’s Republic of China is the only legitimate government representing the whole of China, and Taiwan is an integral part of China. The Russian side opposes the independence of Taiwan in any form.” This is followed by Article eight which provides that “If a situation emerges which, according to one of the agreeing sides, poses a danger to peace, ... or infringes on interests of its security and if a threat of aggression arises against one of the agreeing

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<sup>32</sup> *Foreign Broadcast Information Service*, Daily Report, China, 18 December 1992, pp. 7-9.

<sup>33</sup> That article read, the two sides “will not participate in any unions or blocks or take any actions, including signature of agreements with third countries, that would threaten” the other country. Text of the treaty is in the *New York Times*, 17 July 2001, p. 8.

<sup>34</sup> For example, “Joint Statement by the People’s Republic of China and the Russian Federation on the Multipolarization of the World and the Establishment of a New International Order,” 23 April 1997, *Beijing Review*, 12-18 May 1997, pp. 7-8.

<sup>35</sup> Joint Statement by the Presidents of the People’s Republic of China and the Russian Federation on Anti-Missile Defense. *Beijing Review*. - 7 August 2000 pp. 15-16.

sides, the agreeing sides will immediately make contact with each other and hold consultations in order to eliminate the emerging threat.”<sup>36</sup>

The Sino-Russian joint military exercises of August 2005 raised the prospect of Russo-Chinese military cooperation in a conflict over Taiwan. Those joint exercises were announced on 27 December 2004, just days after the formation of a “core group” including the U.S., Indian, Japanese, and Australian navies was announced to provide humanitarian relief in the aftermath of the Indian Ocean tsunami. China strongly protested the formation of the “core group,” and within about a week, U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell announced its disbandment.<sup>37</sup> The announcement of the Russo-Chinese joint exercises underlined displeasure with the “core group.” The week-long exercises took place in August 2005; they included nearly 10,000 personnel and culminated in a coastal blockade, an amphibious invasion and an airborne assault. Russia demonstrated for China for the first time during the exercises, the supersonic “carrier buster” cruise missile Moskit.<sup>38</sup> Photographs of the invasion carried in *Renmin Ribao* showed amphibious operations.<sup>39</sup> The implication that the joint exercises meant Russia would support China in a war over Taiwan was widely noted and commented on in China at the time.<sup>40</sup> This popular speculation certainly went too far, but on the other hand, Beijing with equal certainty drew solace from the popular belief that China would not stand alone in the event of a confrontation with the United States and Japan over Taiwan. While Japan was moving toward closer alignment with Washington over Taiwan, Russia was moving toward Beijing.

Russia’s robust arms sales relationship with China is the major element of the new Russo-Chinese alignment that must be considered. U.S. military planners prepare for potential military confrontations with China possibly requiring the use of nuclear arms, either over Taiwan or as part of “the emergence of a new, hostile military coalition against the United

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<sup>36</sup> Text of treaty is in *the New York Times*, 17 July 2001. P. A8.

<sup>37</sup> “US dissolves tsunami ‘core group’ of nations,” *Peoples Daily online*, 6 January 2005. <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn>

<sup>38</sup> Ariel Cohen and John Tkacik, “Sino-Russian Military Maneuvers,” *Heritage Foundation*, 30 September 2005. <http://www.heritage.org>

<sup>39</sup> *Renmin ribao*, 25 August 2005, p. 4.

<sup>40</sup> This author was in China shortly after the exercises and sometimes overheard such comment.

States or its allies,” in the words of a December 2001 U.S. Defense Department report to Congress on U.S. nuclear strategy.<sup>41</sup> A clash between the United States and China is not a high probability; but it is a possibility that defense planners in both Beijing and Washington arm, train and plan for. Analysts of China’s defense modernization believe that preparing for a clash with the U.S. over Taiwan is a key focus of China’s military modernization effort.<sup>42</sup>

Because of these concerns, Washington and Tokyo have used their leverage with the European countries to continue the post-1989 embargo on arms sales to China.

Russia, however, is China’s major arms supplier. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, Russian arms sales to China averaged US\$2.66 billion (in constant dollars) per year for the seven years 2001-2007.<sup>43</sup> This volume made the Russo-Chinese arms transfer the largest such relationship in the post-Cold War period. With Russian assistance, Chinese military forces have significantly closed the qualitative gap with U.S. and Japanese military forces, considerably enhancing Chinese capabilities in the event of conflict.

### **China’s Anti-Encirclement Strategy and Efforts**

What seems to be taking place is the gradual formation of a loose coalition of states including Japan, India, the United States, and Australia which are apprehensive of China’s growing power and the possibility that China might resort to use of military force to secure its interests. This proposition will be denounced as a manifestation of “the China threat theory” by Chinese representatives, but I believe the evidence laid out above objectively substantiates it. In fact Chinese analysts understand quite well the adverse trends confronting China’s rise, and seek in various ways to counter them. State or CCP-encouraged polemical efforts to anathematize “the China

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<sup>41</sup> Nuclear Posture Review Report, Submitted to Congress 31 December 2001. <http://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/library/policy/dodnpr.htm>

<sup>42</sup> John Wilson Lewis, Xue Litai, *Imagined Enemies, China Prepares for Uncertain War*, Stanford University Press, 2006; Mark A. Stokes, *China’s Strategic Modernization: Implications for the United States*, Strategic Studies Institute, 1999.

<sup>43</sup> SIPRI Arms Transfers Database. [http://armstrade.sipri.org/arms\\_trade/values.php](http://armstrade.sipri.org/arms_trade/values.php)

threat theory” are part of that Chinese effort. Chinese efforts to check the growing China-balancing coalition involve charm and rewards (“carrots”), as well as elements of coercion and threat (“sticks”). The balance of “carrots” and “sticks” shifts over time in accord with Chinese calculations of expediency. Interestingly, Beijing has avoided adopting harsh approaches towards India and Japan at the same time. Instead, during the 2001-2006 period Beijing courted New Delhi and tried to intimidate Tokyo. Then circa 2006 Beijing’s emphasis shifted. New Delhi was subject to Chinese harsh pressure, while Tokyo became the target of friendship diplomacy.

Starting with Japan, by 1994 China had escaped its post Beijing massacre isolation, a recovery substantially assisted by Tokyo which imagined itself as mediating between Beijing and the West as part of Tokyo’s effort to play a greater international role. Beijing had also discovered by that point the potency of nascent Chinese nationalism in legitimizing CCP rule. During the early 1990s Chinese media had conveyed a positive portrayal of Japan. In 1994, however, the depiction in the Chinese press became distinctly negative, including denunciations of Japan’s aspirations and efforts to play a greater role in Asia, linking Japan’s inability to play a greater role with “the history issue.”<sup>44</sup> Japanese objections to Chinese portrayals of sinister Japanese motives led to even stronger Chinese denunciations. Frequent penetrations by PLA-Navy ships into waters around Japan, further underlined Beijing’s displeasure. Then after Junichiro Koizumi became prime minister in 2001, Beijing seized on the Yasukuni Shrine issue to freeze relations. In the words of China’s 2007 diplomatic almanac:

*When Koizumi was in office, China-Japan relations were in a state of political stalemate as a result of [his] repeated visits to the Yasukuni Shrine ... his wrong moves blocked progress in Japan’s political relations with China, causing the suspension of exchange or high-level visits between the two countries and affecting the friendship between the two peoples. China-Japan relations were in the most difficult state since the normalization of diplomatic relations.*<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Gilbert Rozman, “China’s changing images of Japan, 1989-2001: the struggle to balance partnership and rivalry,” *International Relations of Asia-Pacific*, Vol. 2. - No. 18 (2002), pp. 96-129.

<sup>45</sup> China’s Foreign Affairs, 2007 Edition, Department of Policy Planning, MFA, *Beijing World Affairs Press*, 2007, p. 229.



While brow-beating Tokyo, Beijing launched a full-court friendship offensive toward New Delhi, once India “untied the knot” in Sino-Indian relations created (in China’s view) by India’s “anti-Chinese” justification of its 1998 nuclear tests.<sup>46</sup> A Strategic Dialogue was initiated in March 2000. The second session came in February 2001 and the third in September 2002. Military exchanges began: the commander of India’s eastern military region visited Tibet in 2001, the Indian defense minister in 2003, the PLA chief of staff and two other PLA delegations visited in 2003, and the Chinese defense minister visited India in 2004. Chinese and Indian warships undertook their first ever joint exercise in 2003. The Indian military establishment was (and remains) one of the centers of Indian skepticism about China, and Beijing was trying to ease these hostile and influential views. China initiated a Strategic Dialogue (as opposed to a mere Security Dialogue) with India in January 2006, fulfilling a long-standing Indian demand. Top Chinese leaders traipsed to New Delhi one after the other: Li Peng in January 2001, Premier Zhu Rongji in 2002, Premier Wen Jiabao in 2005, and President Hu Jintao in 2006. In 2003, during a visit by Prime Minister Vajpayee to China, the two sides declared a long-term and constructive partnership. There was a flurry of activity suggesting movement on the border. The two sides appointed “special representatives” to explore the issue from a “political perspective.” An agreement on the “Political Parameters and Guidelines” for resolution of the border issue was agreed to in 2005. Beijing also made several significant political concessions: *de facto* recognition of Indian sovereignty over Sikkim; agreeing (in the Political Parameters) that the interests of settled populations should weigh heavily in the border settlement; and agreeing that Chinese oil companies would no longer undercut Indian companies for petroleum projects in developing countries.

Then in 2007, Beijing’s diplomatic calliope dramatically changed tunes. Tokyo now became the target of Chinese charm, and New Delhi the target of Chinese anger. Again citing China’s diplomatic almanac,

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<sup>46</sup> John Garver. “The Restoration of Sino-Indian Comity following India’s Nuclear Tests,” *The China Quarterly*. - No. 168, December 2001, pp. 865-889.

the resignation of Koizumi and inauguration of Shinzo Abe in September 2006, along with his “successful” visit to China the very next month, “marked a major improvement in the China-Japan relationship.” Following seven rounds of consultations the two sides “reached agreement on overcoming the political obstacle hindering the bilateral relations and promoting ... China-Japan friendship and cooperation.”<sup>47</sup> On that basis, Premier Wen Jiabao made an “ice breaking” visit to Tokyo in April 2007. Meanwhile China-India relations grew chilly, just as China-Japan relations were thawing.

An article in the CCP-controlled Hong Kong newspaper *Takong Pao* at the time of Wen Jiabao’s April 2005 visit to India gave a positive estimate of the success of China’s efforts to keep India out of the U.S. anti-China orbit, explaining in the process the logic of China’s courtship of India in the early 2000s. “The United States wants to develop relations with India in order to strategically encircle China,” and to this end had spread talk about “the China threat” and “openly or tacitly enforced a containment policy toward China.” Such sinister efforts had failed, however, because:

*Judging from India’s recent policy toward China, India has not shown any worry about China’s development, and still less feeling threatened by China.... The fundamental reason for India taking a positive progressive policy toward China is ... the fact that India has clearly understood that the rise of China is not a threat to India and the two sides can realize a win-win situation in the course of their respective development.*<sup>48</sup>

Stated differently, China’s friendship offensive to keep India out of a U.S.-instigated anti-China block was successful. Washington was trying hard to draw India into its anti-China containment system, but India has thus far refused because of China’s friendship diplomacy. In the words of another (non-CCP) Hong Kong paper, “China and the United States have vied with each other in drawing India over to its side.”<sup>49</sup> India has a strong interest in keeping alive China’s hope of winning Indian “friendship.” If that Chinese hope fades,

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> SShih chun-yu. “Premier Wen Jiabao’s achievements in Visiting India have Strategic Significance” - *Ta Kung Pao*, 14 April 2005.

<sup>49</sup> *Hsin Pao* (Hong Kong Economic Journal), 13 April 2005.

Beijing policy toward India could become tougher. A Renmin Ribao article of July 2005 indicated that part of Beijing's strategy for managing China's relation with India was to make clear to New Delhi "the prices to be paid for taking what America offers." In other words, Beijing had to punish India for unfriendly acts toward China taken in cooperation with the United States. That punishment began in late 2006.

Underlining the still-unresolved status of territorial dispute was one way for Beijing to warn India of the costs of too close alignment with the United States and Japan. On 13 November 2006, one week before Hu Jintao was scheduled to begin a 4-day state visit to India, China's ambassador in New Delhi, Sun Yuxi, replied to a question from an Indian interviewer from the CNN-India Business News television about the boundary dispute by saying: "In our position, the whole of what you call the state of Arunachal Pradesh is Chinese territory and Tawang (district) is only one place in it and we are claiming all of that that's our position."<sup>50</sup> The fact that Arunachal Pradesh contained a large Indian "settled population" was thereby implicitly made irrelevant in violation of article seven of the "Principles and Guidelines." Indian leaders were also reminded of the depth of China's grievances against India; what was involved was a territorial dispute, not a mere boundary dispute. This implied the high stakes if Indian leaders did not handle cautiously ties with China.

After Sun's provocative comments, Chinese border forces began preparing to build a road across a 2.1 square kilometer salient of north-west Sikkim. The line India felt constituted the border in this region was apparently demarked with stone cairns, although China rejected the notion that those cairns corresponded to the boundary. According to Indian sources, Chinese personnel began frequent movement into the area in 2007 and toward the end of that year began construction of a road across the region. The matter escalated when India was informed that Chinese engineers intended to blast some stone formations near the border to make way for the road. At a higher level China protested the increased movement of Indian forces into the area. India lodged a

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<sup>50</sup> "Indian FM Mukerjee Rejects PRC Envoy's Border Claims Ahead of Hu Jintao Visit," AFP, 14 November 2006. WNC. Dr. Brahma Chellaney pointed out to me this shift in Chinese policy.

counter protest of China's claim to the region, insisting that the border had been long settled in that region. China halted work on the road, but when foreign minister Pranab Mukherjee visit Beijing in June 2008 to discuss the issue, he was reportedly stunned to be confronted with a Chinese claim to the area.<sup>51</sup>

Let me be honest. I have no inside information on either the reasons for Sun's comments or China's road building in "the finger" salient. It is possible the road building was entirely unrelated to high politics. It does seem likely, however, that construction of a road across an area demarcated by stone cairns deemed by India to be the boundary would have been cleared by at a high level where political implications would have been considered. Similarly, it is possible that Sun's comments were due to incompetence as a diplomat. It seems unlikely, however, that without higher clearance a PRC ambassador would make such a provocative comment during a television broadcast on such a sensitive subject shortly before a visit by China's president. Moreover, Sun's words have never been repudiated by Beijing since and have been popularly circulated and commented in the controlled PRC cyberspace. As for Sun himself, he was appointed to be the PRC Ambassador to Italy in 2008, hardly a sign of punishment or demotion.

This surmise is further strengthened by a further toughening of Chinese policy on the same point shortly after Sun Yuxi's comments. When foreign ministers Yang Jiechi and Pranab Mukherjee met in Hamburg in May 2007, Yang informed his Indian counterpart that the "mere presence" of settled populations did not affect Chinese claims.<sup>52</sup> Manmohan Singh and Hu Jintao discussed the issue further during their June 2007 meeting at the G-8 Germany summit. Singh asserted that the two sides "have already reached consensus" on the political principles for resolving the boundary issue (e.g., on the need to "safeguard the due interests of settled populations" as per Article 7), implying that the "consensus"

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<sup>51</sup> "India-China lock horns over 'Finger area,'" *India News Online*, 19 May 2008. <http://news.indiamart.com/news-analysis/india-china-lock-hor-18900.html> "India plays down Chinese claim to Finger area of Sikkim to set up permanent post," *India News Online*, 26 May 2008. <http://news.indiamart.com/news-analysis/india-plays-down-chi-18958>

<sup>52</sup> Brahma Chellaney, "China's unprincipled principles," *Asia Age* (internet version). 16 June 2007.

of 2005 could not be changed. Hu contented himself by calling for resolution of the issue in the spirit of peace, friendship, equality, mutual benefit, and understanding.<sup>53</sup>

The logic of China's border policy was suggested by a November 2006 article in the Hong Kong newspaper *Wenhui Bao*.<sup>54</sup> "Following the announcement of President Hu Jintao's intended visit to India," the article said, "New Delhi was quick to express its hope to see both sides try harder to resolve their border dispute." India, however, refused to accept China's reasonable proposal for Chinese concessions in the Ladak - Aksai Chin area in the west in exchange for Indian concessions in the Thagla Ridge - Tawang area in the east. In other words, India would have to give up Tawang. Moreover, "In the past few years, while 'China has implemented a policy of good neighborliness and incessantly extended its friendship to India ... India has adopted a mega -strategy of 'restraining China with the United States' on the one hand, and imposing economic and trade restrictions [on China] on the other.'" In this situation, "China does not need to rush for a quick solution to its boundary dispute with India. Time is on China's side." In other words, a tough line on the border was a way of punishing India for its flirtation with the United States. Clearer Indian disassociation from the United States would be necessary before New Delhi could expect dramatic expressions of Chinese friendship on the territorial issue. One anonymous Indian ex-official interviewed by a U.S. Congressional investigation team was of the view that China had been moving toward a settlement of the border question in a fashion acceptable to India until New Delhi sought closer ties to the United States.<sup>55</sup>

Another instrument of Chinese intimidation was a cyber campaign spreading rumors of a China-India war. Starting in 2007 a spate of articles discussing a possible China-India war began appearing on Chinese web-

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<sup>53</sup> "Hu Jintao meets Indian PM, Discusses Ties, Boundary Issue, Climate Change," *Xinhua domestic service*, 7 June. - 2007.

<sup>54</sup> Liu Szu-lu, "No Need to Rush for Quick Settlement of Sino-Indian Border dispute," *Wen Wei Po*, 25 November 2006.

<sup>55</sup> Report to Congress of the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission. 110th Congress, First Session, November 2007, p. 227. <http://www.uscc.gov>. The official was interviewed by a group of U.S. Congressional investigators in August 2007.

sites.<sup>56</sup> Analysts have long understood that India was on the PLA's list of hypothetical enemies.<sup>57</sup> There was little public discussion in China of that possibility until 2007. Several articles must suffice as examples. Two articles posted the same day in late 2008 on the website of the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), a research center in Beijing under the direction of the PLA General Staff, warned of a possible China-India war. The first warned that India would consider as an act of war the planned Chinese diversion of half the water currently flowing through Tibet into India's Brahmaputra River.<sup>58</sup> If China proceeded with its water diversion plan (currently underway) a large scale China-India war could result, one that could far surpass the 1962 war in scale. In such a war, India would have "much support," while China would face a two front challenge. The U.S. might move to "contain China" in the Taiwan Strait. India might use its naval power in the Indian Ocean. China's roads and rail lines connecting Tibet with China proper might be destroyed, the article warned.

The second IISS article warned that war with India was one of two challenges the PLA might face in 2009.<sup>59</sup> Several factors might prompt India's leaders to decide to challenge China along the border, the article warned: India's increasing economic and military strength, including its arsenal of nuclear weapons. Since June, India's frontier forces had been crossing the border and entering Chinese territory, while Indian newspapers were demanding that Chinese forces withdraw from certain regions. The recent economic crisis might cause Indian leaders to touch off a war with China to divert internal contradictions, the article warned.

An article in *Huanqiu Bao* (Global Times), a popular publication of Renmin Ribao, discussed at length the Justice of China's claim to "southern

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<sup>56</sup> This campaign was brought to my attention by, D.S. Rajan, Director of the Chennai Center for Chinese Studies, he pointed this out in, "China: Strategic Experts talk about a 'partial' Sino-Indian war," *South Asia Analysis Group*, Paper no. 2939, 24 November 2008. <<http://www.southasiaanalysis.org>

<sup>57</sup> John Wilson Lewis, Xue Litai, *Imagined Enemies, China Prepares for Uncertain War*, Stanford University Press, 2006; Michael Pillsbury, *China Debates the Future Security Environment*, National Defense University Press, 2000.

<sup>58</sup> "Yindu genggao: gan jie jiang wo jiu da," (India warns: dare to cut the river and we will attack), 20 November 2008. <http://str.chinaiiiss.org/content/2008-11-20/2014745.shtml>

<sup>59</sup> "Jiefan jun mianlin 2 da junshi weiju" (PLA faces 2 big military challenges), 20 November 2008. <http://str.chinaiiiss.org/content/2008-11-20/20141418.shtml> The other crisis was possible US South Korean intervention in North Korea following the death of Kim Jong Il.

Tibet” (a region corresponding to the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh), the abundant resources of that region, the military advantages for China of possessing and defending China from that region rather than from behind the Himalayan crest-line, and the “piratical behavior” of India in having allowed Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to visit that region in February.<sup>60</sup> The article condemned in strong terms the decision of China’s leaders in 1962 to withdraw from that area after Chinese forces had occupied it at the cost of their blood. China’s leaders should open a public debate about whether that territory should now be “recovered” (*shou hui*), or whether China should continue to “relent” (*ren tong*) and maintain the status quo. Popular comment posted in response to the article was overwhelmingly supportive of the author’s militant position.

Yet another article discussed in considerable detail reorganization of PLA forces for operations in Tibet.<sup>61</sup> Under the heading “Recently a certain South Asian ‘great power’” [India] “has been making discordant noises” (*bu hexie shengyin*), the article asserted that in the event of a war, China would need to adopt a “defensive strategy.” The United States would use its air and naval forces to adopt an aggressive strategy of “carrying the war to the enemy” (*fangxian zai bie ren jiamenkou*). PLA forces were still far from prepared for such a war, but they had recently strengthened their position considerably. The opening [in 2006] of the Qinghai-Tibet railway, the rebuilding and hard-surfacing in early 2008 of the Xinjiang-Tibet (trans Aksai Chin) road, and the recent construction of several new and the expansion of several existing airports, had all considerably strengthened the PLA’s logistic capabilities. In the event of a war, the PLA’s logistic position would be far better than in 1962 when, the article explained, logistic shortcomings had made it impossible for the PLA to sustain operations far south of the Himalayan crest forcing the withdrawal from just-occupied areas. In the event of war,

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<sup>60</sup> “Yi wei zhu zang junren de feifu zhiyan: zhongguo hai yao ren ma?” (Heart felt words of a soldier stationed in Tibet: must China continue to forebear?), Huanqiu shibao, 19 October 2008. <http://www.bbs.com/viewthread.php?action=printable&tid=100925>

<sup>61</sup> “Xizang junchu junbeiu zhongzu yingfu keneng fashen zhong yin bianjie zhongtu” (Preparations of Tibet military district are adequate to deal with possible Sino-Indian border conflict,” 17 November 2008. <http://bbs.news.sina.com.cn/tableforum/App/view.php?bbsid=4&subi...>

PLA missile forces would have to attack (*daji*) and “suppress” (*yazhi*) the new air bases recently constructed by India south of the eastern Himalayas. Preceding the article were a dozen satellite photos of a 900 by 700 meter piece of desert in China’s Ningxia region terraformed to replicate the Sino-Indian border in the Aksai Chin – Ladakh region and used for terrain familiarization by PLA personnel. Several years previously bloggers using Google Earth had found and then identified this feature.<sup>62</sup>

May we infer a master strategy behind the shifting approaches to Japan and India in the 2000s? I believe that assuming such a strategy is more plausible, than assuming that China’s Foreign Affairs Leading Group would not discuss such grave issues. Beijing wanted to avoid using intimidation against two major power neighbors; Japan and India, at the same time, less Chinese activity drive the two even closer together.

### **The Need for Greater Chinese Restraint and Caution**

China’s problem today is loosely akin to that of Germany following unification in 1871. United and rapidly industrializing, and with world leadership in such areas as physics and chemistry, Wilhelmine Germany was already the dominant power on the European continent. Chancellor Otto von Bismarck understood that Germany’s great power made its neighbors apprehensive and could easily push them into a coalition to counter Germany. Bismarck crafted diplomacy to prevent that by reassuring key powers-Austria-Hungary, Britain, and Russia- and isolating the power he deemed inveterately opposed to united Germany-France. Germany did not start down the road to “encirclement” and disaster until it abandoned that approach under a new Kaiser in 1890. Rising China today needs to reassure other powers as rising Germany did under Bismarck.

There is a near consensus among scholars of Chinese foreign relations that circa 1997 Beijing modified policies in order to reassure its neighbors of China’s peaceful intentions. The embracing of multilat-

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<sup>62</sup> Shiv Aroor, “From sky, see how China builds model of Indian border 2400 km away,” *India Express*, posted online 5 August 2006. <http://www.indianexpress.com/story/9972.html>



eral institutions,<sup>63</sup> conduct of “charm offensives,”<sup>64</sup> an intensified search for partnership with the United States including disengagement from nuclear and missile cooperation with Iran,<sup>65</sup> were elements of this shift. I would suggest, however, that China’s efforts to reassure other powers have not gone far enough nor have they been effective enough. The evidence presented in earlier sections of this paper indicates, I believe, that China’s efforts vis-à-vis Japan, India, and the United States have had limited effect. Those states are, as demonstrated above, slowly and cautiously drawing closer together because, in significant part, of shared apprehensions about how China might in the future use its great and growing power. The reasons for this are, I believe, that Beijing has not addressed the fundamental sources of conflict with those states. With India, the territorial dispute remains unresolved and China’s “all weather friendship” with Pakistan continues to vex New Delhi. With Japan, the dispute over the seafloor and islands of the East China Sea remains unresolved and China continues to refuse to put “history” into the past and accept Japan as a “normal nation” of equal status with China. As long as these fundamental disputes remain unresolved, it will be difficult for Indian and Japanese leaders to believe that China is genuinely a status quo power. As long as the PLA continues to threaten, plan, arm, and train for war over Taiwan, it will be difficult for U.S. or Japanese leaders to reach such a conclusion.

Only toward Russia have Chinese efforts at reassurance been effective. Toward Russia, Beijing has moved to resolve several fundamental conflicts. Beijing opened the way to final settlement of the long vexed Sino-Russian border issue by agreeing to drop application of the Thalweg principle in the case of Heixiazi / Bolshoi Ussurisky Island at the confluence of the Amur/Heilung and Ussuri Rivers. In July 2008 final settlement of the border issue was agreed to, and by October the new

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<sup>63</sup> Avery Goldstein. “Diplomatic Choice of a Rising Power,” *China Quarterly*, No. 168, December 2001

<sup>64</sup> Joshua Kurlantzick, *Charm Offensive, How China’s Soft Power Is Transforming the World*. - New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007.

<sup>65</sup> Jon Alterman and John Garver, *Vital Triangle: China, the United States, and the Middle East*, Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, D.C., 2008.

boundary dividing Heixiazhi / Bolshoi boundary was demarcated.<sup>66</sup> The Thalweg principle is generally recognized under international law, and had been agreed to, in general, by Soviet leader Michael Gorbachev in the 1980s. Yet Beijing agreed to set that principle aside in the Heixiazhi sector, and allow Russia to keep territory occupied by Soviet forces during the 1929 Russo-Chinese war. Beijing's flexibility regarding the Thalweg addressed Russian concerns about the security of Khabarovsk and the trans-Siberian rail line that run through that city, visible from the northeast corner of Bolshoi Ussurisky Island.

On the immigration issue, Beijing has shown similar solicitude for Russian apprehensions. The Russian population is declining by about 700,000 people per year because of a combination of low birthrate and high mortality. Russia's death rate is double the average for developed countries, while its fertility rate is one of the lowest in the world.<sup>67</sup> Siberia and the Russian Far East have seen the greatest population decline, with Russians leaving those areas for European Russia. According to a recent report in *The Economist*, "large swathes of land in Siberia and the Russian Far East are emptying out as people move to central Russia."<sup>68</sup> The Russian Far East has a population density of only 1.1 persons per square kilometer, while the density on the Chinese side of the border is about 154 persons per square kilometer. These realities could easily precipitate Russian fears of sinicization of eastern Russia via Chinese immigration, legal and illegal. Beijing has acted to assuage such Russian fears. During the early 1990s when the introduction of a visa-less travel border crossing regime resulted in a large wave of Chinese immigration into the Russian Far East, Beijing quickly agreed to Russian demands to re-institute stricter controls and to accept back Chinese rounded up for deportation by Russian police and immigration officers. In subsequent years China continued quiet

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<sup>66</sup> "Return of Heixiazhi marks end of border dispute," 15 October 2008. *China Economic Net*. <http://en.ce.cn>

<sup>67</sup> Julie DaVanzo, Clifford Grammich, *Demographics; Population Trends in the Russian Federation*, Rand Corporation, 2001.

<sup>68</sup> "The incredible shrinking people," *The Economist*. 29 November 2008, pp.12-14.

cooperation with Russia along these lines.<sup>69</sup> Joint Sino-Russian opposition to “unipolarity” can also be seen as a Chinese effort to direct Russian attention away from China, and to support each other’s “territorial unity and integrity.” Strict non-interference in internal affairs is a Chinese effort to reassure Russia that it had nothing to fear from China’s growing power. China’s efforts to reassure Russia seem to have been successful, at least at the official level.

### **Russia’s Position and Role**

Russia is in a pivotal position in the emerging configuration. China greatly needs to have Russia on its side. If Beijing loses Russia, China will be truly encircled—except for the smaller states of Southeast Asia which might feel compelled to avoid angering China at all costs. Russian interests would not be served by the forceful incorporation of Taiwan into the People’s Republic of China. Aligning with China within the present balance may serve Russian interests satisfactorily. But the actual military subordination and incorporation of Taiwan would lead to results adverse to Russia’s interests. In the first instance, the use of military means to achieve China’s interests would be vindicated. Nationalism would also be given a strong boost, which could easily combine with the demonstration of the effectiveness of military means to lead China onto a “blood and iron” approach to national rise. Even if militant and militarized Chinese nationalism were turned against the Russian Far East, it could be turned against India’s Arunachal Pradesh or against Mongolia, neither of which would be in Russia’s interest.

Chinese military incorporation of Taiwan into the PRC would also greatly diminish U.S. influence in East Asia. Either the United States would decide that Taiwan was not worth war with China and abandon Taiwan (perhaps with face-savings arrangements granted by Beijing). Or the PLA might defeat the United States in a combina-

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<sup>69</sup> John W. Garver, “Sino-Russian Relations,” in *China and the World*, in Samuel S. Kim [editor] *Chinese Foreign Policy Faces the New Millennium*, Westview Press, Boulder Colorado, 1998, pp. 114-132.

tion of blitzkrieg occupation of Taiwan followed by a protracted confrontation over Taiwan with the Americans deciding to throw in the towel after 5 or so years.<sup>70</sup> Either way, the result would be that China would become the dominant power in East Asia and countries across the region would adjust accordingly. U.S. security guarantees would be worth far less and China's threats and warnings would be intimidating. Whether Washington and Tokyo would choose to continue their alliance under these circumstances is an open question. Russia could find itself living in a China-dominated East Asia. In the first instance, Beijing would far less needy of Russian friendship.

It might be argued that China is unlikely to win a war with the United States over Taiwan, and that Russian interests would not be adversely affected by a Sino-U.S. war in which China is defeated. China would thereby continue to need Russian support, and Chinese animosity could continue to be directed away from Russia and toward the United States. This may be the case but it is also a short-term view. Over the longer run, such an approach would invite in the 21st century a repetition of the sad history of the 20th century. Defeat by the U.S. in a war over Taiwan would almost certainly generate a "never again" militant nationalism determined to avenge the defeat as Germany became determined to do after 1918. Both sides would prepare for the "next round" with aggrieved China playing the role of post-1918 Germany. In short the existing balance may well be in Russia's interest, but overthrowing that balance to achieve Chinese preeminence in East Asia would not be. The best prospect for peace among the great powers in 21st century East Asia would be offered by all the powers indicating clearly to China that the use of military force to incorporate Taiwan into the state system of the People's Republic of China, is unacceptable, and that if China moves in that direction it will not have their support. It would be better for Russia to do this before a crisis over Taiwan would erupt rather than during the buildup of a crisis. Delivered in the midst of a war crisis over Taiwan, a Russian

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<sup>70</sup> Scenarios along this line are abundant in both Chinese magazines and military journals. American analysts are split about whether Chinese military leaders actually believe these theories of Chinese defeat of the United States.

declaration of neutrality would resound as Russian “abandonment” of China and would lay a new stratum of resentment in the Russo-Chinese relationship.

# RUSSIA'S PLACE AND FUTURE FUTURE. IN EAST ASIA: IDENTITY, TRUST, RESPONSIBILITY AND VISION

*Sergey V. Sevastiyanov\**

## Introduction

In this article the author will analyze Russia's strategic vision and geopolitical place in East Asia through the lens of regionalism and will focus on the process of the creation of international institutions' as well as inter-governmental bilateral ties. Regionalism, in short, has at least three key elements: it is a top down process, it is biased toward formal (usually governmental) agreements; and it involves semi-permanent structures in which governments or their representatives are the main participants.<sup>1</sup> From the regional integration point of view, the Eurasian project is a leading one for Russia. It has been realized by Moscow on the territory of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) states in the framework of the CIS, the Collective Security Agreement Organization (CSAO) and the Eurasian Economic Community (EEC). The CSAO is considered as a principal intergovernmental mechanism to counter strategic challenges and military threats, whilst the EEC became a focus of regional economic integration. Besides, Russia is very interested to increase the political potential of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) as a means of strengthening mutual trust and partnership relations in Central Asia region.<sup>2</sup>

Concerning Russian participation in other large-scale regionalism projects, there are two trans-regional projects, which can be identified as

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<sup>1</sup> Pempel T.J. *Remapping East Asia: The Construction of a Region.*; Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 2005, p.19.

<sup>2</sup> Russian Federation National Security Strategy till 2020, Approved by the Russian Federation President's decree # 537 on May 12, 2009. See [www.scrf.gov.ru](http://www.scrf.gov.ru)

the Euro-Atlantic and the Asia-Pacific. The first one has been very logically identified with the concept of the “West”. However the term “East” did not correspond with the geopolitical content of the second one, and only over the last 10-12 years has the situation in this sphere become clearer. Both above mentioned trans-regional spaces are subdivided into three levels. At the first global level they incorporate the U.S., and are considered as geopolitical cross-oceanic spaces where Washington is trying to realize its world hegemonic ambitions.<sup>3</sup>

At the medium level the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans are removed from the Euro-Atlantic and Asia-Pacific respectively, whilst the European Union and East Asia are basic components of these truly regional spaces. In this context the first Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) in 1996 was most symbolic, because its participants were composed of two groups of countries: the EU members representing Europe, and the ASEAN members plus China, Japan, and RK representing Asia. Thus from 1997 the ASEAN plus Three (APT) countries came to represent the concept of the “East”, while in 2005 an alternative version of this vision materialized in the format of the East Asian Summit, consisting of 16 states, adding India, Australia and New Zealand.

Finally, at the third level of regionalism, as a sub-region adjoining Russian border in the Asia-Pacific it is easy to identify Northeast Asia (NEA). At the same time when the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the EU are expanding towards Russia's borders it is difficult to identify any sub-region in the Euro-Atlantic in which Russia could realize its regionalist policy goals as an indigenous member, though theoretically it should be Eastern Europe. At the same time the still not-clearly defined NEA space raises hopes for Russian economic regionalism based on such foundations as well developed Russian-China economic and political relations, Russian Government strategic plans to develop the Russian Far East with the help of neighboring countries, etc. While East Asia is considered by Moscow more as an arena for geopolitical maneuvering and great power balancing.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Troitskiy, A. *Trans-Atlantic Union 1991-2004*, Moscow: NOFMO, 2004.

<sup>4</sup> Rozman G. *Northeast Asia's Stunted Regionalism: Bilateral Distrust in the Shadow of Globalizaion*. - Cambridge University Press, Cambridge: 2004.

However the opportunities for Russian strategic maneuvering in the West and in the East differ. In the 1990s it became clear that Russia could not be integrated into such key Western institutions as the EU and NATO, and the only acceptable alternative for Moscow was to cooperate with those intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) as an external partner, such as the Russia – NATO and Russia – EU dialogues. As far as NATO is concerned, Russia would never agree with NATO plans to come closer and closer to its borders and its attempts to assume not only a regional but a global role.<sup>5</sup> In the Asia-Pacific Moscow had more chances to realize its regionalist goals and to join regional IGOs. This region is characterized by critical contradictions between China and Japan as leaders of nascent East Asian regionalism, the undefined roles of the United States and India, and by less-institutionalized structure of the IGOs there. It means that regionalism is much weaker in this part of the world, and that Moscow has a greater chance for a more substantial role as an indigenous member at all levels. Besides, Russia has much more in common with Asian countries in their approaches to systems of state control and the sanctity of state sovereignty, which makes supra-nationalism unacceptable. That is why when Russia declared its intention to become an ASEM member, it planned to do it as a representative of Asia but not of Europe.

### **Russia's multilateral diplomacy in the Asia Pacific**

During the last 15 years Russia has been an active participant in multilateral diplomacy in the Asia-Pacific. In 1996 Russia became a member of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and was accepted as a member of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) in 1998. Russia was welcomed in the ARF by the ASEAN countries interested in building a new regional security cooperation system including all major powers. Until the late 1990s, Russia had been excluded from APEC due to its poor economic linkages in the region. However in November 1997 the major regional powers (USA, Japan, and China) reached a “temporary” accord based on their own different geopolitical calculations to accept

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<sup>5</sup> Russian Federation National Security Strategy till 2020, Approved by the Russian Federation President's decree #537 on May 12, 2009. See [www.scrf.gov.ru](http://www.scrf.gov.ru)



Russia in APEC, regardless of economic criteria. Some middle powers such as several ASEAN members and Australia were not happy with that decision because they were concerned that APEC would be dominated by the major powers<sup>6</sup>

Russia's inclusion into regional cooperation in the North East Asian sub-region was of the utmost importance. However, the legacy of the last world war means that there are still no political prerequisites for NEA to become a consolidated international sub-region. Besides, Russia has an orthodox Christian and European cultural background and is not considered as an equal partner in East Asia where tendencies toward the "Asianization of Asia" are gaining momentum. According to Russian scholar V. Larin, "The economic integration of the Russian Far East into East Asia is difficult but achievable; political integration is problematic, while cultural integration is impossible". On the other hand, "close cooperation with regional countries is an optimum—and may be the only—means for Russia's Far Eastern territories to resolve their multiple economic and social problems".<sup>7</sup>

Considering multilateral cooperation in NEA, its level of institutionalization is very low. At this point in time Russia is taking part in the work of key intergovernmental cooperation institutions there. Moscow is a member of the only one INGO dealing with economic cooperation—this is the Tumen River Area Development Program (TRADP). In 2005 it was officially renamed as the Greater Tumen Region (GTI). Besides, from 2003 Moscow became a member of the Six-Party Talks—a key intergovernmental negotiation mechanism for the Korean Peninsula. An analysis of Russia's participation in TRADP allows us to characterize Russia's type of regionalism as a defensive one, because the main effort was directed towards preventing the development of TRADP projects in directions unfavorable for Moscow. In fact, Russian concerns were eventually taken into account, and the renaming of the program as the GTI reflected the widening of the program's geographical zone. So far

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<sup>6</sup> Kato M. "Russia's Multilateral Diplomacy in the Process of Asia-Pacific Regional Integration" in A. Iwashita [editor] *Eager Eyes Fixed on Eurasia*, Sapporo: Slavic Research Center, 2007, pp. 126-127.

<sup>7</sup> Larin V. "Russian Far East and Asia-Pacific Countries: Problems of Cooperation," *Sea bulletin*. - 1999. №4, p. 13.

those changes did not bring any identifiable changes to Russia's stance. According to the recent statement by the representative of the Russian Government, Moscow is ready to take part in GTI projects only in case they would support measures realized in the framework of the Federal Program "Economic and Social Development of the Far East and Zabaykalye till 2013".<sup>8</sup>

Moscow is keen on resolving regional security problems and actively participated in the Six-Party Talks. The most critical issue for Russia is to prevent the use of military force to resolve the issue of North Korea's nuclear program. Such negative developments could destabilize the security situation in NEA and in turn may lead to a worsening of the socioeconomic position of Russia's Far Eastern inhabitants. If the security situation in DPRK is not stabilized, the Korean Peninsula could never become a gate for Russian entry into East Asia, because many regional infrastructure development projects, such as the construction of oil and gas pipelines from Russia to ROK through the DPRK territory, the Trans-Siberian and Trans-Korean railroads, would be placed indefinitely on hold.

In a tough environment for multilateral negotiation Moscow is doing its best to find a compromise and to move the center of gravity of the negotiation process from the Libyan model of resolution (using non-military sanctions through the UN Security Council and increasing the threat of a preemptive military strike) to the Ukrainian model (using strictly diplomatic means or persuasion to give up nuclear weapons with compensation). After the DPRK engaged in missile launches and underground nuclear explosions in 2006 and again in May 2009 Moscow made common cause with China, and acted to ensure that military force would not be used against Pyongyang. What is more important, as a result of the Six-Party Talks of February 2007, Moscow offered the DPRK energy resources and economic assistance of not less than \$100 million. This revealed a constructive political position that may strengthen its in-

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<sup>8</sup> Presentation by the Head of the Russian Delegation, Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, Proceedings of the Investment Forum 2007 "Greater Tumen Initiative – Gateway to North-east Asia". - Tumen Secretariat, Vladivostok, 2007.

fluence in the region.

In East Asia, the current situation for Russia is vague. Due to above mentioned obstacles to regionalism in NEA, the center of gravity has shifted to Southeast Asia (SEA), and the initiative has been held by the ASEAN plus Three, and also by the East Asian Summit. Under these new circumstances, Russian leaders, following the convincing examples of China and Japan, decided to explore new possibilities in SEA. The main priority has been political and economic relations with Malaysia, which may assist Russia's possible participation in East Asian regionalism. For example, Malaysia became the number three buyer (after India and China) of Russian weapons making a successful example for other ASEAN countries of diversifying military arms purchases. Establishing priority ties with Kuala-Lumpur helped Moscow to strengthen its status in SEA, but it turned out to be a double-edged weapon. Close ties with Malaysia limited opportunities for Russia's geopolitical maneuvering in the region, because it was stigmatized with an anti-American and pro-Chinese position, though Russian interests in East Asia actually are much wider.

As a result, the first Russian attempts to join East Asian intergovernmental institutions failed. In 2003 Russia declared its intention to join ASEM, but encountered the problem of its identity. Moscow planned to enter ASEM as an Asian state, but ASEAN members were not satisfied, and they could not reach a consensus on where Russia belonged. In other words, they could not agree on what region (Asia or Europe) Russia could more appropriately represent in this institution. In 2005 Russia's intention to join the East Asian Summit (EAS) also did not get support from all participants. Russian President Putin got an opportunity to address the first EAS as a guest, and he used it to declare a willingness to join this new regional grouping. However the opinions of the Summit's participants' were divided. China, Malaysia, Philippines, and Korea supported Russia's candidacy, whilst Singapore and Indonesia issued a joint statement against the Malaysian proposal to support Russian membership.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Buszynski L. "Russia and Southeast Asia," In Hiroshi Kimura [editor] *Russia's Shift toward Asia*.: Sasakawa Peace Foundation, Tokyo 2007, pp. 192-199.

According to the Singaporean position, Russia's claim did not satisfy the most important criteria—"to have substantial relations with ASEAN". But if we compare ASEAN trade turnover with Russia and New Zealand in 2004 (when these countries were considered for membership), they were quite comparable, \$3.1 and \$3.5 billion respectively. This example demonstrates that the above-mentioned criterion had a subjective character, and that the unwillingness of several ASEAN countries to support Russia was based not just on economic grounds. In fact Russia's attempt to become an EAS founding member was unsuccessful due to different reasons. Most critical among them had been opposition from Japan and other countries, which responded to American concerns.

In this context it is worth mentioning that in recent years Russia's claims for membership in Asian multilateral institutions (The Six-Party Talks and EAS) have been encouraged by small states aspiring to balance American influence which from their point of view had been too strong in their sub-regions (the DPRK in NEA and Malaysia in SEA respectively). At the same time China did not want to risk its strategic priority—which was a stable partnership relationship with the U.S. for the sake of Russian interests. In deliberations over potential Russian membership in those multilateral institutions China would only join a majority vote. In developing regional relations with Moscow, Beijing is fully satisfied with bilateralism, while in NEA China is focusing on the so-called "northern three" (China, Japan, RO) format. The eventual transformation of those trilateral ties into a free trade zone would be very profitable for the Chinese economy.

### **Russia's key regional partnership in the Asia Pacific**

A principal feature of the Russian-American relationship is that U.S. policies in East Asia do not seem to contradict any critical Russian regional interests. In fact, on a number of diplomatic issues, the two countries' interests have effectively converged. Moscow highly appreciated U.S. financial help in dealing with Russia's Pacific fleet, and its nuclear submarine waste, as well as the not much publicized rejec-

tion by Washington of a Japanese proposal to remove part of the U.S. military presence from Okinawa to Hokkaido. Moscow has never called for the dismantling of America's Cold War-era alliances with Japan and South Korea, and Russia's only visible issue with America's bilateral ties in Asia is the U.S.-Japanese joint effort to develop a Theater Missile Defense (TMD) system. Russia considers any attempt to form closed Antiballistic Missile systems as very dangerous for global and regional security. The deployment of such systems in NEA could increase the feeling of insecurity there, especially within China, and may lead to a new round of an arms race. During last fifteen years Russian-American military contacts in the Asia-Pacific region have been positive, they include a series of search-and-rescue and amphibious disaster relief exercises, and numerous naval port calls. The centerpiece of those events was a series of exercises called "Cooperation from the Sea" that took place annually over 1994-98. The theme of those exercises was coordination between the Russian Pacific fleet and the American Pacific fleet in joint disaster relief operations. Staff personnel, surface combatants and amphibious ships as well as Marines and Naval infantry detachments participated in four exercises of that type. So far, they have been the only series of bilateral naval exercises between Russia and the U.S. in the post-Cold War era. However, it is of principal importance that the above-mentioned Russian-American military cooperation in the Asia Pacific played a secondary role in the Russian-American relationship in Europe (for Moscow as well as for Washington). On several occasions worsening bilateral relations in Europe negatively affected their ties in the Pacific. The Kosovo crisis, the NATO enlargement, and other events effectively blocked Russian-American military cooperation in the Asia Pacific. For example, in 1999 the post-Kosovo effect put "Cooperation from the Sea" indefinitely on hold.

Russia enjoys a positive experience of interaction with both the U.S. and Japan in resolving the nuclear safety problem of the Russian Far East. However, Moscow's general approach to the American-led security alliances in NEA is very cautious, although they do not pose any direct threat to Russia's security, Moscow is not a part of this system

and thus its options in championing its interest in the region are limited. Overall, countries that are excluded from the American-led bilateral alliances have a feeling that these structures are the remnants of the Cold War, and should be either disbanded or modified. The best possible scenario in this situation is to gradually give China and Russia a role in their activities starting with developing joint approaches to face non-traditional security threats. For this reason Russia is keen on complementing American regional alliances with a new international governmental organization to deal with security issues in Northeast Asia. For example, on the basis of the Six-Party Talks, Moscow welcomed the activities of the ARF and other multilateral security organizations, proposing to “move in this direction in a step-by-step manner, with the goal of establishing an integrated system that covers the entire Asia-Pacific”.

During the last 15 years the Russian-Japanese relationship has been characterized by obvious contradictions. On the one hand, the geopolitical interests of both countries depend on radical improvements in bilateral relations. On the other hand, Moscow's proposal for joint economic development of the southern Kurile Islands, without the transfer of sovereignty to Japan, did not receive a positive reply from Tokyo. Overall, the bilateral relationship has been composed of two unequal elements: a slowly widening network of cooperation in various fields and the long-term territorial dispute over the southern Kurile Islands (the disputed islands are: Iturup, Kunashir, Shikotan and Habomai).

During the 1990s Japan's desire to support reforms in Russia was constantly reaffirmed by the policies of three prime ministers (Hashimoto, Obuchi, and Mori). As a result, the paradigm of bilateral military cooperation had changed in a positive way as military contacts were elevated from a near zero to a relatively high level. In 1996 a Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) ship paid a visit to Vladivostok-the first visit to Russia by an MSDF ship since the end of the Cold War. In 1997 Russia reciprocated with an official naval visit to Tokyo, 104 years after the last port visit of this kind. In 1998, the-Japanese Minister of Defense Hosei Norota paid an official visit to the Russian Defense Minister and signed an important MOU on military cooperation. Another breakthrough

happened in 2000 when MSDF ships (the first foreign navy ships in the recent Russian history) visited the Kamchatka peninsula. Additionally, in 2003, the MSDF took part in a strategic exercise held in Russian Far Eastern waters. Military ties and exchanges between the Russian Armed Forces and the Japanese SDF also improved and were expanded to the Army and Air Forces. Reflecting these trends, the Japanese government approved a new National Defense Program Outline (NDPO), covering a ten-year period starting in 2005, which proposed to cut by one third the number of SDF tanks and artillery units. For Russians it was obvious that ground forces on Hokkaido should have been substantially reduced during the Gorbachev years without compromising the security of Japan. Such a long delay in Japan's adaptation to profound changes in Russia was a clear example that confidence building among nations requires a significant amount of time.

After a century of war and confrontation, Russia and Japan have practically demilitarized their relations. In modern Russia a majority of experts believe that a military conflict between Russia and Japan is just as inconceivable for example as a conflict between Russia and Germany. Moreover, the strategic challenges facing Moscow and Tokyo force them to view each other not only as security and economic partners, but, first and foremost, as a resource to be exploited for mutual development.<sup>10</sup>

Due to the steady growth of the Russian economy Japan began to demonstrate greater interest in its northern neighbor. Mutual trade turnover between the two countries increased from \$5 billion in 2003 to a record \$14 billion in 2006. Giant automobile producers Toyota and Nissan have decided to construct assembly plants near St. Petersburg and received much publicity in Russia. This positive trend in Russia's economic relations with Japan has not yet been matched by any progress over the issue of the sovereignty of the so-called "Northern Territories". Neither side appeared ready to soften its position. Tokyo wanted to acquire all four islands at once, but Moscow believed it had already taken a step toward resolving the issue on the basis of Putin's proposal of No-

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<sup>10</sup> Dmitri Trenin and Vasily Mikheyev, *Russia and Japan as a Resource for Mutual Development: A XXI Century Perspective on a XX Century Problem*, Carnegie Moscow Center, Moscow: 2005 pp. 4-6.

vember 2004 to return to the Joint Declaration signed by Japan and the USSR in 1956. Under the terms of this agreement, two islands (Shikotan and Habomai) were to be transferred to Japan upon the conclusion of a peace treaty.

Bridging the differences on the territorial issue and concluding a peace treaty are not easy, but not impossible. Let us try to uncover the critical difference in perceptions on those issues in the two countries. A well-known Japanese scholar of Russia, Hiroshi Kimura, in his recent book suggested that there was a wide gap between President Putin's diplomatic objectives vis-a-vis Japan and his real behavior. Kimura formulated his key argument as follows; "If the Putin government assigned the conclusion of a peace treaty through the solution of territorial disputes the highest priority in its Japan policy, it is difficult to understand why it actually adopts an all or nothing diplomatic behavior vis-a-vis Tokyo." Why does it not make greater efforts toward narrowing the gap over the territorial row with Tokyo to the maximum extent possible.<sup>11</sup> In reality Kimura misread Moscow's priorities regarding the peace treaty issue. First of all, according to public opinion polls conducted in 2006, 73 percent of Russians considered that a transfer of Russian territories to any foreign country cannot be tolerated and that Moscow should stop any negotiations on the fate of the southern Kurile Islands that belong to Russia. Secondly, a peace treaty with Japan has little practical importance for Russia's security, and Moscow's real interest is to develop economic ties with Tokyo and to acquire advanced technologies from Japan.

The final border demarcation with China that was achieved during President Putin's visit to Beijing in October 2004 facilitated a new wave of discussion about the fate of the southern Kurile Islands. This was especially so when the Russian leader hinted that this issue could be resolved in a similar way when both sides were ready for a compromise. In November 2004 Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov publicly formulated Moscow's view on a possible settlement with Tokyo. He

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<sup>11</sup> Hiroshi Kimura, "Putin's Policy Toward Japan: Eight Features," in Hiroshi Kimura, ed., *Russia's Shift toward Asia*. - Tokyo: SPF, 2007. P. 117.



made it clear that the right atmosphere for the conclusion of a real peace treaty should be created, and it could be concluded only when relations between the two countries reached the level of a mature economic and strategic partnership.<sup>12</sup> So on the one hand the successful final demarcation of the Russian-Chinese border demonstrated that there was nothing impossible in international politics, on the other hand it is clear that, due to the absolutely different state of bilateral Russian-Japanese ties, in the near future the Russian-Chinese border demarcation model could not be used to resolve the territorial dispute with Japan.

Russia continues to insist that a peace treaty can be concluded when bilateral relations reach the level of a mature economic and strategic partnership. In summer 2007 then-Prime Minister Abe officially offered Japanese assistance for the development of the Russian Far East (RFE) in such fields as nuclear energy, communications, infrastructure development, tourism, ecology, and during a visit to Japan in July 2007 Russian Deputy Prime Minister Sergey Narishkin officially accepted Tokyo's offer of help. However tough statements that had been made on the territorial problem by the Japanese Prime-Minister Taro Aso, and the declaration of Japanese Parliament of June 2009 which called for the earliest return of the "Northern Territories," froze this positive trend in bilateral relations. Public opinion polls conducted recently in 46 provinces (oblasts) of Russia, including the RFE, show that the majority of Russians feel very positively about Japan and expanding relations with this country. Across the country, for most of Russians (54%) modern Japan is seen as a vivid example of economic success. In this context it is instructive to compare the attitudes of Russians toward China and Japan. Although Russian attitudes were more positive for Tokyo than for Beijing, most of those polled view China (33%) and not Japan (21%) as Russia's leading prospective partner in the Asia-Pacific.<sup>13</sup> According to another poll, Japan remains the most "likable" country for a very significant part of the population in the RFE. Forty-five percent of them have the strongest positive feelings toward Japan, followed by ROK (12%),

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<sup>12</sup> <http://www.strana.ru>, November 15, 2004.

<sup>13</sup> All-Russian Center to Study Public Opinion (VCIOM) polls results, October 15-16, 2005. P. 49.

China (9%), and DPRK (3%).<sup>14</sup> In spite of the fact that the population of the RFE did not demonstrate such strong positive feelings toward China, a final border demarcation between Russia and China was successfully achieved in 2004.

This comparison helps us to answer a critical question which is whether the emotional likes and dislikes of the Russian population affected the efforts to resolve the territorial disputes with China and Japan. The answer is that in a practical sense they did not affect it very much. In other words, in such cases the views of the people could not be considered as a constraint on the resolution of these territorial disputes and what really matters is the status of comprehensive bilateral relationship between countries. As stated by Ogoura Kazuo, "Sovereign nations in international community act not on the basis of likes and dislikes, but in accordance with their own interests. No matter how attractive a given country may be, other countries will not accept its attractive power if it obstructs their freedom of action or adversely affects their economic interests".<sup>15</sup>

For a number of security and economic reasons, Russia's policy in Asia gives a clear priority to partnership with China. In October 2004 Putin made a historic visit to China that led to final demarcation of the 4,300-kilometer long Russian-Chinese border. Moscow and Beijing have become partners in strengthening stability in adjacent regions, such as Central Asia through the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and NEA through the Six-Party Talks. Beijing is gradually increasing its role in multilateral security and economic cooperation by proposing to invest \$10 billion to stimulate trade and economic cooperation between SCO member-states, and by ensuring that it remains a constant negotiation venue for the Six-Party Talks as well as a headquarters for the Greater Tumen Initiative.<sup>16</sup>

Over 2000-2005 the overall value of Russian arms exports to China reached around \$6 billion. China became a leading Russian trade partner with annual trade exceeding \$30 billion. In the future annual trade is expect-

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<sup>14</sup> Trenin and Mikheyev, p. 11.

<sup>15</sup> Ogoura Kazuo, "The Limits of Soft Power," Japan Echo, Tokyo, October 2006.

<sup>16</sup> Sevastyanov S. The Russian Far East's Security Perspective: Interplay of Internal and External Challenges and Opportunities. In A. Iwashita [editor] *Siberia and the Russian Far East in the 21st Century: Partners in the "Community of Asia"*. – Sapporo: Slavic Research Center, 2005. P.27.

ed to reach \$60 billion. Concerning Chinese illegal migration, most representatives of the Moscow and regional political elites are convinced that Russia needs a foreign labor force to help develop the vast spaces in the Russian Far East and Siberia. So it is an issue of an effective immigration policy and adequate controls. Taking these and other factors into account China will continue to be the main focus of Russian policy in the Asia-Pacific. In the future bilateral ties will lack the previous geopolitical romanticism about an alliance relationship and will be characterized by more pragmatic economic considerations.

### **Russian new energy policy and Northeast Asia**

Northeast Asia plays a growing role in Russian foreign policy because Moscow aims to use its economic relations with Asian states to enhance the economic development and comprehensive security of the Russian Far East and Eastern Siberia. Moreover, Russia's emergence as an important and reliable energy supplier could contribute substantially to multilateral security and economic cooperation in Northeast Asia. During his second Presidential term, Vladimir Putin introduced the New Energy Policy (NEP), which is based on the following principles; the diversification of the energy supply market, sustaining sovereign control over strategic decisions on oil and gas exploration and transit routes, signing long-term contracts with foreigners to develop Russian natural resources, and regulating foreign access to these resources. The NEP offered Moscow's foreign partners an energy security bargain; Russia would give them "security of supply" in exchange for "security of demand" for its resources. Thus, in an effort to avoid the boom-and-bust cycles of petroleum and natural gas prices of the past three decades the NEP stated that Russia would only invest in energy infrastructure projects if consumer states would sign 20- to 30-year contracts.

In July 2006 Putin made a commitment to increase the Asian share of Russian energy exports from the current 3% to 30% within 15 years. This means that Russia would sell to Asia a minimum of 60 million tons

of oil and 65 billion cubic meters of gas per year.<sup>17</sup> Just for a comparison, in 2005 Russia provided China and Japan with 15 and 2.5 million tons of oil respectively. There is growing concern that a shortage of energy resources will constrain the economic and social development of Northeast Asia. This region is experiencing faster economic growth and the demand for energy is greater than in other parts of the world, while Russia is the only country possessing diversified energy resources sufficient to sustain both domestic growth and to satisfy its considerable export requirements. The combination of very rapid growth in energy demand, particularly in China where by 2020 oil consumption is projected to increase more than twofold and gas consumption more than fourfold, indicates a high dependence on oil.<sup>18</sup> It also points to limited energy reserves, and a high dependence on Middle East oil imports which threaten NEA energy security.<sup>19</sup> It is clear that a shortage of oil, gas and electricity in any major energy importing country in the region would have a negative impact on other countries. A consensus is gradually emerging in favor of a multilateral cooperative approach to energy security. Recent events, especially the construction of the Eastern Siberia–Pacific Ocean oil pipeline (ESPO), demonstrate that Moscow has been gradually assuming a greater commitment to developing the RFE; the Russian government has fulfilled its obligation to invest domestic funds in a sizable part of the region’s multibillion dollar infrastructure projects. Foreign investors have long awaited such a positive signal. At the same time, other components of the Russian NEP, the limits placed on foreign investments and the preferential treatment given to the two largest state-owned companies (Gazprom and Rosneft) in recent years, have changed the playing field for foreign investors in the energy sector in a negative way.

Several of the largest international energy projects in Russia were based on production-sharing agreements (PSAs), including Sakhalin-1

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<sup>17</sup> Putin V. Proceedings of the President Putin’s third meeting with international discussion club “Valdai” members, 09 September 2006, Moscow. President of Russia Official Web site. English: <http://www.kremlin.ru>

<sup>18</sup> China is the second largest oil consumer in the world; Japan is the third; the ROK is the sixth.

<sup>19</sup> Japan depends on Middle East oil for 88% of its imports, the ROK—82%, and China—45%.

(Exxon Mobil), Sakhalin-2 (Royal Dutch Shell), Kharyaga (Total), and Kovykta (British Petroleum), in which foreign companies had controlling stakes. Russian officials now reject the PSAs as unprofitable and have been renegotiating these energy projects. For example, under serious pressure Shell and other foreign companies decided to renegotiate the ownership terms of the Sakhalin-2 project and to sign a new protocol to the project agreement with Gazprom in December 2006. According to these new terms, Gazprom acquired a controlling stake in the Sakhalin Energy Investment Corporation (the Sakhalin-2 project operator), buying 50% plus one shares for \$7.45 billion, while Royal Dutch Shell, Mitsui, and Mitsubishi decreased the number of their total project shares by 50%. As a result of that Shell now has a 27.5% stake, while Mitsui has 12.5% and Mitsubishi has 10%.

Recently Japan's Osaka Gas signed a contract with Sakhalin Energy to buy 200,000 tons of liquefied natural gas (LNG) annually, which will be produced at a plant in southern Sakhalin and then shipped to Osaka, Japan. The Japanese contract will account for 98% of the LNG plant's productive capacity. Despite the recent negative experiences of some foreign investors in Sakhalin oil and gas projects, Chinese, Indian and other companies continue to demonstrate a readiness to become involved in them.

In Europe, Russia and Gazprom have been lucky to establish preferential "state-business" partnerships with Germany (E.ON and BASF) and Italy (Eni). Bonn and Rome provided all kind of political and economic support for Moscow's energy diversification plans, including the construction of sea-based pipelines, while private companies could afford to pay Gazprom world market prices for Russian energy resources. In Northeast Asia the situation is not so favorable to Moscow. There are only two countries in this region (Japan and the ROK) that can afford to pay world market prices for Russian energy, but it is not so easy to deliver energy resources to them.

The current prospects for large-scale American, Japanese and RK investments in the development of eastern Siberia and the RFE are not so great. Closer economic ties between the RFE and the USA have not developed. Bilateral trade and investment substantially declined in the past decade, and the only example of substantial American investment in the RFE is the Sakh-

alin-1 offshore venture. Exxon Neftegaz clashed with the Kremlin over cost overruns for this project and the right to determine the primary customers for the resources produced. As a result the American business community is monitoring the situation closely.

Although former Japanese Prime Minister Koizumi lobbied to change the main route of the ESPO pipeline and to redirect it to the Pacific coast, Japanese business people are not so optimistic. It remains unclear when exactly Japan could expect major oil deliveries from Eastern Siberia because reliable commercial feasibility studies regarding East Siberian oil reserves are not ready yet. Moreover, the Sakhalin-1 and Sakhalin-2 projects are now operational and by 2010 total oil output from these two projects is expected to reach an annual output of 19 million tons.<sup>20</sup> Given the availability of Sakhalin oil and the projected decrease in Japan's oil consumption in the coming decades, some Japanese experts express doubts that Tokyo will help finance commercial feasibility studies for the Eastern Siberian energy projects.<sup>21</sup> Energy cooperation between Seoul and Moscow is restrained by the influence of two factors. First, the ROK is frustrated by unfulfilled promises and long delays in the implementation of long-discussed projects such as the development of the Kovykta gas field and the building of an industrial park within the Nakhodka Free Economic Zone in Primorsky territory. Secondly, the ROK has no easy access to Russian resources, which would have to be transported from Russia by land either through China or the DPRK. It is worth mentioning here that most Russian proposals to sell oil, gas and electricity to neighbors cannot be implemented fully until issues concerning the security of the Korean Peninsula are resolved. Moscow believes that a solution to this regional problem would be greatly facilitated by providing DPRK with adequate security guarantees and facilitating its socio-economic development in exchange for its renunciation of a military nuclear program.

Due to regional geopolitical factors such as geography, politics, economics, and demography only Beijing can be a preferential "state-busi-

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<sup>20</sup> Baseline Study for Energy Cooperation in Northeast Asia. Seoul: Korea Energy Economic Institute, 2007. P. 151.

<sup>21</sup> Hiroshi Kimura, "Putin's Policy Toward Japan: Eight Features," in Hiroshi Kimura, ed., *Russia's Shift toward Asia*. - Tokyo: SPF, 2007. P. 97-98.

ness” partner for Moscow, as supported by Gazprom and Rosneft on the Russian side, and the Chinese government’s partnership with the largest Chinese companies on the other. The demand for energy in China is expected to exceed that of North America in the 2020s, while, according to the document Russian Energy Strategy toward 2020 (approved by the Russian Government on August 28, 2003), the share of the Asia-Pacific region in Russian oil and gas exports in 2020 will reach 30% for oil and 15% for gas. Thus, penetrating China’s market will be crucial for Russia to achieve its own strategic energy targets. According to Russian scholar Alexei Voskressenski, “The terms of China’s access to these resources will be one of the key problems in future Russo-Chinese relations and a key factor for China’s new global economic role. The Russo-Chinese strategic partnership is, indeed, a tool to ensure China’s access to these resources and is thus vital for China’s status as a new rising Asian power”.<sup>22</sup> The only problem for Moscow is that China is seeking a substantial discount for any kind of Russian resources. As a result, Russia has been chiefly concerned about the possible scenario in which China might enjoy a monopsony in price negotiations, even if the latter potentially provided the former with the largest energy market.

Though strengthened Russo-Chinese bilateral economic and security ties are one of the key factors shaping the Russian model of Asia-Pacific regionalism, such a one-sided approach has serious structural limits, and Moscow should search for an alternative basis for a Russian-shaped regionalism, and should diversify its Asia-Pacific policy. Multinational cooperation including China, Japan, ROK, USA, and the ASEAN countries is desirable for the purpose of the overall development of the Siberia and the RFE. Such cooperation would also enable Russia to resolve key energy development problems. First, it could secure a larger market share for oil and gas transmitted to neighboring countries. Second, diversifying the market for energy resources could attract more foreign investment. Finally, stable regulatory regimes could better integrate the interests of all participants, especially private sector investors.

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<sup>22</sup> Voskressenski A. “The Rise of China and Russo-Chinese Relations,” In A. Iwashita [editor] *Eager Eyes Fixed on Eurasia*. – Sapporo: Slavic Research Center, 2007. P. 28.

## Conclusion

Since the mid 1990s Russian politics in the Asia-Pacific have become more dynamic. Moscow became a full member of all critical Asia Pacific and Northeast Asian regional institutions, and it is important to continue the active work in these areas. The recent decisions of the Russian leadership to host the APEC summit in Vladivostok in 2012, and to assume substantial financial and other obligations to help the DPRK, demonstrate that the economic component of Russian regionalism in NEA is gradually becoming more important in the regional security agenda. The Russian Government should develop a long term complex Asian strategy, and one of its key components should be the strengthening of mutual interactions between the RFE and the quickly forming East Asian economic space. The best way for Russia to become a member of the EAS is to rely on a combination of economic and geopolitical approaches. It means that Moscow should widen economic cooperation (with an emphasis on multilateral infrastructure development projects as clear symbols of regionalism) with NEA countries, and should develop more balanced relations with leading East Asian states and the U.S.

The consolidation of Moscow's control over decisions on energy extraction and transit routes may increase the presence of resource extracting companies from developing states such as China and India in NEA. This is unlikely to lead to a confrontation between Beijing and Tokyo over energy resources. China is the only country in NEA that could become a preferential "state-business" partner for Moscow. Such a partnership has already developed a firm inter-governmental basis in the Russo-Chinese strategic partnership.<sup>23</sup> It has also developed a business foundation through a series of bilateral cooperation agreements between Gazprom and Rosneft from the Russian side, and CNPC, Sinopec, and other companies from the Chinese side. However, to avoid placing Beijing in the position of enjoying a monoposony in price negotiations, Moscow should find ways to deliver a substantial part of its energy resources to Japan, the ROK and other countries. But due to constant political frictions with the U.S. and Japan, in practical terms this is

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<sup>23</sup> Russia and China signed the Treaty on Good Neighborly Friendship and Cooperation on July 16, 2001



not easy for Russia and Russian economic and political dependence on China is constantly growing.

Interestingly enough, the newly published “Russian National Security Strategy till 2020” (approved by the Russian President’s decree 537 on May 12, 2009) gave a detailed description of the Russian role as a global world power, and of the security threats to Russia emanating from the Euro-Atlantic and Central Asian regions. It is focused on the main approaches to counter them and on Russian priorities in developing relations with the key players, international organizations, and institutions as well as states. In stark contrast, this document does not mention the Asia-Pacific region at all. It does not say anything concerning Russian security challenges and interests in this part of the world. (the only exception is the Korean Peninsula which is mentioned among other regional security threats to international peace such as Middle East, Iraq and Afghanistan). It means that Russia’s official approach to its Asia-Pacific policy is either considered in Moscow as not very important, which is less likely, or that so far it has not been clearly formulated, and this is more likely.

## SINO-JAPAN-ROK RELATIONS: POLITICAL CONFIDENCE ISSUES\*

*Piao Jianyi\*\**

### **Introduction**

North-East Asia is not a strictly geographic term but defined from the angle of both geopolitics and geo-economics. It includes eastern China, North Korea, South Korea, Japan, eastern Mongolia, eastern Siberia and Far East of Russia, as well as influence imposed from the United States. In current North-East Asian international relations, China, Japan and ROK have been the most influential states. When it comes to discussion on Political Confidence and the Security Issues of North-East Asia, it is crucial to analyze political issues between China, Japan and ROK reveal policy practice and developments relating to the topic. Political Confidence is one of the hottest issues in international relations today, though it is still in the initial stage of development. In this connection the Sino-Japan-ROK relationship has not revealed much political confidence recently. Sino-Japan-ROK relations have generally adhered to functionalism, in other words, the mutual profit from trade and economic cooperation among the three states has been the corner stone of their relations; these relations may expand to include cultural and social fields. At last, they may deal with security issues which will mean that relations will move into a new phase. Sino-Japan-ROK relations have been strengthened through various successes and failures. This paper examines various unsolved political issues in Sino-Japan-

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ROK relations from China's perspective, and will suggest further study of the successful experiences in the future. Based on previous studies, this paper is divided into four parts.<sup>1</sup> In the first three parts, the paper briefly states the unsolved issues of political confidence in bilateral relations between China, Japan and ROK. In the last part as a conclusion the paper provides some academic approaches to these issues.

## **I. Political Confidence Issues in Sino-Japan Relations**

In September 1972, China and Japan managed to normalize their relations. In August 1978, the two countries announced the Sino-Japan Treaty for Peace and Friendship. In November 1998, China and Japan had begun establishing a Friendly and Cooperative Partnership for Peace and Development. Since May 2008, both sides have promoted the building of a Sino-Japan Strategic Reciprocal Relationship. There have been only three major steps in Sino-Japan relations 36 years after the establishment of their diplomatic relations. The reason is that there are 7 sensitive unsolved issues in the bilateral relationship as listed below.

### ***Issue 1: Dispute over Acknowledging History***

How to recognize Japan's invasion of China during World War II is still the most important issue in Sino-Japan relations. The Chinese government has been advocating long-term friendship between China and Japan on the basis of treating this piece of history correctly. The Japanese government has already acknowledged the invasion and showed remorse over the pain caused by the war. Both sides have reached an agreement that acknowledging and treating this history correctly is imperative for the bilateral relationship. However, there are still right-wing factions in Japanese politics that attempted to deny and distort history. Some Japanese prime ministers and MPs visited to the Yasukuni Shrine that is a symbol of the revival of Japanese militarism.

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<sup>1</sup> Piao Jiayin "Sino-ROK All Round Cooperative Partnership: Definition and Structure" and "The Regional Political and Security Environment for Building North-East Asian Economic Community" in Piao Jiayin and Piao Guanji ad. <Sino-ROK Relations and North-East Economic Community>, China's Social Sciences Publishing House, Nov. 2006, 1-117 pp.

### ***Issue 2: Taiwan***

The Taiwan Issue is another ticking bomb in Sino-Japan relations. Since China and Japan achieved the normalization of their relationship, Taiwan's status in the international community has not been an issue between the two states. The Chinese government approves of nongovernmental contacts in the Japan-Taiwan relationship while it is strongly against governmental contacts, which means recognition of "two Chinas", or "one China and one Taiwan". The Chinese government also made the Japanese government promise that the Taiwan issue would never be covered by the US-Japan alliance. But the visits of Li Denghui and other Taiwan politicians to Japan has made the Japan's promise a vain one.

### ***Issue 3: Sovereignty of Diaoyu Island***

Diaoyu (Sengakku, in Japanese) Island was China's territory from the Ming Dynasty, which was affiliated geographically to Taiwan Island. The Treaty of San Francisco claimed that the United States would be the trustee of Diaoyu Island along with Okinawa. In 1971, these islands were to be returned by the United States to Japan according to the treaty between Japan and United States. In order to establish diplomatic relations with Japan at the time, the Chinese government compromised its claim to the Diaoyu Island. This was done so not to impede the normalization process between the two countries and China decided to leave the issue to the future on the basis that Diaoyu Island belongs to China. But right-wing factions in Japan never stop making incendiary statements over the issue of the sovereignty of Diaoyu Island.

### ***Issue 4: The US-Japanese Security Treaty***

By the later 1990s, Japan-US security cooperation stepped into a new era. The Japanese government emphasized that the cooperation is for self-defense, and not related to any particular area or country. The newly revised Guidelines for US-Japan Defense Cooperation have failed to explicitly exclude Taiwan from the scope of "the areas surrounding Japan" which is referred to in the guidelines, this could involve military intervention. The Japanese government should take

more convincing measures to reassure China and its Asian neighbors that Japanese military maneuvers are headed in the right direction.

#### ***Issue 5: War Reparations***

During the negotiation towards the normalization of Sino-Japanese relations, the Japanese government made it clear that Japan deeply regretted what it had done during the invasion. On such premise, Chinese government made the decision to forgoing war reparations for China's national interests' sake, and this position was reaffirmed during the negotiations leading to the Sino-Japan Treaty of Peace and Friendship. On the other hand, there are still outstanding war-time issues posing as threats to bilateral relations, such as the Comfort Women and Chinese-labor-workers issues, all have brought problems into the current friendship between the two countries. The Chinese government has asked its Japanese counterpart to take these unresolved issues seriously to make Sino-Japan relations more stable.

#### ***Issue 6: Japanese Abandoned Chemical Weapons in China (CWC)***

China has urged Japan to earnestly implement its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention for the destruction of these weapons. To expedite the pace of relevant work a Memorandum on the Destruction of Japanese Abandoned Chemical Weapons was concluded between China and Japan. China wants to commence with the destructive process as soon as possible. China demands that, in keeping with the stipulations of the convention, the country leaving chemical weapons in another country should destroy all such weapons as soon as possible. The Chinese and Japanese governments will engage in further negotiations over this matter.

#### ***Issue 7: Jurisdiction over Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)***

This is another hot-potato issue outstanding in Sino-Japan relations. In the overlapping exclusive economic zone in the Chinese East Sea, China insists on setting the boundaries according to continental principle, while Japan holds the idea of midline principle. Two countries have started negotiations on the matter.

## **II. Political Confidence Issues in Sino-ROK Relations**

After the establishment of diplomatic relations in August 1992, China and the ROK declared a “Sino-ROK Strategic Cooperative Partnership Facing 21st Century” in November 1998. And then, bilateral relations were promoted to a “Sino-ROK All-round Cooperative Partnership” in July 2003, and a “Strategic Cooperative Partnership” in May 2005. Sino-ROK relations have made three large strides during 16 years, which can only be compared with the development of Sino-Russia relations. Nevertheless, there exist eight issues impeding the confidence building between China and the ROK.

### ***Issue 1: EEZ and Continental Shelf Delimitation***

China and the ROK have not delimited their respective EEZs and Continental Shelves. Since 1973, South Korea unilaterally has been cooperating with the US and Japan to drill, explore oil and gas in the disputed areas, which has provoked strong opposition from the Chinese side. Moreover, the ROK has built a scientific exploration station in Suyan Islet (Ieardo, in Korean), deepening the conflicts between China and the ROK.

### ***Issue2: Legal Status of China's Ethnic Koreans in the ROK***

After establishing diplomatic relations a few South Koreans, taking advantage of cultural exchanges, began to instigate nationalism among China's ethnic Koreans. And some South Koreans even raised the issue of the legal position of China's ethnic Koreans. South Korea's national assembly amended the Overseas Korean Act, which created a serious political issue destabilizing China's society as a multi-national state.

### ***Issue 3: Trade Imbalance***

After the establishment of diplomatic relations, China's adverse trade balance has expanded increasingly. Both use different statistics and there is increasing ROK investment in China based on mid-products from ROK. The South Korean government consistently refuses to open its agricultural market to China, which has made the issue more serious than

before. Although it might be a business issue, it is also a reflection of a different standard towards China in comparison with western countries.

#### ***Issue 4: DPRK Defectors in China***

The DPRK defectors issue has nothing to do with North Korea. But some South Koreans in China took North Korea's defectors in and even enticed them to defect and intrude into foreign embassies in China, which made the North Korea's defectors issue an international problem. This issue endangers the stability of China's Korean nationalities and China's society security, it damages China's international image, and brings serious negative influences into Sino-DPRK relations and the stability of the Korean peninsula.

#### ***Issue 5: Civilian Antagonism***

During the FIFA Cup in 2002, some China's media and soccer fans questioned the achievement of the South Korean team, which ignited civilian antagonism between China and South Korea. During the Beijing Olympic torch relay in Seoul, some South Korean disrupted the torch relay, damaging South Korea's image among China's civilians.

#### ***Issue 6: Gaogouli (Koguryo)***

Gaogouli (Koguryo, in Korean) is an academic issue, but before the establishment of diplomatic relations, some South Korean lawmakers introduced a motion to the national assembly and urged the South Korea government to reclaim territory from China which belonged to Gaogouli in history, this made Gaogouli become a sensitive political issue. Some within the South Korean media claimed that China intended to use its position on Gaogouli to intervene into future military conflicts in Korean peninsula. Some South Korean politicians even claimed to take advantage of the Taiwan issue to force China to concede to South Korea in the issue.

#### ***Issue 7: Jiandao (kando)***

Jiandao (Kando, in Korean) is an expression which refers to Yanji city, Wangqing County, Helong city and Hunchun city within Yabian

Korean autonomous area on Chinese territory. According to the Chinese historical record, in 1907, Japan claimed that the administrative ownership of Jiandao had not been determined and dispatched military police to Jiandao. Through the Qing government's negotiations, Japan withdrew the military police and affirmed the territorial rights of the Qing over Jiandao.<sup>2</sup> But South Korea maintained that Japan, for the sake of obtaining the right to build a railway in Northeast China, signed the Jiandao Convention with the Qing government in 1909 and ceded Changbai Mountain (Baetusan, in Korean) and the north area of Tumen River to the Qing government.<sup>3</sup> In 2004, 59 South Korea lawmakers introduced a motion which called for abolishing the Jiandao Convention.

#### ***Issue 8: Taiwan***

When it established normal relations with People's Republic of China, South Korea severed diplomatic relations with Taiwan and some South Koreans took that to heart. At present, almost all in South Korea's media call relations between the Chinese Mainland and Taiwan as "Sino-Taiwan relations", seemingly not accepting that Taiwan is a part of China. The South Korean government hopes that ROK-Taiwan relations could reach the level of US-Taiwan or Europe-Taiwan relations. In 2004, the South Korean government congratulated Chen Shuibian on his second presidency. And in spite of China's contrary efforts, some ROK lawmakers attended Chen Shuibian's inauguration and even condemned China saying that it had interfered into South Korean internal affairs.<sup>4</sup>

### **III. Political Confidence Issues in Japan-ROK Relations**

In June 1965, Japan and ROK had normalized their diplomatic relations. In October 1998, the two sides announced establishment of a

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<sup>2</sup> *China's Natural History*, <http://www.gg-art.com/history/1.php?y=1907>

<sup>3</sup> *Everyday News*, [http://www.m2000.co.kr/sub\\_news/sub\\_news\\_view.php?news\\_1d=32349&77=2004](http://www.m2000.co.kr/sub_news/sub_news_view.php?news_1d=32349&77=2004)

<sup>4</sup> *Yonhapnews*, <http://www.yohapnews.co.kr>, August 16, 2004



*"Japan-ROK 21st Century New Partnership"*, indicating the end of the unfortunate history between them and looked toward the future. In April 2008, the two sides decided to upgrade their relations to a "mature partnership" which gives greater importance to the future than to the past. Compared with the Sino-Japanese and the Sino-ROK relationship, there are five prominent political issues between Japan and ROK, as a result of Japan's 36 year colonial rule on Korean peninsula.

### ***Issue 1: Legal Status of Korean Residents in Japan***

After the recovery of the Korean peninsula, 600,000 Koreans, who were forcibly recruited to Japan as labor during the colonial era, could not return to their country, hence, issue of their legal status emerged. With the outbreak of the Korean War, these Koreans split into pro-North Korea's "Chongryon" and pro-South Korea's "Mindan" factions. After the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and the ROK, the "Mindan" people received permanent residency in Japan, but they still suffered from discrimination in social welfare in Japanese laws and regulations. In November 1991, Japan and ROK signed a memorandum on the legal status of Korean residents in Japan after the third generation, and decided to solve these problems gradually. In recent years, Korean residents in Japan make great efforts to fight for voting rights in local elections.

### ***Issue 2: The Recognition of History***

Since 1981, the Japanese revision of history textbooks, which distorted and beautified Japan's colonial rule over the Korean peninsula, aroused strong condemnation from the ROK. In September 1984, the Emperor of Japan reflected on the historical issues, but this aroused criticism from the ROK. Since then, many Japanese politicians apologized for their past history, but from time to time, some important Japanese government officials beautify the colonial history of the Korean peninsula. After the 1990's, the "comfort women" issue became the biggest problem between Japan and ROK. The ROK asked the Japanese government to admit it that it recruited Korean women to become "comfort

women", and to apologize. However, the Japanese government denied this, and Japanese politicians occasionally deny history, they visit the Yasukuni Shrine, which makes it difficult for the ROK to deepen confidence in Japan.

### ***Issue 3: Fishing Disputes***

When Japan and the ROK established diplomatic relations in 1965, the two sides signed a fishing agreement, which established a 12 nautical mile fishing zone around both countries. It also stated that the agreement may be unilaterally terminated. At that time, Japan had a developed capacity for ocean fishing, so Japanese fishing boats frequently went to the Korean coastal waters. ROK fishing boats could not go to Japan's waters because of limited fishing equipment. When the ROK's fishing capacity could reach the North Pacific Ocean, the Soviet Union and the United States set up a 200-nautical-mile EEZ, forcing the ROK ocean fishing fleet back to the sea near Hokkaido, Japan. In this regard, Japan drew an operating line around its sea zone prohibiting Korean trawlers to enter, which led to disputes between the fishermen of two countries. To solve this problem, in October 1980 Japan and the ROK reached an agreement which called for self-discipline in other countries fishing waters. However, the development of the ROK fishing fleet brought greater losses to the Japanese fishing industry. Therefore, in 1996, Japan announced the establishment of a comprehensive 200-nautical-mile EEZ, and began to negotiate with ROK to amend the 1965 fishing agreement. Due to fruitless negotiations, Japan announced in January 1998 the repeal of this fishing agreement. In October of the same year, Japan and ROK signed a new fishing agreement which included a provision to set up a Dokdo (Takeshima, in Japanese) island sea area as a "center zone", which both sides could enter to conduct fishing operations. Many ROK people believe that Japan's intention is to take the Dokdo Islands and they called on the Government to re-negotiate the fishing agreements with Japan.

### ***Issue 4: Dokdo (or Takeshima) Sovereignty***

Dokdo (Takeshima, in Japanese) Island is located in the southern waters of the Sea of Japan (the East Sea, in Korean), the geographic coordinates are

longitude 131° 51'54.6"~131° 52'10.4", and latitude 37° 14'26.8"~37° 14'30.6"; the nearest distance from ROK (Ulleungdo Island) is 87.4 km and from Japan (Oki Island) is 157.5 km, it has an area of 187,554 square meters. The island is volcanic, with the same geological structure of the ROK's Ulleungdo Island. The waters around the island are more than 2,000 meters in depth, they are rich in fish, shellfish and algae resources. According to Korea history, since the reign period of Hyunjong of Koryo the Chosun dynasty had had jurisdiction over Ulleungdo, and was aware of the existence of the Dokdo. In 1901, the Korean government placed the Dokdo under the administration of Ulleungdo. Japan argued that it discovered Takeshima Island in the 17th century and explored the waters around the island exclusively. Hence, Japan claims it has original title for this island. In January 1952, Korea announced sovereignty over the waters surrounding Dokdo Island, and drew a sovereignty-marked "peace line" around the Dokdo, which triggered the dispute between the ROK and Japan.

#### ***Issue 5: Trend of Japan Moving toward a Major Military Power***

As a result of having been deprived of its diplomatic rights and Japanese colonial rule for 36 years the ROK has been cautious about Japan's rise, especially with help from the United States, Japan uses the excuse of the threat from the surrounding countries to accelerate the development of its military power. Japan's becoming a major military power greatly worries the ROK and other neighbors.

### **IV. Conclusions**

Firstly, among the above-mentioned factors which impact upon the promotion of political confidence among China, Japan and ROK, China-related issues are first, then Japanese, ROK-related issues are last; issues between China and Japan account for most of the attention, then those between China and ROK are similar to those between ROK and Japan; but the number of issues is almost evenly divided between the countries. As a result, bilateral relations between China, Japan and Korea are quite balanced. There is no particularly good bilateral relationship, and no particularly bad bilateral relationship.

Secondly, these problems, in accordance with their nature and content, can be divided into a few major categories such territorial issues (or territorial sea), national sovereignty issues, historical issues, ethnic issues and military-security issues. From above we can see that, first the territorial (territorial sea) and the other sovereignty issues affect the bilateral relationships of all three countries; Secondly, in these three bilateral relationships historical issues relate mainly to Japan, especially those history issues between China and Japan are most important. Thirdly the ROK is involved in ethnic problems affecting the other two, especially the ethnic problem between China and the ROK are especially complicated; fourth, both China and the ROK are wary about Japan's military expansion.

Thirdly, these issues can be divided into mere bilateral issues, trilateral issues, those with an impact spilling over to affect China, Japan and Korea. From the above we can see that, first in bilateral issues, Sino-Japan and Sino-ROK issues are more important than those between the ROK and Japan which focus on "recognizing history" and "relations with Taiwan". Thirdly these issues have affected the United States, DPRK, Russia and other North-East Asian countries.

Fourthly, from a theoretical perspective, confidence building between countries depends on the comprehensive effects of the rational cognitive and emotional factors; but how these two factors may affect this confidence depends on the specific circumstances of the cases. It can be inferred that the issues which influence political confidence among China, Japan and ROK, mainly are a result of the lack of timely and adequate mutual understanding. Out-of-date knowledge of other countries often leads to negative emotions, resulting in the obstruction of the formation of correct perceptions. In fact, the above-mentioned Sino-Japan-ROK issues took shape in this way. Therefore, the strengthening of mutual exchanges, deepening mutual understanding to strengthen emotional communication is the only way to enhance political confidence between China, Japan and the ROK.

## FOR NOTES

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## **Political Confidence and Security Building in Northeast Asia**

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