



EMERGING SECURITY ARCHITECTURE IN EAST ASIA **INDIA'S STRATEGY TOWARDS THE KOREAS AND JAPAN**



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East Asia is a region in a constant state of flux as far as its geographical definition and its place in the global security architecture are concerned. It is generally believed that the economic center of gravity of the world is gradually shifting to Indo-pacific from the Atlantic region. With Europe, more or less having resolved its historical conflicts the future theatres of major differences would all be in Asia; either in West Asia, South Asia or East Asia. India has not sought a role for itself in the security related issues of West Asia beyond AFPAK region. Economically India is actively pursuing greater integration

with countries towards the East-particularly the 10 members of ASEAN, Japan and Republic of Korea. Gradually India's strategic interests in East Asia are also gaining prominence. As such, India has major stakes in the future shape and composition of formal structures as well as formal and informal sub-groups and alliances in East Asia.

Since early 1990s there have been attempts to work for greater regional dialogue among the countries of East Asia. In the absence of an acceptable regional leader(s), there has been a broad consensus that the future regional cooperation would be constructed around the existing ASEAN which has overtime grown into a membership of ten countries and has largely shed its ideological baggage of pro-US and anti-communism policies. To examine this further it would be useful to have a brief look at the incremental enlargement of the scope of work undertaken by ASEAN.

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The first step by ASEAN towards discussion of strategic issues of the region was taken with the formation of the ASEAN Region Forum (ARF) in 1993. ARF advocated an overarching Asia-Pacific regional security dialogue espousing the principle of 'co-operative security' over the traditional concept of 'balance of power'. In 1996 India, China and Russia were invited to join ARF in their capacity as full Dialogue Partners of ASEAN. In 2004 Pakistan also joined on explicit assurance that bilateral issues like Kashmir would not be raised. ARF is one of the few regional fora where both North Korea and South Korea are represented.

At present ARF has working groups on (i) search and rescue (ii) defense educational institutions (iii) civilian use of military assets, (iv) anti-terrorism and (v) maritime security. Conflict resolution is missing from its agenda.

India finds ARF a useful forum to express opinions on Asia-Pacific strategic issues. It also allows space to India to present itself as an Indo-Pacific power. In the unfolding regional architecture in Indo-Pacific region, the East Asia Summit process has considerable potential. The idea emerged from the 2001 report of 'East Asia Vision Group' of eminent intellectuals established by the then President of South Korea Kim Dae-jung. The report visualized an East Asia Summit (EAS) of ASEAN member states along with China, Japan and Republic of

Korean. The entire process was to be led by ASEAN.

EAS started in 2005 as a leaders' led forum with membership of 10 ASEAN countries and 6 neighbors: China, Japan, ROK, India, Australia and New Zealand. In November 2011, United States and Russia were also invited to join EAS. The 7th EAS in Phnom Penh in November 2012 was attended by President Barak Obama and Foreign minister Sergey Lavrov of Russia.

India has been attending EAS summits at the Prime Minister level. However, this process does not yet have any definite direction, clear objectives or tangible outcomes. Many analysts believe that the future regional security structures could emerge out of the EAS process with a clear mandate and a secretariat where all the members would have an equal say. Some deft diplomacy would be required to reconcile the sovereign principle of equality of all members with the insistence of ASEAN to play the central role. It would be a challenge to be overcome as the countries move forward.

Another important platform for growing regional security related interaction in the region is 'ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting -Plus' or ADMM+. This is the only platform in East Asia where the defence ministers of all the countries of the region regularly participate. The forum started as ADMM in 2006 with only the ASEAN country defence ministers participating. In 2010, the participants of all Dialogue Partners of ASEAN were also invited. The biennial meetings deal with the following five issues:

- (i) Maritime security
- (ii) Counter-terrorism
- (iii) Disaster management
- (iv) Peacekeeping operation
- (v) Military medicine

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India's Defence Minister normally attends the meetings.

The fourth platform for discussing securing security related issues in the region is the 'Shangri-La Dialogue' hosted annually by the International Institute for strategic studies in Hotel Shangri-La in Singapore. It is a track one inter-governmental security forum where Defence Ministers, military chiefs, academics and diplomats are invited. 28 Asia-Pacific states including India regularly attend the meetings. In June 2012 Defence Minister A.K. Antony, had presented his vision of a 'Comprehensive Maritime Security Architecture' at the Dialogue.

ARF, EAS, ADMM+ and Shangri La Dialogue are in many ways complementary to each other. It is hoped that their collective efforts would lead towards a genuine, effective and inclusive Asia-Pacific political - security community.

As an active participant in shaping the emerging security architecture in East Asia it is imperative for India to discuss its future contours with our strategic partners in the region. Only with a collective effort on the basis of shared perspectives can India realistically influence the future security architecture in East Asia.

With the limits of the economic, military, strategic and soft power of individual countries in the region, it would be fair to say that perhaps only United States and China can unilaterally 'shape' the future security scenario in East Asia. ASEAN as well as major powers like India and Japan would certainly have an influential role and can further their regional objectives by forming partnerships around specific issues with like-minded countries.

With increasing inter-dependence among countries, pulls of globalization and conflicting national interests India would

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find that it has to keep its lines open with all the countries of the region and manage relations with an outward smile even with those countries like China and North Korea whose actions often deeply hurt India's national interests, pride and psyche.

From a security viewpoint India needs to enter into strategic dialogues with potential partners on pursuing the following broad objectives:-

1. Promote a multi polar East Asia
2. Work for a stable, peaceful, secure and open East Asia.
3. Freedom of navigation in Indo-Pacific region - preserving status quo of the right of passage in South China Sea
4. Maritime Security -- Collaboration against piracy
5. Cyber Security
6. Security of communications, satellites etc.
7. Nudge Myanmar forward on the road to democracy.
8. Denial of sanctuaries to terrorist outfits - Indonesia, Philippines and Thailand.

These broad objectives need to be pursued in the context of (i) Rise of china (ii) US pivot towards Asia-Pacific (iii) Emerging concept of the integrity of Indo-Pacific

region and (iv) Questions about the viability of ASEAN-centric security architecture in East Asia.

In view of the inability of ASEAN to pronounce itself clearly on security related issues of its member eq. Philippines-PRC spat on Scarborough Shoal or Thailand-Cambodia border conflict on the Preah Vihear Temple, the policy of all decisions by consensus and absence of a clear leader it is probable that ASEAN may not continue to be the engine to drive this process and may evolve into a mere secretariat for the ARF, EAS etc. in the future regional security architecture. The engines for driving and influencing this process could be outside ASEAN; US and China mainly and Russia, India and Japan in the 2nd Tier.

To pursue its core national interests India would need to explore, build and nurture issue-based partnerships rather than across the board strategic understanding with any particular friendly country(s) on all the issues of concern to us. As a tactic to pursue a wider strategy we would need to forge both bilateral and trilateral partnerships with limited common agenda specific to each partnership.

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INDIA AND REPUBLIC OF KOREA

India and South Korea have a very strong economic relationship with bilateral trade in 2012 of the order of 20 billion. The year 2010 was a watershed year in the bilateral relationship with operationalization of a Comprehensive Economic Partnership and forging of 'Strategic Partnership'.

In the context of East Asia, Indian analysts need to factor in the following realities while interacting with their ROK or Japanese counterparts:

1. South Koreans have a strong sentiment of hostility towards Japan. Japanese treatment of Koreans, Korean culture and Korean nationhood under the colonial regime of 1910-45 was brutal, humiliating and heavy handed. A significant section of the present Japanese leadership is descendent of the Japanese civil and military personalities of that militant era and is, therefore, not sufficiently contrite over its colonial and wartime excesses.
2. Historically for centuries the Koreans have lived happily under Chinese suzerainty with Beijing guiding this relationship with a light touch. In Confucian terms Korean rulers have treated the Chinese Emperor with respect as an elder brother. ROK already has its most important trade relationship with PRC and political relations are also rapidly warming. Newly elected President Park Geun Hye had her first foreign visit after US to China and this visit was defined as 'A Trip of Heart and Trust.'
3. Chinese psyche nurses a deep sense of grievance against Japan for

its subjugation of Manchuria etc. in the 19th century up to the 2nd world war. Chinese public and leadership appear to be planning to teach Japan a lesson to redress its past humiliation.

India and ROK have a regular Foreign Policy and Security Dialogue (FPSD) at the level of Vice Minister/ Secretary (East) in the two foreign offices. It would be the right Forum to bilaterally discuss the future shape of East Asian security architecture. Under this rubric the two countries would do well to explore, explain and harmonize their approach to the strategic and security aspects in the following areas:

1. India needs to convince ROK to work for a multi-polar East Asia. There is an influential section of Korean analysts which has accepted Chinese dominance of East Asia as an inevitability and is already exploring ROKs accommodation with this eventuality. History warns that the emergence of any one East Asian power with overwhelming military and economic superiority over its neighbors could adversely impact the interests of all the countries of the region .Korea has itself experienced the bitter fallout of the rise of Japan as a mighty unipolar East Asian power when its aggression in China and Korean Peninsula could not be checked by Asian power(s)-either individually or collectively.
2. India and ROK need to work together for maritime security in East Asia and take action against any acts of piracy in the Malacca straits or near the Indonesian Coastline.
3. Continuation of the existing freedom of navigation in the South China Sea unilaterally claimed by

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China is another important shared objective. Both India and ROK need to be active in keeping with regional and global efforts to check any moves by the Chinese to impose unilateral limitations and restrictions on the movement of international shipping in these waters. In other words, status quo on mobility and freedom of navigation of all ships including warships must be preserved in the South China Sea.

4. All the countries in East Asia are vulnerable to cyber attacks. It is a moot point whether cyber security can be promoted through regional arrangements. But it would be worthwhile to explore this approach as the global measures against cyber attacks would necessarily be drafted, dictated and delivered by the US and the West.
5. In dealing with North Korea , India and ROK have a common aim to curb its rogue instincts and propensity for periodic saber rattling .It would be an important objective for comprehensive security in East Asia. India has always kept its lines of communication open with North Korea. Even at the time of enhanced tension in early 2013 when North Korea had its third nuclear test, India sent its delegation

to Pyongyang in April 2013 for Foreign office consultations dates for which had been decided earlier.

6. India and ROK need to discuss the possibilities of pooling their resources for development and industrialization of Myanmar. In the recent past, Myanmar had drawn closer to DPRK as both had a pariah status in the international community. With Myanmar's increasing acceptance in the world, rapidly opening economy and democratization there is now ample space for India and ROK to synergize their plans to assist that friendly country.

7. India and ROK share the objective of a de-nuclearised Korean peninsula and it would be in their mutual interest to exchange information on any suspected clandestine deals between DPRK and Pakistan of nuclear and missile technologies.

In any dialogue with DPRK we need to emphasize the virtues of non-proliferation and convey our serious concern over DPRKs repeated actions to transfer WMD technology to South or South-West Asia in India's neighborhood.

RELATIONS WITH DPRK

Since independence India has, consciously and as principled policy, played a neutral role in the ideological divide on the Korean peninsula. Right up to early 1980s India deliberately sought to treat both Koreas in an even-handed manner. The old-timers in DPRK would be aware of India's sincere efforts to bring the two sides together in the aftermath of the Korean War.

The situation changed in the 1980s with the emergence of South Korea as an industrial powerhouse and reports of an unholy alliance between DPRK and Pakistan to exchange uranium enrichment technology with missile launch expertise. It is widely believed that Pakistan's Ghauri and Shaheen missiles are modified versions of DPRKs Nodong and Taepodong missiles. This clandestine exchange continued till 1990s but was apparently stopped by General Parvez Musharraf under intense American pressure.

However, some illicit transfer of uranium enrichment technology and equipment continues from DPRK to Iran. India has publicly stated that a nuclear armed Iran is not in the interest of regional peace and stability.

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DPRK periodically blows hot and cold and often plays a dangerous game of brinkmanship. In our interaction with DPRK at senior levels we may attempt to

understand their world view, their perception of East Asian security architecture and their hopes and expectations from other countries of the region.

As far as relations between DPRK and ROK are concerned, we should nudge both the countries to seek accommodation of their core interests and enhance contacts among the peoples. India is not in a position to play any active or meaningful direct role to resolve or ameliorate the Inter-Korean conflict.

STRATEGIC DIALOGUE WITH JAPAN

Japan is rapidly emerging as India's 'Strategic Partner' in the true sense of this overused term. During his visit to Japan earlier this year Prime Minister Manmohan Singh described Japan as India's 'natural and indispensable partner.' Japanese ODA is playing a significant part in augmenting our infrastructure. Japan's generous long term commitment to assist in developing Metros, Dedicated Freight Corridor(s) and Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor is praise worthy.

In this atmosphere of shared warmth, friendship and mutual confidence the two sides need to hack at the thicket of confusion and take resolute steps to achieve tangible results in the following areas:-

(i) Japan needs to resolve its internal policy muddle on export of civil nuclear technology to India. It is a promising field of mutual collaboration and would give a boost to Japanese industry.

(ii) The two countries could pool their resources, technology and manpower to pursue exploration of space. Like the European Space Agency, it may be more cost-

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effective for the two countries to jointly develop new launch vehicles, design communication satellites and share facilities at monitoring ground stations. India and Japan would be natural partners to develop anti-anti satellite systems which would be purely defensive in nature. Both the countries are working to develop anti-missile systems and R & D in this vitally important field should be shared.

(iii) India is facing the prospects of an increasing foot print of China in countries which have traditionally been close to India. Despite the reservoir of good will towards India, friendly countries like Bhutan and Maldives may find it difficult to resist the lure of Chinese cheque book diplomacy. In this era of un-certainty of the permanency of old relationships India needs to explore the possibility of involving other friendly countries like Japan to become India's partners in the socio-economic development of such countries.

(iv) India and Japan need to work as partners in working for socio-economic development of Myanmar. That country, as it democratizes gradually, is opening up and viable options should be offered to wean

Myanmar away from its continued dependence on China.

(v) India and Japan need to continue and deepen bilateral naval exchanges. The first bilateral naval exercises were held in June 2012 and these should be undertaken on a regular basis.

The possibility of repeating trilateral naval exercises along with United States must always be on the agenda. It is important to note that India, Japan and US now have a regular trilateral dialogue at the Head of Division level among the Foreign offices. This would be an important forum to exchange views and harmonise policies in shaping the future security architecture in East Asia.

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CONCLUSION

In influencing the future shape of security architecture in East Asia, India needs to act in concert with other like minded countries of the region. With ROK , India has a 'Strategic Partnership' and with Japan a 'Strategic and Global Partnership'. India has

common perceptions on a range of issues with these two friendly countries which impact on security and stability in East Asia. The three countries need to harmonize their positions on issues of concern in their respective regional policies and then form partnerships with other countries around specific matters to seek the desired results of multi-polarity, stability, peace and security.

