



# IPCS

INSTITUTE OF PEACE AND CONFLICT STUDIES

Innovative Research | Independent Analysis | Informed Opinion

IPCS SPECIAL FOCUS

## China and the Air DEFENCE Identification Zone (ADIZ)

Air Defence Zone and Brinkmanship

*Rukmani Gupta*

3

Cold Confrontation with the US?

*Prof Chintamani Mahapatra*

5

Assertive Unilateralism?

*Angana Guha Roy*

6

An Airman's Perspective

*Gp Capt (Retd) PI Muralidharan*

9

At Variance with the Principle of Adherence

*Vice Admiral (retd) Vijay Shankar*

12

Political Objectives and International Responses

*Teshu Singh*

14

*Edited by*  
Teshu Singh



# IPCS

INSTITUTE OF PEACE AND CONFLICT STUDIES

## About the Debate

Air Defence Identification Zone (ADIZ) is a buffer zone outside a country's sovereign airspace. It covers an area of airspace over land or water in which the identification, location and control of civil aircraft are required by the state claiming control over the airspace. However, it is different from territorial airspace or no-fly zones.

The concept of ADIZ emerged during Cold War. United States was the first country to declare world's first ADIZ. Recently, Beijing declared East China Sea Air Defense Identification Zone that came into effect from 23 November 2013, 10 AM. The declaration has drawn reactions from Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and the US. As a response to the unilateral declaration; South Korea expanded their zone to include islands of Jeodo, Marado and Hongdo that overlapped with the exclusive economic zones of China and South Korea. As a reaction Japan's lower house unanimously passed a resolution condemning the ADIZ. The scenario has increased the probability of a clash between Japan and China, and the likelihood of involvement of the US in the region. Further, as a fallout of the tension the development has affected the tension over the South China Sea dispute as well.

Delving further into the issue; the present set of debates bring out multiple aspects of the ADIZ; ranging from 'Air Defence Zone and Brinkmanship', 'Cold Confrontation with the US?', 'Assertive Unilateralism' and 'Political Objectives and International Responses'. Additionally, Gp Capt (Retd) PI Muralidharan has analysed the issue from the air force perspective and Vice Adm (redt) Vijay Shankar has dealt with the subject 'at Variance with the Principle of Adherence' respectively.

## China and East China Sea: Air Defence Zone and Brinkmanship

**Rukmani Gupta**

Analyst, IHS

China's announcement of a new air defense zone in the East China Sea is a dangerous move towards brinkmanship in territorial disputes in the region. Aimed at "safeguarding state sovereignty, territorial land and air security and maintaining flight order" the "East China Sea Air Defense Identification Zone" came into effect from 23 November 2013, 10 AM Beijing Time. The areas encompassed by the new zone include territories claimed by South Korea and Japan. Although Chinese Defence Ministry Spokesperson, Yang Jiejun emphasized that the creation of this zone would not "affect the freedom of flight in relevant airspace", the rules for identification for aircraft entering the zone released by Chinese government sources, suggest otherwise. Aircrafts will now need to respond to Chinese queries regarding flight path and nationality, as well as maintain two-way radio communications. Failure to comply with these requirements will supposedly invite Chinese military intervention.

According to Yang the new Air Defense Identification Zone has no particular target and "China will take timely measures to deal with air threats and unidentified flying objects from the sea, including identification, monitoring, control and disposition, and it hopes all relevant sides positively cooperate and jointly maintain flying safety."

This recent development by China does not in any way further flight safety in the area concerned. At best, civilian aircraft will have to identify themselves to multiple agencies in the region. At worst, military aircraft will not comply with Chinese regulations and there will entail a military standoff.

It is the later, worst case scenario that seems more probable. South Korea has already stated its regret that China's new zone overlapped in some part with the South Korean military zone and covered Ieodo, a rock claimed by Seoul. The South Korean Defense military spokesperson was explicit in reiterating its territorial control over Ieodo. Japan has lodged protests with the Chinese embassy in Japan and the United States too has expressed concern over China's moves.

The exacerbation of tensions between China and Japan over contesting claims in the East China Sea is a reasonable expectation in light of recent developments. Since the Japanese nationalisation of the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands claimed by both China and Japan in the East China in September 2012, China and Japan have been engaged in a dangerous game of chicken. December 2012 saw the first violation of Japanese airspace by Chinese jets since Japan began keeping records

of such events. In September 2013, a Chinese Unmanned Ariel Vehicle (UAV) flew close to the disputed Senkaku/Diaoyu islands. Japan has already said that it would shoot down unmanned aircraft in Japanese airspace and the Chinese have stated that such an action would constitute an “act of war”. Chinese maritime patrol vessels have been regularly entering what Japan considers its own territorial waters with the latest transgression occurring on 22 November.

Even though the Japanese government has called for keeping open diplomatic engagement with China, on the issue of the disputed islands, China believes that the Abe administration follows a policy of “Three nos” related to the dispute - no recognition, no shelving and no dialogue. On the Chinese side, recognition of a dispute and reversal of the nationalisation of three islands undertaken in September 2012 seem to have become preconditions to any diplomatic solution. Given that both Japan and China seem unwilling to compromise on stated positions, the announcement of the air defense identification zone by China will only destabilise the situation.

*As such, the creation of the new air defense zone can be seen as a move similar to the creation of the Sansha military garrison in the South China Sea – an attempt to seek de facto control of claimed territories. It seriously challenges the Chinese narrative of seeking resolution of differences through diplomatic means.*

This announcement by China of the new air defense identification zone is counterproductive for the country. It reinforces the idea of an aggressive China that seeks to establish expansionist territorial claims through intimidation or military means. As such, the creation of the new air defense zone can be seen as a move similar to the creation of the Sansha military garrison in the South China Sea – an attempt to seek de facto control of claimed territories. It seriously challenges the Chinese narrative of seeking resolution of differences through diplomatic means. Past incidents involving skirmished between Chinese fishing vessels and Japanese coastguard were excused as not having state sanction. Chinese denial of a radar lock on a Japanese warship in January 2013 was interpreted as unwillingness to escalate conflict. There is no such explanation available for this latest move. China cannot but be aware that recent developments have laid the ground for immediate escalation of minor incidents. Should China undertake military action against Japanese aircraft that do not comply with the announced Chinese regulations, it is to be expected that Japan too would respond in kind. Since December 2012, Japanese F-15s have been scrambled many times as a response to Chinese presence near the disputed islands.

The United States recognizes Japanese administrative control over the disputed islands and has stated that this falls under the purview of the US-Japan security treaty. Willy nilly then, the US too may be dragged into the dispute. China, that has couched its development in the rhetoric of peace for the past many decades, seems to have belied the ‘peaceful development’ narrative through this one move.

*Views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author alone and are not endorsed by IHS*

## China and Air Defence Identification Zone (ADIZ): Cold Confrontation with the US?

**Prof Chintamani Mahapatra**

Chairperson, Canadian, US & Latin American Studies, JNU

In recent years, Asia-Pacific region has caught global attention more for periodic political upheavals than for its economic dynamism. Most of the political turmoil, significantly, has been caused by the fastest growing economy—the people's Republic of China.

The apprehension that economically sound China will generate political heat and will lead to muscular assertion of Chinese influence seems to be coming true. The latest in the series of regional political turbulences has been sparked once again by China when the Xi Jinping government made a unilateral decision to establish an Air Defence Identification Zone and asked other countries to inform the Chinese authorities in advance any of their aircraft entering the zone or else face “emergency defence measures”.

This sudden declaration on 23 November last surprised many countries and forced some to react strongly. While Japan asked its civil airlines to reject Chinese authority, the United States responded after two days by flying one of its nuclear capable B 52 bombers over the zone without informing the Chinese. While the Obama Administration stated that the aircraft was unarmed, who had the ability to verify?

Obviously, the United States did not desire to take a step that would unnecessary spark military confrontation, but its quick response aimed at sending a strong signal that the Pentagon would not tolerate imposition of any restrictions on the open skies by the Chinese. Subsequently Japan and South Korea, two American allies housing US military bases and thousands of US troops, followed the US example and sent their own aircraft to fly through the zone without informing China. South Korea went a step ahead and declared its own ADIZ that overlapped the Chinese ADIZ, significantly over a disputed islet, called Leodo. The Lower House of the Japanese Diet passed a resolution against China's behaviour in East China Sea.

It is inconceivable that Japan and South Korea would have responded so strongly without Washington winking at those moves. The smart move by the US, after the voyage of B 52 bombers, was reflected in the advisory the Obama administration issued to US airlines to respect the Chinese ADIZ and inform the Chinese authorities, while entering the zone.

*It is inconceivable that Japan and South Korea would have responded so strongly without Washington winking at those moves. The smart move by the US, after the voyage of B 52 bombers, was reflected in the advisory the Obama administration issued to US airlines to respect the Chinese ADIZ and inform the Chinese authorities, while entering the zone.*

What explains the US behaviour and ambiguous measures? US Secretary of State John Kerry goes to Tokyo and Seoul and reiterates US commitments to the respective alliances close on the heels of the Chinese declaration of the ADIZ. Then he goes to Beijing and says little during his interactions with the media after five hours of discussion with President Xi Jinping.

There was, of course, a precedent to such US diplomatic ambiguities. Last year, Sino-Japanese tension over the sovereignty claims on Shenkaku/Diaoyu islands in the East China Sea flared up soon after the Japanese government bought those islands from Japanese owners. The United States at once reiterated its commitment to US-Japan Treaty of Alliance and simultaneously assuaged Beijing that Washington would not take a position on the sovereignty issue.

The Chinese assertiveness and the American responses speak volumes of slow but steady emergence of a new kind of relationship between the existing superpower and the emerging superpower. This is not a new kind of major power relationship that President Xi Jinping proposed during his summit with President Barak Obama in

June last year. This is also not the kind of a G-2 relationship that the Obama Administration envisioned during the early years of his first term.

*What explains the US behaviour and ambiguous measures? US Secretary of State John Kerry goes to Tokyo and Seoul and reiterates US commitments to the respective alliances close on the heels of the Chinese declaration of the ADIZ.*

The emerging pattern of Sino-US interactions symbolizes “cold confrontation” between a hegemon that appears to be experiencing relative decline of its influence in world affairs and a rising power that has begun to assert its position in the world after its miraculous economic achievements.

The US strategic planners have long been carefully monitoring China’s military modernization, particularly capacity building of its Air Force and the Navy. The US suspects that the PLA has been striving hard to acquire sea-denial and anti-access capabilities that would compromise the so-far-unrestricted mobility of the US navy and air force in the Asia Pacific region. In fact, the Pentagon has already made investment, despite the defence budget cut, to develop a new concept of Air-Sea Battle that would render Chinese anti-access/sea-denial strength vulnerable.

## **China and Air Defence Identification Zone (ADIZ): Assertive Unilateralism?**

**Angana Guha Roy**

Research Intern, IPCS

A day after China launched its first Stealth Drone ‘Lijan’, it also announced its Air Defence Identification Zone (ADIZ) in East China Sea, overlapping with the existing ADIZ by Japan and South Korea. Does this demonstrate China’s strategic

attempt to evoke concern among its neighbours and other major players in the region? What are China's Air Identification Rules? Do they violate International norms? Why China has abruptly come up with this strategy?

While questioning China's real intention to establish an ADIZ, it has been speculated that this is an attempt 'to possibly buttress its maritime and territorial claims'. Meanwhile China has elicited international criticism for the Air Identification Rules (AIR) it has put forward. The most important is - China did not consult any of its neighbours before announcing the ADIZ.

#### Air Identification Rules (AIR)

According to China's National Defence Ministry document any aircraft must abide by certain rules while flying through the ADIZ. The document provides few Identification criterions. It asks international aircrafts to report flight plans, maintain two way radio communications, activate the transponder if an aircraft has to broadcast their location, clearly mark their nationalities and the logo of their registration identification.

As per the AIR, any aircraft flying through the zone must follow the instruction of the Ministry of National Defence of the PRC, the 'administrative organ' of the ECS ADIZ. In case, any aircraft refuse to follow the identification rules, China's armed forces shall adopt 'defensive emergency measures' to respond to non-cooperating aircraft.

*The US Secretary of State John Kerry has stated, 'freedom of overflight and other internationally lawful uses of sea and airspace are essential to prosperity, stability, and security in the Pacific. We don't support efforts by any state to apply its ADIZ procedures to foreign aircraft not intending to enter its national airspace'.*

#### Confronting International Norms?

The legal position China has taken for the ADIZ establishes a version of sovereign airspace. The unilateral imposition of its regulatory document departs from accepted practice. First, it does not distinguish between aircraft flying through the zone with no intention of flying into China's airspace and those that do, unlike the US.

The US Secretary of State John Kerry has stated, 'freedom of overflight and other internationally lawful uses of sea and airspace are essential to prosperity, stability, and security in the Pacific. We don't support efforts by any state to apply its ADIZ procedures to foreign aircraft not intending to enter its national airspace'.

Secondly, the 'Means of Identification' violates the international norm of airborne 'innocent passage' by asking for Flight Plan reports. Thirdly, its Radio Identification Criteria violates UNCLOS treaty according to which the aircrafts at all times 'monitor the radio frequency assigned by competent internationally designated Air Traffic Control (ATC) authority or appropriate international distress radio frequency.

Thus, China's credibility to cover all transits could be questioned. It has issued a warning statement in the regulatory document to the extent that it can adopt 'defensive emergency measures to respond to aircraft that do not cooperate in the identification or otherwise refuse to follow the instructions.' This is contradictory to the international norms that exempt state aircraft from any such obligation to any national authority so far the transit is with 'due regard for the safety of civil aviation'.

### Strategic Objectives

*China has also gone ahead to include the disputed Leodo reef, also claimed by South Korea, that falls under their respective Exclusive Economic Zone. This will perhaps, give China an airspace leverage on Leodo, which in accordance to UNCLOS can't be claimed by any country, for being a 'submerged reef' under the water.*

China's ADIZ strategy has rattled Northeast Asia. The strategic move has abruptly come up during a period when Japan under the leadership of Abe, is trying to increase its military capability. It has encompassed the airspace over the disputed Senkaku Island, now owned by Japan, in its ADIZ. As per the Air Identification Rules, Japan has to share its flight report or provide Identification details to China over the Island it itself owns. This clearly indicates China's strategy to challenge Japan on the disputed zone.

In an interview political scientist Ian Bremmer says, 'It's important to remember that this was a plan Beijing had been developing ever since last summer (if not before), when Japan's then prime minister Noda purchased more of the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands, altering the longstanding status quo from Beijing's perspective...Beijing wanted to maximize the chances of getting this done with limited pushback from the US ..With that as the goal, it was good timing...the Iran nuclear deal was underway, for which the Chinese foreign minister was supporting John Kerry in Geneva.'

China has also gone ahead to include the disputed Leodo reef, also claimed by South Korea, that falls under their respective Exclusive Economic Zone. This will perhaps, give China an airspace leverage on Leodo, which in accordance to UNCLOS can't be claimed by any country, for being a 'submerged reef' under the water.

China's ADIZ strategy has projected its assertive unilateral attitude in the region. This no doubt indicates its attempt to establish a sovereign airspace in the region. Although to justify its attempt, it has referred to countries like US and Japan who has previously established ADIZ, it didn't follow their course of bilateralism in this regard. US which established the first ADIZ setting the tradition coordinated with Canada. On the other hand, Japan, despite facing much opposition from Taiwan, coordinated with it before implementing the planned action.

But China's move was sudden and abrupt, projecting its impudent foreign policy attitude. Does this in turn, portends any trouble for China's other South Asian counterparts, hinting towards its tendency to impose unilateralism as per its national interests?



## China and Air Defence Identification Zone (ADIZ): An Airman's Perspective

Gp Capt (Retd) PI Muralidharan

The People's Republic of China's Ministry of National Defence announced on 23 November 2013 the creation of a new Air Defence Identification Zone (ADIZ) over the East China Sea. This, incidentally, includes air space over the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands claimed jointly by China, Taiwan and Japan, as well as that over the Ieodo /Suyan Reef claimed both by PRC and South Korea. The Senkaku Islands are located around 400 km from Okinawa and about 200 km from Hainan Island which houses the Chinese PLAN Pacific Fleet.

Understandably, the Chinese declaration has drawn strong protests from affected countries such as Japan and ROK, and other concerned nations such as the US, Australia and Taiwan. On 25 November 2013, two USAF B-52s from Guam flew through the newly declared ADIZ in challenge, but apparently drew no reaction from the Chinese. The Japanese have been exercising 'administrative control' over the Senkaku Islands for decades, officially nationalising them in September 2012, when it was bought from its Japanese owners by the government. Traditionally, sovereign control of any land territory is tantamount to control of its air space and maritime boundaries and not the other way around. It is conceivable during a war situation that air power could be employed to enforce an ADIZ in the manner the Chinese seek to enforce during relatively peaceful climes.

Also, the Chinese declaration of an ADIZ does not per se enhance China's legal claim over these islands. Another moot point is whether the Chinese could enforce this ADIZ deep in the East China Sea (at air distances of around 200 km, somewhat like India's 'Bombay High' from Mumbai). The aerial assets/ radars, communication networks, manpower etc required to provide air defence over these kinds of distances from the mainland would be mind-boggling. Therefore, the declaration thus far remains essentially 'political'.

On 24 November 2013, China flew a TU-154 and another Y-8 aircraft on patrol over the Senkaku, eliciting an Air Defence reaction from two Japanese F-15s who intercepted them. The Chinese have also claimed that they scrambled fighters in response to two US and ten Japanese aircraft recently. The potential for miscalculation and a resultant 'air incident' is therefore rife. Meanwhile the Koreans have sought to get the Chinese to realign their ADIZ to avoid

*Will countries on very high alert status fall and splatter like Humpty Dumpty, compelling the king's men to scramble to the rescue? To take the worst case indexed, i.e. Afghanistan and applying formulae such as division of ethnic-sectarian grounds despite the internal chaos have totally been rejected and aggressively resisted. Similar cartographies are planned, shelved and reconsidered with regards Pakistan. Can such experiments work? Is it so easy to break a country and experiment with it? How long will the 'White Man' shoulder the mercenary zeal to correct and reform the global pagans?*

overlapping with their own areas, which the Chinese have declined to do. As it stands, the US and Australia have refused to recognise the ADIZ for their military traffic, and the Japanese and the South Koreans have also decided to flout its norms. Although declaration of ADIZs is the sovereign right of nations, the international norm is that countries do not unilaterally declare them and that too overlapping those of other nations, and over disputed territories/air spaces.

*The Chinese declaration requires aircraft entering the ADIZ to report flight information to Chinese authorities; failure to comply would prompt 'defensive emergency measures to be adopted by their armed forces'. Clearly provocative, these measures could lead to miscalculations, or worse still, aerial clashes or mid air collisions, like what happened with the American P3A over the Hainan Islands in 2001, which has the potential to trigger wider conflict.*

Why this ADIZ?

Whilst claiming that the move was not directed against any specific country or threat, China clearly seeks to strengthen its claims over the disputed island territories in the East/South China Seas, following its September 2012 submission to the UN for baselines to demarcate maritime boundaries around disputed island territories. It is also possible that China is reacting to recent Japanese threats to shoot down Chinese UAVs considered to be encroaching upon their air space. By crafting an ADIZ encompassing the Senkaku Islands, the Chinese perhaps believe that they have established a basis for acting against Japanese aircraft operating over the islands. Also, this could be the precursor for more such ADIZs to be set up over other contentious areas such as the Spratly Islands in the South China Sea and other islands in the Yellow Sea. Also, the Chinese would like to collate data on the numbers of Japanese 'intrusions' into its ADIZ, indeed, akin to the data the Japanese have traditionally been publishing on Chinese and Russian air intrusions.

#### International Law on ADIZs

The Chinese declaration requires aircraft entering the ADIZ to report flight information to Chinese authorities; failure to comply would prompt 'defensive emergency measures to be adopted by their armed forces'. Clearly provocative, these measures could lead to miscalculations, or worse still, aerial clashes or mid air collisions, like what happened with the American P3A over the Hainan Islands in 2001, which has the potential to trigger wider conflict. Lessons from air incidents between the Turkish and Greek Air Forces over disputed island territories in the Aegean Sea area also cannot be forgotten.

An ADIZ is defined as airspace over land or water in which identification, location and control of all aircraft is required in the interests of national air defence. This means that civil aircraft transiting through this zone are required to file a flight plan with the controlling agency, in this case, the PLA Air Force or PLAN Air Force, as the case may be. Based on principles of self-defence and precaution, since 1950, some 50 nations including the US, UK, Canada, South Korea, Japan, Taiwan, India and Pakistan have adopted ADIZ measures in their national air defence architecture. ADIZs do not thus stand for national or territorial boundaries and they do not justify interference in another nation's aerial navigation rights, especially over

international waters and during times other than war. The legal validity of ADIZs has never been challenged worldwide and they cannot be banned under existing international norms. This also means that traditional over flight permissions to military aircraft through these Zones need to be ensured.

China's ADIZ in the East China Sea imposes requirements on civil and military aircraft - such as filing of a flight plan and declaring operating radio frequencies - whereas normal ADIZs apply only to civil aircraft. In fact, ADIZ procedures in the US do not apply to any foreign air carrier not bound for US territorial air space. Should China now go ahead with its future plans to establish an ADIZ over the South China Sea, it would be seen as a destabilising move, violating the spirit of the 2002 Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC-SCS). Japan had unilaterally extended its ADIZ in May 2013 to reach 130 km from mainland China. The new Chinese ADIZ, interestingly, approaches the same distance i.e. 130 km from the Japan-claimed Senkaku Islands.

#### Can China Pull It Off Militarily?

Considering the technical difficulties in establishing an effective ADIZ (at a distance significantly far removed from mainland and coastal environs), the Chinese are clearly playing for the political mileage that could be extracted from the declaration. Any effective air defence umbrella over an area so far away from the Chinese mainland (around 200 km) would require an asset base that the Chinese presently are woefully short of, namely seaborne air defence radars, several numbers of AWACS/AEW aircraft, aerial refueling aircraft to augment the ranges of interceptors, AWACS platforms, and effective, secure communications, modern identification - friend or foe (IFF) systems throughout the air defence order of battle. Only a country such as the US has the wherewithal to undertake such an air defence mission in remote sea territory, given its nine carrier battle groups and a preponderance of AWACS/ AEW and other radar assets.

*Only a country such as the US has the wherewithal to undertake such an air defence mission in remote sea territory, given its nine carrier battle groups and a preponderance of AWACS/ AEW and other radar assets.*

One could well imagine the magnitude of the challenge by envisaging a hypothetical task for the Indian Armed Forces of setting up an air defence umbrella over, say, the A&N Islands located some 1300 km from India's Eastern sea board. At least one aircraft carrier (may be more than one to have one on station!); adequate AWACS support and enough numbers of long range Air Defence Interceptors would be called for to undertake such a task. China is not there yet in terms of Air Defence capability, especially over the sea. Therefore, the whole exercise appears to be one to score political points. China would not like to provoke US air forces over this matter. It would be content to fish in troubled waters between Japan and South Korea to see how their governments react. It is interesting that whilst the US, Taiwan, Japan and South Korea have negated the Chinese ADIZ norms partly or wholly, international air carriers such as

Singapore Airlines have decided to toe the line and intimate the Chinese on their flights transiting the ECS ADIZ.

Whither the Dragon in the Sky?

Japan, South Korea and the US have flown their military aircraft through the Chinese ADIZ. Taiwan and South Korea have asked their civil airliners to file flight plans with the Chinese. Some renowned international airlines such as SAL are already complying with Chinese norms. But it needs to be remembered that the US is a big player in this region, what with its military relationship with Japan and close air force cooperation with the South Koreans (they take part in the Red Flag series of air exercises frequently). Clearly, the ADIZ declaration has the blessings of the Chinese upper echelons, but if given the choice, nobody would like to precipitate a crisis in the region, as the number of countries involved in the South China Sea/Spratly disputes could lead to an unforeseen escalation. So far, the ASEAN has not reacted formally to the ADIZ development, but the general feeling amongst analysts is that the Dragon is playing chicken - something akin to a person wishing to build a fence around a plot of land in a city that he does not belong to!

*Given the large overlap in the ADIZs of Japan and China, frequent interceptions by either side are a given. Besides, China's Aircraft Identification Rules make no distinction between aircraft transiting through its ADIZ flying parallel to its coast line and those aircraft flying towards its airspace.*

Given the large overlap in the ADIZs of Japan and China, frequent interceptions by either side are a given. Besides, China's Aircraft Identification Rules make no distinction between aircraft transiting through its ADIZ flying parallel to its coast line and those aircraft flying towards its airspace. Though the US chastised China for this anomaly during Secretary Kerry's recent 'demarche visit', it has quietly directed its civil air carriers to honour the Chinese ADIZ stipulations. These signals could possibly tempt the Chinese military and leadership to miscalculate that any precipitate kinetic action by their forces against Japanese aircraft in disputed airspace would not attract any US reaction. But such a miscalculation may indeed serve to be the trigger for escalation, should some overzealous local commander be trigger-happy. Likewise, the possibility of a maritime or aerial conflict exists between South Korea and China over the Jeju Islands housing the ROK-controlled submerged Ieodo Rock. Given these threat scenarios, the US is bound to be working towards some kind of a 'save face' for China so that yet another military strategic hot spot is diffused.

## China and Air Defence Identification Zone (ADIZ): At Variance with the Principle of Adherence

Vice Admiral (retd) Vijay Shankar

Why did China establish its East China Sea ADIZ? Despite the knowledge that the central three criteria were breached, it covered the disputed Islands of Senkaku/Diaoyu; the Zone solicited information even if the foreign aircraft had no intentions of entering China's territorial air space; and intriguingly, the new Zone intruded

and overlapped the Japanese and Korean ADIZs. It also, cannot be coincidental that the inexact vesica piscis formed by the intersection of the Japan and China ADIZ along with the intersection of their disputed Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ) are centred on the Chunxiao gas fields (originally disputed but since 2008 overseen by a shaky joint development programme).

#### Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ)

It is space over land or water within which identification, location, and routing of aircrafts are controlled. It is enforced by a state in the interest of security and safety. While ADIZs usually extend into what is universally acknowledged to be international airspace, even by the countries that maintain them, they in no way confer sovereignty. Its extent is determined by the reaction time to respond to foreign and possibly hostile aircrafts. The authority to establish an ADIZ is not given by any international treaty nor prohibited by international law and is not regulated by any international body. The first ADIZ was established by the United States soon after World War II. As surveillance technologies improved, the scramble for security reached a frenzied peak during the early stages of the Cold War when the fear of a sneak nuclear airborne first strike was a strategic fixation amongst protagonists.

*Several countries currently maintain ADIZs including Norway, Britain, USA, Canada, Japan, Pakistan, India, South Korea, Taiwan and China.*

Several countries currently maintain ADIZs including Norway, Britain, USA, Canada, Japan, Pakistan, India, South Korea, Taiwan and China. Three conventional criteria preside over such zones, these are: the Zone cover undisputed territory, Zones do not apply to foreign aircraft not intending to enter territorial airspace, Zones do not overlap. Since states have the right to regulate air traffic only over their land, countries are not legally obliged to comply with another States ADIZ requirements in international airspace, but commercial traffic tend to do so because of the promise of security and safety.

Three reasons for China

First, the Surprise Attack Anxiety. Surprise may be an essential feature of the “Principles of War”, and theoretical savvy suggest that the danger of a surprise attack is highest when one party to a conflict considers war inevitable and thinks that getting in the first blow would deliver a decisive military advantage; but, the reality is entirely in variance. For State initiated offensive military acts and follow up actions cannot today be masked, primarily because contemporary surveillance systems are designed to effectively discriminate hostile preparations and intrusions. Such technical measures are well known to China and appropriate devices are in place. ADIZs on the other hand are founded on the assumption of adherence and therefore in a state of war or military hostilities, it is inconceivable that one of the antagonists is going to adhere to the niceties of safety obligations. Tensions are undoubtedly high in the East China Sea region at the moment, but this is not Cold War. No country wants to target the heart of the global economy. The surprise attack

formulation as articulated by China's defence ministry is therefore on thin ice and has left China's ADIZ more a question mark as to what their strategic intent is.

Second, the rationale that it is illicit trafficking of man, material and narcotics that is the object of the Zone is ludicrous since the region is neither a significant drug route nor is it a cognizable unlawful human trafficking corridor. Also the presence of multiple and overlapping maritime disputes and claims in area contributes to a surfeit of zealous policing agencies which makes the trafficking theory implausible.

Third, the suggestion that the Zone was motivated by a desire to reduce the risk of midair collisions is hardly tenable since the most acute peril that airmen face is when there is duality of control without clear and unambiguous responsibility and power to regulate traffic. The underlying problem is not commercial air traffic, which is already under efficient regulation in the East China Sea, but the movement of military flights which have no obligation to abdicate control to the Zonal controller whilst in international airspace. Proclaiming the ADIZ and declaring the right to "emergency defensive measures", it has put pressure on China to intercept foreign military flights increasing the risk of accidents. The move up an escalatory ladder jumped a few rungs when military aircraft from the US, Japan and South Korea challenged the ADIZ.

*The Zone has also lowered the threshold for armed incidents. Which brings us back to our original question of why the Zone? History has repeatedly shown that the rise of a new hegemon is marked by resistance to the status-quo. China's ADIZ in the East China Sea must be seen as a manifestation of its growing assertiveness.*

It is evident that China's ADIZ neither qualifies the 3-conventional criteria test nor does their logic have any prospect of acceptance. It has, however roused a dangerous dilemma for there now exists a real possibility that a commercial plane in the area could receive conflicting instructions and face hazardous consequences. The Zone has also lowered the threshold for armed incidents. Which brings us back to our original question of why the Zone? History has repeatedly shown that the rise of a new hegemon is marked by resistance to the status-quo. China's ADIZ in the East China Sea must be seen as a manifestation of its growing assertiveness.

From the Indian perspective, planners must be prepared to confront similar proclamations over the Line of Actual Control particularly in the Arunachal sector. The riposte lies in defying any such unilateral decree.

## China and Air Defence Identification Zone (ADIZ): Political Objectives and International Responses

**Teshu Singh**

Senior Research Officer

Two related developments; the declaration of ADIZ and the confrontation of a US navy guided missile cruiser Cowpen with a Chinese ship on 5 December 2013 has brought attention to the security architecture in the Asia Pacific. It is worth highlighting that the ADIZ is not a Chinese innovation, it was first established by the US in 1950 creating a joint North American ADIZ with Canada. This begs the questions; what are the larger political objectives of China in the region? How far the US, Japan and the South Korea would let it go in upsetting it?

#### Political Objectives of China in the Region

Both the East China Sea and the South China Sea have been potential flash point in the Asia Pacific region <http://www.ipcs.org/article/china/china-and-the-asia-pacific-trends-challenges-and-dilemmas-3796.html>. China was interested in the region from last November itself [http://www.ipcs.org/pdf\\_file/issue/IB198-CRP-Teshu-China.pdf](http://www.ipcs.org/pdf_file/issue/IB198-CRP-Teshu-China.pdf).

Needless, to discuss the ADIZ is crucial because it covers the contested archipelago. It falls under the contested territory between China-Japan (Diaoyu/ Senkaku) and China-South Korea (Suyan reef/leodo reef). The zone overlaps with the exiting ADIZ of Japan, South Korea and Taiwan. Notably, the ADIZ is aimed at strengthening Beijing's claim over the disputed islands in the ECS. It will allow China to push for bolder action in the region thereby giving the legitimacy of international law and norms.

The ADIZ would give China a chance to keep track of all ariel movement in the region. China has already declared an exclusive economic zone in a part of Western Pacific thus making a greater presence in the region. This can also be seen as a response to the US 'pivot to Asia' or 'rebalance strategy'. China's actions are aimed at sending a message to the US that it is serious about challenging an Asian order in which America has been the dominant power for forty years.

The declaration of the ADIZ came immediately after the meeting of the third Plenary Session of the Eighteenth Party Congress. Geng Yansheng, spokesman for the Ministry of National Defence on China's establishment of the ECS, ADIZ "the Chinese government announced the establishment of the East China Sea Air Defence Identification Zone on November 23, 2013. It is necessary measure for China to protect its state sovereignty and territory and airspace security. It is conducive to maintaining flying safety in international airspace, and is in line with international laws and conventions. The announcement of the East China Sea ADIZ has earned understanding and recognition from an increasing number of countries and peoples, but misunderstandings or even distortions also exist".

*Needless, to discuss the ADIZ is crucial because it covers the contested archipelago. It falls under the contested territory between China-Japan (Diaoyu/ Senkaku) and China-South Korea (Suyan reef/leodo reef). The zone overlaps with the exiting ADIZ of Japan, South Korea and Taiwan.*

Perhaps, the two abovementioned two incidents amount to more than just occupation of few islands and rock; possession of natural resources; it is an

indication of China's neighbourly policy in the region. China's principal foreign policy objective has been to seek a stable external environment as a favourable condition for domestic economic development. This was reiterated in this year's defence white paper; it affirmed the continuing validity of China's primary external strategic guidelines. It states that China has a period of strategic opportunity extending through 2020 in which a benign external security environment allows it to focus on its internal development.

These developments in the region speak volume about the 'New Leadership's' policy in the region. It is definitely aimed at countering US military deployment in Asia. Conversely, it seems the twenty four character policy of Deng Xiaoping is over. China is playing the game of 'weiqi' where it is slowly expanding its influence through steps that are not at the threshold of violence and do not trigger a forcible response.

#### International Response to the incidents

The assertive Chinese behaviour has led to a greater US-China strategic rivalry. The tension is already expanding to the SCS region which is evident from the collision of the US and Chinese ship. The collision was the most serious one since 2009, when Chinese ships and planes repeatedly harassed the US ocean surveillance vessels USNS Impeccable in the South China Sea. The US Secretary of State John Kerry has already warned China of declaring an ADIZ in the SCS. Washington has committed forty million USD to strengthen its sea defence capabilities and the two countries are close to opening up of Subic Bay and the Clark Air base.

Japan is already planning to set up a new amphibious military unit and deploy unarmed surveillance drones in its southwest in the disputed area. The first ever joint naval exercise between India and Japan is also a fall out the ADIZ.

South Korea announced the expansion of its ADIZ, further south in the disputed area; prior to this South Korea's ADIZ did not cover the submerged rock. It plans to hold talks with "related countries" to avoid any further military clashes. Other countries like Australia, Philippines, Vietnam, Germany, France and European Union. Australia stated this move as 'unhelpful to regional security'.

