

## EDITOR'S NOTE

Geo-politics continued to hold centre stage during the quarter. In recognition of the continuing interplay between geo-politics and aerospace power, the Centre for Air Power Studies organised a seminar on the subject as the 6th 'Jumbo' Majumdar Seminar on February 3-4, 2015, in honour of one of the icons of the Indian Air Force, the late Wg Cdr KK Majumdar. The Inaugural Address was delivered by **Air Mshl SS Soman**, Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief (AOC-in-C) Western Air Command (WAC), Indian Air Force (IAF). The address is reproduced, for a wider audience, as the lead article in this edition of the journal.

The drawdown in Afghanistan ended by the end of last year, though not completely. The situation in that war-torn country is tenuous at best and is still under a number of conflicting pressures. The events in Afghanistan will continue to make headlines for some time to come. We have included two articles in this journal related to the happenings in that country. **Shalini Chawla** examines the possible role of China in Afghanistan. The article is an interesting study. In the last few years, China has attempted to improve relations with Afghanistan for security and economic reasons. Now, in an uncertain environment, China is seeking greater influence in the region and is also willing to mediate with the Taliban. China is, indeed, conscious of the possible support from the region to the Uighurs in Xinjiang. The issue is elaborated in another article by **Uday Deshwal**. Uday argues that in spite of the rapid "Hanisation", Xinjiang is far from peaceful. Now China fears that as a sequel to the US/NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation) drawdown, there is a danger of Afghanistan once again harbouring *jihadists* and a possible spillover of these elements into Xinjiang.

China retains its flavour amongst our researchers. **Sana Hashmi** says that although China has land borders with 14 sovereign states and maritime boundaries with six nations, its border disputes with Bhutan and India remain unresolved. With the break-up of the Soviet Union,

China was keen to settle border disputes with the newly formed Central Asian Republics (CARs), ostensibly to ensure that these new states did not recognise Taiwan. It succeeded, but at some cost. With Kazakhstan, China settled the border although it received only 30 percent of the land under dispute; with Tajikistan, China was happy with only 1,000 sq km of the total 29,000 sq km in contention. Now China has a growing interest in Central Asia and is desirous of extending trade, seeking energy resources, and the quelling of terrorism. A young intern, **Snigdha Mongia**, examines the history of the Pinnacle Islands, the claims and supporting evidence, and whether the claims are justified. She concludes that a solution will be difficult to find.

The visit of President Obama to be the chief guest at our Republic Day parade excited many analysts. **Hina Pandey** agrees that it was a good visit that represented a progression of our improving relations, with the odd hiccup every now and then. Some distrust remains and it will require concerted effort to give the strategic partnership the import it deserves.

**Wg Cdr AK Gupta** discusses the opportunities and challenges of Indo-ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) cooperation in the field of cyber security. The significance of cyber security can never be overemphasised, and although some initiatives have been taken, the issue remains work in progress.

On a different tack, **Kriti Singh** paints a landscape of the Indian print and television media. The media, the users and the government have their own strengths and expectations. The media is a growing industry, but more importantly, it will always be a tool for both Defence and Diplomacy, the name given to this journal.

Finally, we have an article written by another of our interns, **Manisha Chaurasiya**, on what we can expect from the forthcoming nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference. The article is timely as the conference is scheduled for May this year. What is actually achieved at the conference will be covered in a later issue of this journal.

Happy reading



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# GEO-POLITICS AND AEROSPACE POWER

**SS SOMAN**

At the outset, I would like to convey my thanks to the Director General (DG), Centre for Air Power Studies (CAPS) for inviting me to deliver the inaugural address for the 6th Jumbo Majumdar International Conference on Geo-Politics and Aerospace Power. The annual conference not only reminds us of the pioneering work done by the Indian Air Force (IAF) legends such as Jumbo Majumdar, but also highlights the significance that aerospace power has fast gained in the geo-political arena.

During the Burma campaign, Jumbo Majumdar played a stellar role as the commanding officer of No. 1 Squadron. His contribution stands out due to three reasons. The sortie flown by him on February 2, 1942, was momentous as it was the first counter-air sortie of the Royal Indian Air Force (RIAF). Secondly, it was the first time that the Lysander was employed in a strike role. Thirdly, undertaking such missions on an aircraft designed for observation duties with no gun-sight and at an operating speed of about 150 miles per hour, required ingenuity, innovation and courage.

Despite the limited capability of the Lysander aircraft, the operational missions not only exploited but amply demonstrated the key facets of aerospace power, that is, responsiveness, flexibility and

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offensive action. Though the service career of Jumbo was very short, his leadership, vision and professionalism earned him the reputation of a legend within the RIAF. The contribution of Jumbo Majumdar and our other pioneers, both as proponents and practitioners of air power is significant. For not only did they set high professional standards, but, more importantly, through their sterling leadership, inculcated the spirit of vision, innovation and adaptiveness for successive generations. It was this foundation laid by him and other legends that has enabled the IAF to transition from a tactical air force into a formidable force with full spectrum capability.

The theme of the conference, geo-politics and aerospace power is seminal from a national standpoint, as in the conduct of international relations and statecraft, the contribution of aerospace power in shaping national security strategies and generating sovereign options remains unique and unparalleled.

## **GEO-POLITICS**

While traditionally, the focus of geo-politics has been on political power in relation to geographic space, it has acquired a much bigger dimension in recent times. In this context, the framework proposed by Nayef Al-Rodhan<sup>1</sup> combines traditional and new dimensions of geo-politics to offer a multi-dimensional view of power and power relationships.

In this framework, the importance of geography is superseded by the combination of hard- and soft- power tools that states can employ to obtain and preserve power. He identifies seven key dimensions of state power that include the environment, military and security issues, economics, domestic politics, international diplomacy, science and human potential, and social and health issues. This framework also allows for an assessment of relative strengths and weaknesses, helps predict future trends, and indicates the likely influence and efficacy of the various instruments vis-a-vis the geo-political aims.

Although most states use economic, diplomatic, or other forms of non-military means to preserve power, historical evidence supports

1. Nayef R.F. Al-Rodhan is a philosopher, neuroscientist, geostrategist and author. He is an Honorary Fellow of St Antony's College at Oxford University. In 2009, he proposed the concept of meta-geopolitics in his book, *Neo-Statecraft and Meta Geopolitics: Reconciliation of Power, Interests and Justice in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*.

that military power is often the preferred instrument. Kenneth Waltz in his book *Man, State and War* reinforces this point by stating, "Force is introduced, in the absence of an authority that can limit the means used by competitors." While globalisation, trade and the emergence of transnational economic forums have led to economic interdependence between states, it has also resulted in a competition for resources, leading to disputes. Therefore, even though most states can assure their citizens of internal order, they have to possess credible and effective military capability to safeguard their interests from other nations. It is in this domain of military capability that aerospace power, though a late entrant, has started to influence geopolitics in ways that are still evolving.

The reason why the ways are still evolving is because while geopolitics is ancient, aerospace power is barely a century old, with its component, space power, being even younger. This explains why we have classics like Mackinder's *The Geographic Pivot of History* (1904) with its Heartland theory, and Mahan's *The Influence of Sea Power upon History* (1890), both of which were causative in influencing the international outlook of both landlocked and sea-faring nations. While Walter Boyne has done some evolutionary work on the *Influence of Aerospace Power on History*, it is still awaiting the evidence of history to further unfold, and be characterised as a definitive classic.

The reasons why aerospace power influences geo-politics is because it reduces the impositions of geography like no other power. That's because while the Earth is 30 percent land and 70 percent water, it is 100 percent air and space. Thus, aerospace power can reach anywhere, bypassing obstacles. Hence, we saw momentous events, like the *Hump* airlift across the Himalayas in World War II, threatening Japan from an unexpected flank. This airlift was itself a precursor to the Berlin airlift, an event which would demonstrate to the Soviets in peace-time, the resolve and capability of the West. This demonstration of intent, without actual violence, would go a long way in enforcing the Cold War *détente*.

Geo-politically, a bipolar world was largely one of balance. On the other hand, the present multipolar world, is marked by instability and rapidly shifting equations. In such dynamic geo-political scenarios, the flexibility to adapt to evolving circumstances with an

appropriate response would enable a nation continual advantage in securing and sustaining its national interests. Within the military element of geo-politics, the inherent flexibility and responsiveness of aerospace allows it to concentrate force rapidly across long distances for application of both types of power – hard and soft.

The influence of aerospace on geo-politics is not limited to nations. Even non-state actors realise this: recall the mayhem of 9/11. We can also see how quick the response was using aerospace power. The Taliban government of Afghanistan was defeated in days because aerospace power, enhanced by small special forces teams, added huge combat power to a tiny ground footprint, in terrain where the estimate to generate combat power with a conventional land force was in months. The terrain dictated a conventional land force ratio of 9:1; however, the use of aerospace power made this requirement redundant. Aerospace power has also played a major role in regime change, as evidenced in 2001 in Libya. Irrespective of the rightness of the actions, we cannot deny its effect. Aerospace power can also prevent regime change. Witness Mali in 2013, and the recent setbacks experienced by the Islamic State of Syria (ISIS) due to the air strikes in the Kobane region of northern Syria, since January 31, 2015.

In earlier days, air power's characteristics of speed, reach and responsiveness allowed the British to switch to air control in policing the empire, switching from the requirement of a large human footprint to a much less visible but more cost-effective method of maintaining order in Mesopotamia, Africa, and northwest India. We can see another version of air policing unfolding in the very **same inhospitable regions** today, especially using what is popularly called drone warfare. The key differences since then are attributable to the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMAs) of Remotely Piloted Aircraft (RPAs), and Precision Guided Munitions (PGMs).

Aerospace power has emerged as a preferred tool for coercion, towards hard power diplomacy as an element of geo-politics, as nations try to nudge other nations, or even non-state actors towards favorable outcomes. The means could be through compellence which is offensive coercion or deterrence which is defensive coercion. It is this characteristic of being able to hurt without first conquering which makes aerospace power effective, either



by threatening the enemy with its use, or by its actual use. This is something not possible with land power. The characteristic has limited applicability for maritime power as well. As without the use of aviation assets, the employment of pure maritime power could be countered by a credible and effective anti-area access denial strategy; thereby confining its effects within the littoral regions. By no means is a case being made to imply that aerospace power can go it alone and win wars by itself. On the contrary, the *sinqua-non* for any military success is integrated air and surface force operations. While surface power is fundamental to achieve desired end-states, the use of aerospace power as per established tenets of employment during a conflict could generate the necessary asymmetry that would make the subsequent task of the surface forces significantly easier. These characteristics of aerospace power also formed the bedrock of nuclear deterrence. The same holds good for conventional deterrence as aerospace power presents the quickest tool to either punish or deny enemy objectives. Some facets of coercion were revealed in Bosnia and Kosovo. Aerospace power also ensures that one is not coerced.

Another area where aerospace power contributes immensely to statecraft is in information gathering. Persistent stare is possible only through the use of aerospace power's Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance (ISR) assets. It enables one to gather information on the capability and, at times, intent, of one's neighbours and adversaries. The unique ISR and other capabilities of aerospace power could also be used for soft-power diplomacy and commercial applications. The multinational search for the ill-fated Malaysian MH-370 and the multiple applications in the fields of agriculture and remote sensing are effective methods to enhance global cooperation and economic development. Besides, the use of aerospace for timely humanitarian relief has proved to be invaluable, whether it was the IAF's Humanitarian Aid and Disaster Relief (HADR) effort during Operations Rahat and Megh-Rahat, the tsunami relief to Sri Lanka and Maldives in 2004, or the recent airlift of drinking water to Male in December 2014. In a diplomatic role, the aerobatic display teams of the IAF, 'Sarang', and 'Suryakiran', have helped strengthen the wings of friendship in Southeast Asia. The use of air power as a soft

power tool, therefore, goes a great distance to strengthen bilateral trust – a huge political payoff.

Another area where aerospace power has proved very useful is in assisting and facilitating commercial business processes. More specifically, its contribution in the arenas of satellite communication and navigation has helped boost economic development, trade and governance. Overall, aerospace power provides capable, credible and cost-effective solutions to meet geo-political aspirations.

India's foreign policy is pragmatic, and premised on the twin policies of *no extra-territorial ambition* and *no export of ideology*.<sup>2</sup> However, even though India seeks peaceful resolution of all disputes, our own security environment is not benign.

In South Asia, the mix of several countries with robust identities and ideologies, rising military budgets, bitter historical memories, and unresolved territorial disputes yields a recipe for classic geo-political manoeuvring and possibly armed conflict. Adding to the challenges in the neighbourhood are the scourge of terrorism through state and non-state actors, reckless actions by authoritarian regimes and the spectre of state collapse. These, and the added imperatives of the US drawdown from Afghanistan and the emerging influence of groups like the ISIS necessitate that we be in a position to defend our interests at both the regional and global levels.

India is at a strategic crossroads, and a challenge that will confront us is choosing the correct path to transition from a developing nation to a modern power. On the one hand, lies the challenge of development, to compete in the global economy; and, on the other, lies the national security it requires for it to succeed. As Ashley Tellis has said, "States cannot become great powers unless, at some level, they demonstrate mastery over the creation, deployment and use of military force in the service of national objectives." Therefore, for India to make this transition successfully, both soft and hard power are required.

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2. In a speech given at the Asia Security Summit (Shangri-La Dialogue) in Singapore on June 3, 2006, India's (then) Defence Minister, Shri Pranab Mukherjee, reiterated that India seeks the peaceful resolution of all disputes, premised on the twin policies of *no extra-territorial ambition* and *no export of ideology* (emphasis added). Ministry of Defence, "Text of Raksha Mantri Shri Pranab Mukherjee's address at Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore," news release Press Information Bureau, Government of India, June 3, 2006, <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx?relid=18213>. Accessed on January 23, 2013.

In this regard, aerospace power provides optimum solutions to satisfy the requirements of both soft and hard power. Procurement of credible aerospace assets is useful for political signalling, to deter both real and perceived as well as existential and potential threats, and also to develop capabilities required for actual war-fighting and force projection.

While aerospace power may be the preferred option, it is inherently dependent on technology. Larger numbers and tactics cannot offset the effects of superior technology. Therefore, though expensive, it is imperative to develop cutting-edge research and development labs, and the related aerospace manufacturing capability. This would enable aerospace power to remain a relevant and credible option. Moreover, recent trends place technology alongside economic power, military alliances, and diplomatic statesmanship, as a driver of geo-politics. Hence, the *mantras* of "Make in India" and "Digital India" articulated by the government are visionary, not only from the standpoint of mere aerospace development, but also from developing geo-technical capabilities as a counter-weight to geo-politics.

To conclude, as time evolves, not only will aerospace power have an increasing effect on geo-politics by shrinking the world, so too will the newer paradigms of space and cyber power. Both share many of the same characteristics of air power, but are even newer technologies with unique defining features. But that would be the subject of another seminar by itself.

The aerospace conference over the next two days will dwell on numerous important issues related to the existing multipolar world order, regional security dynamics, the unique role of defence in diplomacy, use of space, and future trends in aerospace technologies. I'm confident that the conference and the discussions that follow would be very informative. I take this opportunity to wish the conference all success.

# CHINA'S ROLE IN AFGHANISTAN POST 2014

SHALINI CHAWLA

*China and Afghanistan are traditional friendly neighbours. China pays great attention to developments in Afghanistan and is committed to deepening both countries' strategic partnership, and so decided to appoint a special envoy....*

– Chinese Foreign Ministry.<sup>1</sup>

With the announcement for the drawdown of the US and North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) forces from Afghanistan by the end of December 2014, the security concerns of the neighbouring countries were heightened, given the fact that the US drawdown is expected to impact the security dynamics of the region. The regional powers, including China, have been concerned and shown interest in stabilising Afghanistan, post the US drawdown.

The last few years have witnessed increasing signs of Chinese interest and engagement in Afghanistan. In early 2014, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi made a rare trip to Kabul for a meeting with his counterpart. Following which, in July 2014, China announced the appointment of a special envoy for Afghanistan (for

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1. "China Appoints Sun Yaxi as Special Envoy for Afghanistan" , July 19, 2014, *Dispatch News Desk*, at <http://www.dnd.com.pk/china-appoints-sun-yuxi-special-envoy-afghanistan/72225>. Accessed on February 5, 2015.

the first time) under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Sun Yuxi, who is a former ambassador to both India and Afghanistan, has been appointed as a special envoy for Afghanistan. Beijing, obviously, is keen to contribute in ensuring peace and stability in Afghanistan and official representation in Afghanistan is, indeed, a welcome initiation.

Another significant move came from China in February this year (2015) when it offered to mediate in prevaricated efforts to engage the Afghan Taliban in the peace process in Afghanistan. Reuters reported that China has initiated mediation among representatives from Afghanistan, Pakistan and Taliban. This is, indeed, a noticeable step from Beijing which certainly has economic and security concerns in Afghanistan. Afghanistan has gone through a political, economic and military transition and also how China and Afghanistan perceive each other has undergone a change. In the last few years, as the United States' drawdown has been underway from Afghanistan, China has raised its profile, and increased its involvement and presence in Afghanistan. China's policy towards Afghanistan in the last few years has been driven primarily by its economic interests and security concerns. China has been obviously worried about the rising Uighur secessionism in the Western Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (XUAR) bordering Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK) and Afghanistan. China is apprehensive about the proliferation of rising extremism and Talibanisation from the Afghan-Pakistan border into the restive Xinjiang.

## **BACKGROUND**

China has been a silent player in Afghanistan from the time the diplomatic relations commenced in 1955 and the two nations signed a boundary treaty in 1963. The boundary treaty of 1963 settled the territorial dispute over the Afghan-controlled Wakhan on the border between Badakhshan province in Afghanistan and the XUAR in China.<sup>2</sup> Although China has not been involved directly in the Afghan conflict, it did condemn the Soviet invasion in the 1980s and joined

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2. See International Boundary Study, No. 89 – May 1, 1969, *Afghanistan-China Boundary*, The Geographer Office of the Geographer Bureau of Intelligence and Research, at <http://archive.law.fsu.edu/library/collection/limitsinseas/ibs089.pdf>. Accessed on December 12, 2014.

the anti-Russian coalition which was kept a secret for years—rather the details of the coalition were less known facts. China supported the US-led Afghan War against the Russians with a good supply of equipment and also the construction of two top secret US monitoring sites in Xinjiang: Qitai and Korla.<sup>3</sup> The US-China coalition in the 1980s served the two countries' mutual strategic interests, as John K. Cooley states:

The Chinese listening posts gave both Washington and Beijing a unique opportunity to eavesdrop on Soviet Central Asia. Politically, they gave the United States, the leader of the anti-Soviet coalition in Afghanistan, a choice asset in Chinese controlled territory—although, as the Americans would soon more fully realize, that control from Beijing was contested by elements among the Uighur Muslim population in Xinjiang.<sup>4</sup>

On the other hand, Beijing's decision to "join the grand coalition against the Russians in Afghanistan was, of course, a logical effect of its gradual rapprochement with the United States."<sup>5</sup> The Chinese involvement in the anti-Soviet war did have repercussions and led to a rise in unrest in the Xinjiang province, with China facing a severe blowback in the form of the much aggravated revolt of the Uighurs. China was disinterested in Afghanistan in the early 1990s, as it was grappling with its own internal challenges, leading to the Tiananmen Square massacre. On the external front, the disintegration of the Soviet Union led to foreign policy challenges for China and also, additional support to the unrest in Xinjiang. Beijing did ultimately engage with the Taliban regime in Afghanistan in the 1990s, given its growing strategic relationship with Pakistan. Surya Gangadharan, in his article, talked of the Beijing-Taliban engagement and the visit of five senior Chinese diplomats, including the head of the Asia desk in the Chinese Foreign Ministry, Sun Guoxian. Gangadharan observes:

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3. John K. Cooley, *Unholy Wars: Afghanistan, America and International Terrorism* (London: Pluto Press, 2001), p. 70.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 70.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 66.

The visit was never commented on publicly by Beijing. Unofficial reports suggested that the visit was China's way of saying 'thank you' to the Taliban who, in October 1998, had allowed in Chinese missile experts to recover and examine the remains of the cruise missiles the US had fired on Afghan terrorist bases in August that year. The Taliban also allowed the Chinese to take back an unexploded cruise missile. But it's difficult to accept the argument that the Chinese had sent a top team of diplomats to Kabul merely to say thank you.<sup>6</sup>

Some reports suggest that an agreement was signed between the Taliban militia in Afghanistan and the People's Republic of China (PRC). The agreement actually bemused the diplomatic community in South Asia, as the Taliban had attracted much international criticism for the destruction of the Buddha statues at Bamiyan.<sup>7</sup> The agreement which was incongruously signed between the PRC and Taliban military representatives laid out the following initiatives from the PRC:

- Repair and maintain equipment captured by the Taliban militia from adversaries.
- The PLA would assist in raising and training the Taliban armed forces. Initially, 25,000 troops are to be trained.
- The PLA would provide training facilities for the Taliban air force pilots.
- The PLA would provide from its own funds about 10 million US dollars to improve infrastructure for the Taliban and its armed forces.
- Initial training and maintenance of equipment are done at Taxila in Pakistan.<sup>8</sup>

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6. Surya Gangadharan, "The China-Taliban Equation", *Aakrosh: Asian Journal On Terrorism and Internal Conflicts*, vol.3, no.6, January, pp. 55-77.

7. Ahmed Rashid, "After 1,700 Years Buddhas fall to Taliban Dynamite", *The Telegraph*, March 12, 2001, at <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/afghanistan/1326063/After-1700-years-Buddhas-fall-to-Taliban-dynamite.html>. Accessed on April 12, 2013.

8. Tara Shankar Sahay "Taliban-China Deal Puzzles Diplomats", February 12, 1999, *Rediff*, at <http://www.rediff.com/news/1999/feb/12tali.htm>. Accessed on August 15, 2014.

The agreement, which was in all logical probability brokered by Pakistan, had an assurance from the Taliban that “it will not provide any training to Chinese Muslims in China’s Xinjiang province and that it will assist the Chinese authorities maintain places of worship and *madrasas* as in China”.<sup>9</sup>

China’s engagement with the Taliban in the 1990s, which involved providing military assistance to the Taliban, amply projected the Chinese policy of overt engagement with the Taliban which was obviously driven by China’s own security and strategic interests. China eventually became a member of the “Six plus Two” Group, a UN initiative to address the Afghan crisis.<sup>10</sup>

### **CHINA IN AFGHANISTAN POST 2001**

Post 2001, China did not object to the US stance, Operation Enduring Freedom, and it was silent on the US positioning of its forces in the neighbouring Central Asian countries. Chinese President Jiang Zemin, in his message to President Bush on September 11, 2001, said, “The Chinese Government condemns and opposes, as always, all violent activities by terrorism.”<sup>11</sup> China also voted in favour of Resolution 1368 (to combat terrorism) at the UN Security Council. Immediately after September 11, China was clearly positioning itself as a player supporting the UN’s role in Afghanistan (specifically combating terrorism). A statement made by Chinese Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan at the high-level meeting of the “Six plus Two” Groups on Afghanistan, stated the principles which need to be followed in Afghanistan:

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9. Ibid.

10. The Six plus Two Group on Afghanistan (also known as 6 plus 2 Contact Group or “6 plus 2”) describes an informal coalition of the six nations sharing borders with Afghanistan (China, Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan), plus the United States and Russia, which functioned from 1997 to 2001 under the aegis of the United Nations.

11. Press Release of the Chinese Mission (13/09/01): Chinese President Jiang Zemin expressed condolences by telegraph over terrorist attacks and talked with President Bush on telephone to show China’s position against terrorism (September 13, 2001), Permanent Mission of People’s Republic of China to the UN, at <http://www.china-un.org/eng/chinaandun/securitycouncil/thematicissues/counterterrorism/t26903.htm>. Accessed on April 10, 2014.



First, the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Afghanistan should be ensured.

Second, the Afghan people must be allowed to independently decide on a solution.

Third, the future government of Afghanistan should be broad based, embody the interests of all ethnic groups and live in harmony with all countries, particularly its neighbours.

Fourth, the solution must be conducive to peace and stability in the region.

Fifth, the United Nations should play a constructive role more actively. The United Nations and its Security Council have long played a crucial role on the Afghan issue and enjoyed a good reputation in this regard. The Afghan issue is a very complicated one. A more active role by the US in laying out the future arrangements of Afghanistan will help build consensus among most countries and among Afghan factions as well.<sup>12</sup>

There were significant statements made by the Chinese leadership condemning terrorism on various occasions and this highlighted Chinese concerns about troubles in Xinjiang. China was well aware of the fact that the Uighur militants did have a support base in Afghanistan and Pakistan. With the fall of the Taliban government in Kabul, the relationship between the two nations has steadily altered, and China's involvement in Afghanistan has deepened, from investing heavily in the economic sector and strengthening diplomatic ties to being a moderator in the peace talks among the Afghan regime, Taliban and Pakistan. Although, for a long time, China maintained a low key position in Kabul as compared to the US and the rest of the Western powers, it has eventually emerged as the largest foreign investor in Afghanistan.

China has managed to institutionalise its strategic partnership with Afghanistan. There has been a series of diplomatic visits/declarations between the two countries and China pledged economic assistance to Afghanistan when it endorsed the Bonn

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12. Statement by Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan of China, at high-level meeting of the Group of "6+2" on Afghanistan, 2001/11/12, Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of China to the UN, at <http://www.china-un.org/eng/zt/fk/t28935.htm>. Accessed on June 12, 2014.

Agreement in 2001, the Tokyo Conference in 2002, subsequent conferences held in 2003, 2004 and again in 2005. The first major Joint Declaration between the two states came in 2006, when China and Afghanistan signed the Treaty of Good-Neighbourly Friendship and Cooperation to maintain ties, specially in the security aspect to maintain peace in the region.<sup>13</sup> The Good-Neighbourly Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation stated that the two sides would enhance the fight against terrorism, separatism, and extremism. Terrorism and drugs flowing in from Afghanistan have been China's main concern. Since then, the two countries have reached a series of agreements highlighting cooperation in the areas of terrorism, drug trafficking, trade and economic development (China's investment is in developing natural resources and building the road network).

In 2010, during Karzai's visit to China, Hu Jintao talked about the areas of cooperation both countries could build on. In 2011, at the Bonn Conference, the Chinese President proposed an "Afghan-led and Afghan-owned" process of peace and reconstruction in Afghanistan. In 2012, at the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Summit in Beijing, China supported Afghanistan's observer status and the two nations also signed the Strategic Partnership Agreement (2012).<sup>14</sup> The Joint Declaration between Afghanistan and China signed in 2012 is important as it formed the basis of future cooperation between the two on various fronts. Principles on which the two sides agreed in the 2012 declaration include:

Cooperation in the political, economic, cultural and security fields, as well as on regional and international affairs.

High-level exchanges are of special significance.

To continually strengthen the pragmatic cooperation in such fields as resources and energy development, infrastructure development, engineering and agriculture.

Strong rejection to all forms of terrorism, extremism, separatism and organized crimes.

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13. "China Ratifies Good-Neighborly Treaty with Afghanistan", *People's Daily Online*, October 30, 2006, at [http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200610/31/eng20061031\\_316949.html](http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200610/31/eng20061031_316949.html). Accessed on July 10, 2014.

14. "China, Afghanistan Upgrade Ties to Strategic Partnership", *Xinhua*, June 8, 2012, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2012-06/08/c\\_131640214.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2012-06/08/c_131640214.htm). Accessed on November 1, 2014.

The Chinese side welcomes a bigger role played by Afghanistan in the SCO, including in its new role as an observer country.<sup>15</sup>

In the Position Paper presented in 2014 at the 67th session of the UNGA (United Nations General Assembly), China talked about extending support to the “Afghan-led and Afghan-owned reconciliation process and the establishment of a broad-based and inclusive government in Afghanistan.”<sup>16</sup> Beijing has been very hopeful of the efforts initiated through the Istanbul Process, which it believes “is conducive to the early settlement of the Afghan issue and the realization of regional security and prosperity.”<sup>17</sup>

China has encouraged strengthening cooperation through the SCO on fighting the “three evil forces” of terrorism, separatism and extremism. It has pushed for a larger role of the SCO, and the SCO clearly attaches significance to the crisis situation in Afghanistan. Although many scholars believe that the SCO could take a lead role in the political stability of Afghanistan, needless to say, the organisation has its limitations and challenges.

### **CHINA'S SECURITY CONCERNS IN AFGHANISTAN**

Security is the core concern of China as it shares an 85-km border with Afghanistan. China faces a security challenge from the religious-separatist terrorist elements in Xinjiang that have found safe havens in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The ethnic Uighurs, who are (mostly) Muslims, and culturally close to the Central Asian Republics, have had historical grievances against the majority ethnic Han Chinese of the PRC, and have been posing a serious internal threat to Beijing. Xinjiang, rich in vast mineral resources, is potentially an important trade route for China, and is also the

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15. Joint Declaration between the People's Republic of China and the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan on Establishing Strategic and Cooperative Partnership”, 2012/06/08, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Afghanistan. [http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/wjdt\\_665385/2649\\_665393/t939517.shtml](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjdt_665385/2649_665393/t939517.shtml). Accessed on March 9, 2015.

16. “Position Paper of the People's Republic of China at the 67<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations General Assembly”, 2012/09/20, Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of China to the UN, at <http://www.china-un.org/eng/hyyfy/t971887.htm>. Accessed on December 12, 2014.

17. “Ministerial Conference of the Istanbul Process on Afghanistan in Beijing”, 2014/11/03, Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the Republic of India, at <http://in.chineseembassy.org/eng/gdxw/t1206749.htm>. Accessed on March 10, 2015.

location of Lop-Nor, which was used by China to conduct a nuclear test for Pakistan.<sup>18</sup>

Historically, there have been tensions between the Uighurs and the Chinese government but after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the formation of the Central Asian Republics, the cries of self-determination from the Uighurs have risen significantly. As John K Cooley observed:

During the opening years of the Afghan *jihād*, China joined the anti-Russian coalition. It did so far for its own strategic reasons. It paid a terrible price during the blowback period after the war's end. That price was renewed and spreading revolt of the Uighurs, the Muslim and Turkic-speaking peoples of China's far West, the vast province of Xinjiang, many of whom who yearned for independence in their own Muslim state...<sup>19</sup>

There have been numerous incidents of terrorist violence in Xinjiang, leading to the issue being in the priority list of the central government. Since 1990, there have been several separatist uprisings, protests and killings of Han Chinese officials, and a dramatic rise in the demands for the creation of an independent "East Turkestan".<sup>20</sup>

Till now, the Chinese response to the Xinjiang insurgency and violence has been primarily with the use of force and suppression, with little economic incentives being offered to the region.<sup>21</sup> There has been lack of political means for combating the resistance and Beijing has been using harsh tactics. Little has been done to address the alienation of the region which has not allowed the insurgency to settle down. Rohan Gururatna, the head of the International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism Research, at Nanyang

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18. "Controlling Xinjiang: Autonomy on China's "New Frontier", *Asian-Pacific Law and Policy Journal*, vol.3, issue 1, Winter 2002, p.121.

19. Cooley, n. 3, p. 66.

20. Teresa Poole, "Fresh Rioting in Xinjiang", *INDEPENDENT*, February 20, 1999, as cited in n. 18, p. 122.

21. See Elizabeth Van Wie Davis, "Uyghur Muslim Ethnic Separatism in Xinjiang, China", *Centre for Security Studies*, January 2008, at <http://www.apcss.org/college/publications/uyghur-muslim-ethnic-separatism-in-xinjiang-china/>. Accessed on July 21, 2014.

Technological University in Singapore, said the violence comprises acts of resistance by the “disaffected” Uighurs.<sup>22</sup>

The international human rights advocates blame the official restrictions on religion, language and culture, and discrimination for the radicalisation of the region. Gururatna observes, “Beijing has invested in building infrastructure, but not in creating reconciliation.”<sup>23</sup>

China has been deeply concerned with the support these militants draw from the terrorist organisations based in Pakistan and Afghanistan as there has been sufficient evidence in the past indicating this linkage. Beijing is concerned about the spread of the separatist ideology from Afghanistan and the insurgency prone regions of Pakistan. The Uighurs have been using Afghanistan and Pakistan as a sanctuary for a long time now. According to Ahmed Rashid:

Uyghur militants from Xinjiang, China, are increasingly using Afghanistan as a sanctuary, a supply base for training and weapons, and a means to fund their movement back home through the lucrative opium trade. Heroin addiction is now a major social problem in Xinjiang. Although the Taliban are not directly recruiting Uyghurs into their forces, Uyghur militants have enlisted with, and get support from, the foreign Islamic units fighting for the Taliban. These units include the 800-man Arab brigade led by Osama Bin Laden, units of Pakistani student militants, and the 2,000-man force of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan led by Juma Namangani, now based in northern Afghanistan.<sup>24</sup>

China’s additional worries arise from the support that Al Qaeda has pledged to extend to the militants in Xinjiang.<sup>25</sup> There have

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22. Dan Levin, “At Least 50 Killed in Xinjiang Violence, Officials Say”, *The New York Times*, September 25, 2014, at [http://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/26/world/asia/death-toll-in-xinjiang-violence-may-be-higher-than-reported.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/26/world/asia/death-toll-in-xinjiang-violence-may-be-higher-than-reported.html?_r=0). Accessed on December 12, 2014.

23. Ibid.

24. Ahmed Rashid, “China Forced to Expand Role in Central Asia”, *The Central Asia-Caucasus Analysis*, July 19, 2000, at <http://www.cacianalyst.org/publications/analytical-articles/item/7187-analytical-articles-caci-analyst-2000-7-19-art-7187.html>. Accessed on August 12, 2014.

25. See “Al-Qaeda Leader Ayman Al-Zawahiri Sets Out his First Jihad Guidelines”, *Reuters*, September 18, 2013, at <http://www.scmp.com/news/world/article/1311795/al-qaeda-leader-ayman-al-zawahiri>. Accessed on January 12, 2015.

been reports in the West citing the fact that the Uighur separatist movement known as the East Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM) has deep links with Al Qaeda and cadres receive training in the Al Qaeda camps in Afghanistan and also weapons (and training) from Pakistan. Post 9/11, the Chinese have been quite concerned about aggravation of the existing separatist movement due to the spillover effect from Afghanistan. China fears that the Uighurs have in the past, and will continue in the future, to gain support from the transnational Muslim extremist forces.

The second factor which China also suffers from is the spillover of the drug problem from Afghanistan. A major share of the drugs entering China is smuggled into China from the Golden Crescent (meaning Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan). The western provinces of China have been deeply affected by the drug export from Afghanistan, and Xinjiang, apart from serving as a transit route, has also been the final destination for the drug suppliers, with an increasing number of drug consumers.<sup>26</sup>

#### **CHINA'S QUEST FOR ENHANCED ECONOMIC ENGAGEMENT**

China has enhanced its economic engagement with Afghanistan and has invested in the infrastructure and telecom industry and quite substantively in the energy sector. China's expanding energy requirement has been an important driver for its renewed engagement and interest in Afghanistan. The US Energy Information Administration (EIA) predicts that in the near future, China will account for one-third of the world's energy consumption. Afghanistan provides China with an opportunity to access the minerals and other energy resources. China is keen to invest in the Afghan infrastructure as the new transit corridors would facilitate Chinese trade towards the west into Iran and the Middle East and towards the south into Gwadar in Pakistan.<sup>27</sup>

China has extended economic assistance to Afghanistan and provided aid worth Yuan 1.3 billion (US\$ 203 million) and waived debt worth US\$ 19.5 million during 2002-10.<sup>28</sup> In 2012, when the

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26. Nerkez Opacin, *China's Role in Afghanistan: A Capitalist Peace Approach* (Hamburg: Anchor Academic Publishing, 2014), p. 38.

27. Zalmay Khalizad, "Why Afghanistan Courts China", *The New York Times*, November 3, 2014, at [http://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/04/opinion/why-afghanistan-courts-china.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/04/opinion/why-afghanistan-courts-china.html?_r=0). Accessed on December 12, 2014.

28. Vishal Chandra, *The Unfinished War in Afghanistan 2001-2014* (New Delhi: Pentagon Press, 2015), p. 249.

Strategic Partnership Agreement was signed, Beijing pledged an additional assistance of Yuan 150 million (US\$ 23.7 million). Although the Chinese contribution is relatively smaller compared to that of the West, it does demonstrate an alteration in the Chinese foreign policy towards Afghanistan.

China has pledged an investment of \$3.5 billion in the Mes Aynak copper mines in Afghanistan's Logar province, which is the largest Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the Afghan history. China has now emerged as the largest foreign investor in Afghanistan. In 2007, a 30-year deal was signed between the Afghan government and two Chinese state owned companies, the China Metallurgical Corporation (MCC) group and the Jiangxi Copper Company, to mine copper in the eastern region of the Afghanistan -Aynak copper mine. According to the Afghan sources, "Mes Aynak has between 11.3 and 17 million metric tonnes of copper, 7,700 metric tonnes of silver, 600,000 metric tonnes of cobalt and an unidentified amount of gold..., 11.3 million tonnes of pure copper needs to be separated from three billion tonnes of copper ore."<sup>29</sup> It is difficult to give the exact estimates as the Afghan government has not published the details of the agreement. In 2012, the Afghan Ministry of Mines made a statement, "The Aynak project represents the largest private sector project in the country's history, and it will generate more jobs, revenues and enhancements to Afghanistan's infrastructure than any other single project to date..."<sup>30</sup>

The project would invariably generate opportunities for the Afghans. According to a World Bank Report, the project would create 12,000 direct jobs and 62,500 "induced" jobs while adding \$250 million in annual revenues once the mine hits capacity.<sup>31</sup>

The project faces multiple challenges and progress on it has been rather slow, owing to repeated terrorist attacks (about 13 in 2013 alone), lack of skilled workers, corruption in the Afghan

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29. "Copper Reserves in Afghanistan," *Pajhwok Afghan News Special Mines Page*, at <http://mines.pajhwok.com/content/copper-reserves-afghanistan>. Accessed on March 12, 2015.

30. Kathleen Caulderwood, "China and Afghanistan's Minerals: Archaeologists Still Scrambling To Save Mes Aynak", *International Business Times*, August 25, 2014, at <http://www.ibtimes.com/china-afghanistans-minerals-archaeologists-still-scrambling-save-mes-aynak-1668808>. Accessed on November 11, 2014.

31. *Ibid.*

system and, very importantly, media focus on the archeological site.

China has invested in the oil and natural gas sector, and in 2011, the Chinese state-owned China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) and Watan Energy, a local Afghan company, signed an agreement worth \$700 million. The agreement reportedly allows the Chinese firm to carry out research on oil and natural gas in Sari Pul and Paryab, an area known as the Amu Darya river basin.<sup>32</sup> The area was first explored by the Soviets in the 1960s, who estimated the reserves at about 87 million barrels. The Chinese and the Afghans believe the reserves to be much more than the originally estimated figure.<sup>33</sup>

The agreement includes the following: “(i) CNPC will build a refinery, which would be Afghanistan’s first refinery; (ii) the Afghan government will receive 70 percent of the profits from the sale of the oil and natural gas; and (iii) CNPC will pay 15 percent in royalties, as well as corporate taxes and rent for the land used for the operations.”<sup>34</sup>

## CONCLUSIONS

Beijing has kept itself aligned with the international community in the last few years and has increased its engagement in Afghanistan. By and large, it maintains an independent policy on Afghanistan, primarily reflective of its deep security concerns and economic interests, which are the prime drivers of its proactive diplomatic engagement. Beijing certainly wants a stable Afghanistan, which does not become a home or sanctuary for the Uighur militancy, but, on the other hand, it is conscious of the challenges which accompany engagement with Afghanistan. It has refrained from any direct military involvement in Afghanistan (till now!) but has offered assistance in military training. It has learnt from the troubles which the West is facing after 13 years of war in Afghanistan, leading to the attraction of the attention of the international terrorist groups, and it certainly wants to avoid these. Also, many Afghans don’t particularly view the Chinese as

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32. Patrick Quinn and Slobodan, “Afghanistan, China Sign First Oil Contract”, [Afghan News] December 28, 2011 - 02-26-2012, *Pashtunforums*, at <http://www.pashtunforums.com/showthread.php?t=26211>. Accessed on February 12, 2015.

33. Ibid.

34. Ibid.



friends, and sending armed forces into Afghanistan might not be a logical option, according to the Chinese leadership. China has been an eager player in the mediation with the Taliban, as it realises that the Taliban is a reality in Afghanistan which has to be involved in the (sustainable) political settlement.

Looking at the recent developments, the following conclusions may be drawn regarding China's emerging role in Afghanistan:

- Chinese engagement is primarily aimed to take care of security concerns and to ensure that unrest in Xinjiang does not benefit from the spillover effects of the extremism and terrorist groups operating from Afghanistan.
- China's quest for energy has led to investments in the Afghan energy sector. Certainly, it aims to build up the transportation network which would connect it to the Iranian oilfields, Central Asian Republics, and also Gwadar in Pakistan.
- China wants stability in Afghanistan but has no plans of stabilising Afghan politics, facilitating its ethnic rivalries and modifying its social structure.
- China would enhance investment in the social sector like building hospitals, roads and cultural institutes promoting the Chinese culture, in order to build goodwill among the Afghans.
- A good foothold in Afghanistan would certainly provide a leverage to China in terms of containing the expansion of the other major players – the US and Russia – in the region.
- China is likely to maintain and enhance its diplomatic and economic engagement in Afghanistan as stability in Afghanistan is in Beijing's interest.

# CHINA'S APPROACH TOWARDS BOUNDARY DISPUTE RESOLUTION: A CASE STUDY OF CENTRAL ASIA

**SANA HASHMI**

The rise of the People's Republic of China (PRC) has been a defining feature of the 20th and 21st centuries. While China has been stepping on the path of an inevitable rise, it has also been embroiled in a wide array of boundary disputes along its borders, involving almost all its neighbours. When the PRC was established, the Chinese leadership decided to undergo a prolonged task of establishing cordial relationships with its immediate neighbours and beyond. However, as it turned out, the biggest stumbling block in smoothening relations with neighbours was China's geography itself. The PRC is a country with intricate physical geography and even more complex borders. It shares land borders with 14 sovereign states and is landlocked from three sides. Apart from China, Russia, that is located towards the northwest of China, also shares international borders with 14 nation-states. No other country shares international borders with as many countries. However, while Russia has two maritime neighbours, China shares maritime boundaries with six countries towards its east.

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With such a vast neighbourhood, China is bound to have differences with its neighbours with regard to its expanded boundaries. Clearly, China is a country with disputed borders. However, there has been a change in China's approach while dealing with its smaller neighbours. China has till now resolved its land border issues with 12 neighbouring countries. While China had addressed its boundary questions with countries like Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Mongolia and Afghanistan in the early 1960s, it went ahead to resolve its boundary disputes with Laos, Vietnam, Russia and the Central Asian Republics in the 1990s. However, China is still left with two unresolved land border, and two maritime disputes. With respect to its two unresolved land border disputes, China still needs to settle the border dispute with India and Bhutan. The general perception suggests that China is less likely to be generous in settling any more boundary disputes than it has been hitherto.<sup>1</sup>

### **CHINA-CENTRAL ASIA BORDER RELATIONS**

Central Asia includes five republics of the erstwhile Soviet Union but only three Central Asian states share a border with China, namely, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. The disintegration of the Soviet Union and the emergence of five independent Central Asian Republics, close to China's border, considerably altered the geo-politics of the region. The Central Asian Republics, along with Russia, inherited border problems with China from the Soviet Union. China claims that its border problems with Central Asia were a consequence of unequal treaties that were imposed on China during the so-called century of humiliation. Although China's stand towards the Soviet Union was kind of obstinate and delayed, it wasted no time in resolving the disputes with the Central Asian Republics after the disintegration of the Soviet Union. The collapse of the Soviet Union coupled with the separatist movements in Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (XUAR) in the 1990s compelled China to move towards resolving the prolonged dispute with Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. In order to curb the Uighur separatism and get the least external support for separatist movements, cooperation from countries bordering Xinjiang, particularly the Central Asian Republic became a prerequisite for China. In fact, China readily

1. Stephen Blank and Younkyoo Kim, "Rethinking China's Strategy for Border Disputes: China's Border Policy Towards Central Asia, 1991-2011", *Issues and Studies*, vol. 48, no. 2, 2012, p. 37.

accepted unequal treaties as the basis for new boundary agreements and negotiations moved forward quite smoothly.<sup>2</sup>

Amongst the Central Asian neighbours of China, Kazakhstan is the largest, and inherited fifteen disputed sectors in the 1990s. China's Xinjiang shared a 1,740-km-long border with Kazakhstan which became porous due to rampant insurgency and drug trafficking. So as to secure its border, China signed the first border agreement with Kazakhstan in April 1994, which was followed by subsequent agreements signed in September 1997 and July 1998. According to a BBC news report in 1998, "China-Kazakhstan boundary treaty defined sovereignty over the areas — a 680-square-km territory near the Baimurz Pass and a 380-square-km area near the Sary-Chardy River, and set the 1,700-km border". The border demarcation was completed in 2002, with China receiving only 30 percent of the total contested land.

After gaining its independence, Kyrgyzstan was left with the task of resolving territorial disputes in seven sectors along the China border. Kyrgyzstan inherited a total disputed area of more than 3,600 sq km, with a majority of the area, including the Uzengi-Kush river basin. To inch closer to Kyrgyzstan, China signed the first and second boundary agreements in July 1996 and August 1999 respectively. Interestingly, China demanded more than 50 percent of the contested land; however, it settled for only 32 percent. Of all its border agreements with the Central Asian Republics, China's border pact with Kyrgyzstan resulted in huge protests in Kyrgyzstan, so much so that President Askar Akayev had to flee the country in 2005. Akayev, the prime leader of the country, was accused of compromising with the Kyrgyz territory so as to reap personal benefits from China.

Tajikistan was the last Central Asian Republic to resolve the boundary dispute with China in August 1999. With the largest disputed area being the Pamir mountains, Tajikistan inherited three disputed sectors from the Chinese-Soviet territorial dispute. The next boundary agreement was signed in May 2002. However, the Tajik Parliament ratified the agreement recently only in 2011, which led China to receive only 1,000 sq. km of the total 28,000 sq. km.

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2. Eric A. Hyer, "Haunted by History: China and its Northwestern Neighbours", *Haol*, vol. 7, 2005, p. 88.

It is imperative to explore answers to questions regarding why it is important to study China's boundary dispute resolution mechanism with the Central Asian Republics, though China has so far settled its border with nine other countries as well. It is in this context that Stephen Blank and Younkyyoo Kim argue that "in predicting China's future path, its strategy for resolving its border disputes in Central Asia and the nature of its border-resolution mechanism furnish a useful barometer of evolving trends in Chinese policy".<sup>3</sup>

### *Negotiating the Border Dispute*

There are no two viewpoints on the fact that border stability and security have always played a central role in China's Central Asia policy. China initiated negotiations with the Central Asian countries in 1992. As a follow up to the negotiation process, on April 26, 1996, China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan signed the "Treaty on Deepening Military Trust in Border Regions" in Shanghai, China, which was one of the initial steps towards stabilising China's border with Russia and the Central Asian Republics. China, along with Russia and the Central Asian Republics, arrived at a decision to meet annually. This arrangement came to be known as the "Shanghai Five". Later, on April 27, 1997, members of the Shanghai Five signed the "Treaty on Reduction of Military Forces in Border Regions". These developments, including the signing of the 1996 and 1997 Treaties show that the sole and original purpose of the Shanghai Five was to address the border problems between China and the four former Soviet republics.<sup>4</sup>

It is noteworthy that China does not favour multilateralism for resolving its territorial issues; however, the Shanghai Five was primarily formed to provide a platform for negotiations among China, Russia and Central Asia. Given that non-traditional security threats can never be dealt with alone, China wanted to seek the support of these four countries to eliminate the threat emanating from Xinjiang. And, for dealing with the issue of terrorism and separatism, border dispute resolution was a prerequisite. Formation of the Shanghai Five

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3. Blank and Kim, n. 1, p. 36.

4. Henry Plater-Zyberk, *Who's Scared of the SCO?* (United Kingdom: Defence Academy of the United Kingdom, 2007), p. 1.

was a part of China's broader strategy to stabilise its northwestern border and, for that matter, the entire northwestern region. Moreover, the coming together of China, Russia and the Central Asian countries further assured China of their commitment of checking separatist forces.

### **POSSIBLE MOTIVATING FACTORS FOR CHINA-CENTRAL ASIA DISPUTE RESOLUTIONS**

China's overall foreign policy goal since the late 1970s has been to maintain a peaceful international environment for its economic modernisation<sup>5</sup> and border security. China's policy in Central Asia was no different. In fact, China's strategic interest in Central Asia has come down to include three determinants: security, trade and energy. While China always had a wide-ranging interest in Central Asia, after establishing official ties with the Central Asian Republics in 1992, the main task for China was to demarcate its border with these countries appropriately so as to ensure border stability along its northwestern region. With the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the apparent willingness of the Central Asian Republics, at that point of time, answering questions of sovereignty and territorial integrity with the Central Asian states became no more than a cakewalk for China.

Seemingly, China's border policy with Central Asia was primarily shaped by a mix of external and internal determinants.

#### *Internal Determinants*

##### *Volatility of Xinjiang*

Border and minority issues in China are closely interlinked with each other. In fact, most of the ethnic minorities are located at the peripheries which makes it all the more difficult for a country like China. Of all the minority-dominated areas of China, Xinjiang, which is multi-ethnic, is considered to be the most restive region in China, where unrest is deeply-rooted. The ethnic minorities in Xinjiang claim that China is in the process of causing an influx of Han nationals

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5. Suisheng Zhao, *Chinese Foreign Policy: Pragmatism and Strategic Behaviour* (New York: East Gate Book, 2004), p. 258.

in Xinjiang. Unemployment among the Uighurs and the attitude of Chinese officials towards the locals are among the reasons for the mounting unrest in the region. By citing these reasons, the minorities in the Xinjiang region have been demanding greater autonomy or independence from the Chinese leadership for a very long time now.

Xinjiang's foreign border extends about 5,600 km, of which 3,700 km are shared with three Central Asian countries. The independence of the Central Asian states coincided with the long-smouldering ethnic unrest in China's most volatile region, Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (XUAR). The stability of China's northwestern border has a direct link with the Central Asian Republics. China was well aware of the fact that given that Central Asia had ethnic connections with Xinjiang, the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the emergence of independent Central Asian Republics could stoke Uighur nationalism in Xinjiang and fuel Uighur aspirations for independence. This triggered apprehensions in Beijing that Xinjiang would break away.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, there was a sense of fear in China that if political instability, along with Islamic radicalism, spreads in Central Asia, it would have far-reaching implications on Xinjiang. Additionally, coming close on the heels of the Tiananmen uprising of 1989, which had undermined the Chinese government's legitimacy, the separatist violence in Xinjiang compounded the regime's insecurity, as it posed a threat to China's territorial integrity.<sup>7</sup> It is important to note that primarily, China moved towards settling its boundary with the Central Asian region because it was confronted with an internal threat in the form of a separatist movement in Xinjiang. In fact, China was much more cautious when Xinjiang was in turmoil than when protests were occurring in another of China's restive regions, Tibet. Consequently, the compromises made by China with regard to its territorial dispute with the Central Asian Republics were attributed to a sharp rise in separatist violence in Xinjiang in the early 1990s. On the security front, China knew that the separatist movement in Xinjiang could succeed only through foreign knowhow and assistance to the Uighur separatist groups.

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6. Sudha Ramachandran, "China Plays Long Game on Border Disputes", *Asia Times Online*, January 27, 2011, <http://www.atimes.com/atimes/China/MA27Ad02.html>. Accessed on January 6, 2014.

7. Blank and Kim, n. 1, p. 41.

### *External Determinants*

#### *The Disintegration of the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics*

When the Soviet Union dissolved, the border talks among China, Russia and the Central Asian Republics were only half way through. While the border question regarding the eastern sector of their common border was addressed, the western section of the border was yet to be settled. Apparently, during the period when the Soviet Union was very much there, the approach lacked fast-forwardness. One thing that is clear is that China was not so willing to resolve issues with the erstwhile Soviet Union and it gave preference to other issues instead of settling its long border with the Soviet Union. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the largest land-based threat for the PRC was eliminated. The reason for China's reluctance to settle the border with the USSR was attributed to its approach towards resolving border disputes. Professor Srikanth Kondapalli explains that in the past, China has moved quickly to resolve a dispute if the contestant state has been weak.<sup>8</sup> It can be said that a state with limited military prowess, mindful of the high costs associated with successfully changing the status quo, is unwilling to take such a risk, and tends toward maintaining the prevailing distribution of power.<sup>9</sup> Hence, as regards territorial disputes, to some extent, it would not be wrong to assert that China's selection of policies towards neighbouring states reveals a hardline approach towards countries whose capabilities are either at par with China or not too inferior to those of China and a concessionary approach towards states which are comparatively less powerful. The logic applies well to the China-Central Asia border dispute resolution mechanism.

#### *The Taiwan Issue*

Since the establishment of the PRC, reunification of Taiwan with the Chinese motherland has been China's foremost priority, so much so that Taiwan has been categorised as China's core interest. While Hong Kong and Macau were reintegrated into the PRC in 1997 and

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8. Ramachandran, n. 6.

9. Nie Hongyi, "Explaining Chinese Solutions to Territorial Disputes with Neighbour States", *Chinese Journal of International Politics*, vol. 2, no. 4, 2009, p. 494.



1999 respectively, Taiwan's reunification remains a distant goal for China. Since the establishment of the PRC, the Chinese leadership has tried everything for the reunification of Taiwan — it has even tried to apply the "One Country, Two Systems" formula. Nevertheless, the Taiwan issue remains unresolved.

As soon as the Central Asian Republics were established, the Chinese leadership wasted no time in recognising these new states and established diplomatic relations in the following years. The reason behind such haste was evident. China wanted to prevent these countries from recognising Taiwan. Secondly, before the dissolution of the Soviet Union, China's border on the northwestern and western sides was heavily militarised. Following the break-up of the Soviet Union, diplomatic and military experts representing China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan undertook negotiations on disarmament and confidence building in military affairs in the border region and a common understanding was achieved.<sup>10</sup> The signing of the 1996 and 1997 Treaties paved the path for China to demilitarise its border along the northwestern region. One of the important reasons for China resolving its border disputes in the 1990s was to maintain peace and stability along its northwestern border so that it could shift its focus to Taiwan. Since there was less pressure on the post-Soviet border, it became easy for China to shift troops away from its borders with Central Asia, to focus heavily on Taiwan. As far as the Central Asian states are concerned, China's willingness to resolve its borders with these states and demilitarise its northwestern borders has borne fruit. These countries have accepted Beijing's position that reunification with Taiwan is China's domestic affair. Additionally, these countries, under the purview of the SCO, have supported China's right to reunite with Taiwan.

### **THE US FACTOR**

Though Central Asia has been a backyard of Russia in both pre and post-Soviet eras, since the independence of these states in 1992, China and the US are also gaining prominence in this region. Since the 1990s, China has increasingly been engaging the Central Asian

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10. Xing Guangcheng, "China in Central Asia", in Roy Allinson and Lena Jonson, eds., *Central Asian Security: The New International Context* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 2001), p. 159.

countries under the framework of economic cooperation. China's economic presence in Central Asia has been immense, unlike its military presence, which has been considerably less. The US has a far larger presence in the Central Asian region than China, and this has never been appreciated by China. It would be pertinent to mention here that China has all along criticised American power politics and its hegemonistic behaviour in the world. Even Russia always resisted the US presence so close to the Russian border. While China-Russia relations had not been those of good friends in the post-Soviet era, they had, most of the times, cooperated with each other for the cause of convergent interests. The US military presence and its increased presence has been a major cause of concern for both the countries.

### **REVIVAL OF THE SILK ROAD**

China and Central Asia have old cultural ties and a history and tradition of regional economic cooperation. The ancient Silk Road created close ties between China and the people of Central Asia. According to Eric Tamm, "Silk Road as a misnomer. There was never one road, but rather a network of routes connecting China to the world across the scorching deserts and dusty steppes of Central Asia".<sup>11</sup> The Silk Road was a general name for the ancient strategic transportation channel which started from China and passed through Central Asia, West Asia, Africa and Europe and, in the 19th century, when the term Silk Road was first used by a German geographer, it included just the land road from China's Xinjiang to Central Asia and was later expanded gradually and reached West Asia, Europe and Africa.<sup>12</sup> Facing the new times, these states together have the need, the ability and, indeed, the responsibility to construct a Silk Road of modern times.<sup>13</sup> Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, both China and Central Asia are endeavouring to revive the old Silk Road. At the time of the break-up of the Soviet Union, a new world order and China's newborn western neighbours, with which the PRC had

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11. Eric Enno Tamm, *The Horse that Leaps Through Clouds: A Tale of Espionage, the Silk Road and the Rise of Modern China* (Canada: Perseus Books, 2011), p. 81.

12. For more details on the Ancient Silk Road, see <http://www.china.org.cn/english/MATERIAL/139504.htm>.

13. Guangcheng, n 10, p. 153.

border delimitation discussions, meant it was pivotal to launch and then strengthen cooperation with the new counterparts.<sup>14</sup>

Recently, since the fifth generation leaders assumed leadership responsibilities in China, they have been trying to push for the speedy development of infrastructure along the route. In fact, the initiative has been renamed as "Silk Road Economic Belt" and several South Asian countries have also been invited to be a part of the initiative. Interestingly, with the settlement of its border with the Central Asian countries, China, since the 1990s, began to think about reviving the Silk Road and has become vocal about it in the last few years. This shift in the Chinese policy would not have been possible without resolution of its border disputes with the Central Asian Republics.

The revival of the Silk Road is going to have a far-reaching impact on China's relations with Central Asia. Since the formation of the new Central Asian Republics, Central Asia, being a landlocked region, desires to have robust economic ties with China. Similarly, for the development of Xinjiang which is also a landlocked province of China, cooperation with the Central Asian countries is vital. Being one of the restive regions of China, Xinjiang was in dire need of economic resources. In the 1990s, Central Asia quickly became an important centre of China's economic attention as part of the revival of the "Silk Road" economy in the wake of the Soviet collapse.<sup>15</sup> Central Asia is going to play a major role in the revival of the Silk Road. A large part of the Silk Road passes through Xinjiang. With the intention of reviving this Silk Road, various agreements have been signed to pave the path. This would not have been possible without a settled border between the East Asian and Central Asian regions. As soon as China's border with the Central Asian region was settled, Beijing considered a revival of the Silk Road and mobilised a large group of specialists to study this matter and plan its implementation. In Central Asia, the proposal to revive the Silk Road was greeted with much interest. Another important aspect is that, given that the first step of China's great development of the western area is to build gas and pipelines and other transport installations, revival of the Silk Road is vital. In

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14. Justyna Szczudlik-Tatar, "China's New Silk Road Diplomacy", *PISM Policy Paper*, no. 34, December 2013, p. 2.

15. Hyer, n. 2, p. 89.

fact, it would not be wrong to assert that yesterday's Silk Road has become today's oil and gas road, and tomorrow it will be developed as a win-win cooperation road between Central Asia and China.<sup>16</sup> While China and Central Asia are all for the revival of the Silk Road, there has been a slow progress in this regard. However, whenever it does materialise, Xinjiang can become a channel between the East and the West and a link between East Asia, Central Asia and Eurasia, as well as an important point on the contemporary Silk Road.<sup>17</sup>

## CONCLUSION

By virtue of having an exceptionally high number of neighbours, China has been facing the boundary conundrum for over 60 years now. China's unsettled borders and consequent mutual suspicions with neighbours have spanned centuries in China's history. Seemingly, therefore, Chinese leaders and policy-makers have tended to resort to delay. However, in the modern era, owing to geo-political, economic and strategic compulsions, the PRC has resolved disputes with its neighbours. China has been insistent in inking and implementing the five principles which also explains China's territorial behaviour. Several factors can be accounted for in that regard such as ethnic unrest, border stability, trade, and so on. While unrest in Xinjiang comes under the domestic factor, the Taiwan issue has been a strategic factor in China's overall border policies.

As far as China's border relations with the Central Asian Republics are concerned, the 1990s comprised a decade of challenges and opportunities for both. China-Central Asia relations are wide-ranging with a plethora of convergent interests, but in the 1990s, China's main interests in Central Asia were confined to securing its borders and developing its northwestern region with assistance from neighbouring countries, particularly of Central Asia. Trade became a part of China's broader strategy of securing its border. In fact, China's Central Asia policy is divided into two phases. The first phase (1992-99) was more or less focussed on border security and the second phase (2000 onwards) is about addressing China's energy

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16. Niu Ruji, "Good Neighbourhood and Cross-Border Cooperation between China and Central Asian States", *Northwest Ethnic Minorities Research Centre*, 2010, <http://www.sinoss.net/qikan/uploadfile/2010/1130/9030.pdf>. Accessed on July 25, 2013.

17. Guangcheng, n. 10, p. 185.

demands through Central Asia and fighting terrorism, separatism and extremism multilaterally. Though energy was certainly on China's diplomatic agenda in the 1990s, it was not a priority for the simple fact that China's domestic energy demand began to increase only post-2000. Though Central Asia has become a new hub for China's oil imports, China's energy cooperation with Central Asia had no impact on China's decision to resolve the boundary issue for the simple fact that the situation got altered with the advent of the 21st century.

To sum up, it would be apt to say that in the 1990s, China's primary strategic goal in Central Asia was to maintain stability along its borders so as to secure the Chinese Communist Party leadership. All other goals were secondary. Additionally, the China-Central Asia boundary dispute resolution laid down the foundation of their robust and lasting ties.

# NOT A TILT TO THE US: ONLY INEVITABLE CONTINUITY IN US-INDIA RELATIONS

HINA PANDEY

Commentators on US-India relations passed quick judgement: the Modi-Obama meet was viewed as, “India Non-Aligned No More”. A renowned American daily’s blog stated that India’s Cold War commitment to the Non- Aligned Movement ( NAM) had died years ago but its obituary was written with the Obama-Modi meet. In short, “India has come out of its closet and declared itself as a friend of America.”<sup>1</sup> Sure, President Obama in his town hall speech expressed frankly the possibility for a more robust US-India collaboration. A clear indication of this, is his view that the *US is not only India’s natural partner but can become its best partner*. But does this translate into a signal of landmark change in the Indian foreign policy? Or an unabashed U-turn from the policy of NAM? The answer to both the questions is ‘no’.

Ever since the much debated US-India civilian nuclear cooperation, the bilateral relations have been suffering from a sense of overhype among scholars. Anything trivial in the US-India partnership attracts

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1. Geeta Anand, “Inside India: Non-Aligned No More, India Comes Out — As Friend of US”, *Wall Street Journal Blog*, January, 28, 2015, at <http://blogs.wsj.com/indiarealtime/2015/01/28/non-aligned-no-more-india-comes-out-as-friend-of-u-s/>. Accessed on January 30 2014.

the noise and heat of both proponents and opponents. This is a humdrum reaction, not only in the Indian media, but also globally. Recently, the British media too prematurely opined that “Modi seems to have replaced Cameron as America’s best partner”, in an article published under the thought provoking title, “Modi Eclipses Cameron as Obama’s Buddy”.<sup>2</sup>

Of course, this is one among many interpretations of the US-India watchers. Some views have reduced President Obama’s India visit to nothing more than a symbolic gesture. This also is not entirely true. Indeed, the coming months will tell whether any substantive outcomes will be reaped, as even symbolism has a utility in international politics. In international relations, states cannot always convey meaningful gestures without actions. The symbolism is, thus, a subtle mode to signal the long-term vision on matters of consequence. President Obama’s India visit was indeed symbolic in terms of the meeting of the world’s oldest and largest democracies. India and the US are known to be the representatives of successful working democracies under the backdrop of a diversified social fabric. The narratives of the world’s oldest and largest democracies, thus, are inevitable, especially when the “largest democracy” invites the “oldest democracy” for the celebration of its democratic character on its 66th Republic Day. The narratives are bound to follow because India and the US had remained estranged for years during the Cold War.

Furthermore, to assess the trend in the US-India relations correctly, US-India ties are required to be tested on many issues. India is yet to become a member of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) and the US role in this is considered to be important. Also, India’s entry in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) (including veto rights) is a long road remaining to be travelled together by the two countries.

There is no way the visit by President Obama may be interpreted as India discarding of the principles of NAM. Albeit, polarised, there remains an ongoing debate among the Indian strategic and foreign policy analysts about the degree and feasibility of NAM as a foreign policy commitment. One aspect of NAM retains a unanimous approval,

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2. Antonia Filmer, “Modi Eclipses Cameron as Obama’s Buddy”, *The Sunday Guardian*, February 1, 2015.

which is the need for the Indian foreign policy to continue to function with strategic autonomy in an era of polycentricity. If the foreign policy interactions since the change of government are to be assessed, the aforementioned policy objective appears to be an operative principle.

In the last one year, India has sought to only continue and expand its foreign policy interests. A six-month foreign policy report card of Prime Minister (PM) Modi was prepared by Brahma Chellany , wherein he argued that Modi is focussed on revitalising the country's economic and military security with considerable political capital investment in high-powered diplomacy.<sup>3</sup> US-India relations may be viewed as part of this new foreign policy agenda.

In addition, a perspective from the US could also be useful in assessing the continuity in US-India relations. India figures not as a best friend of the US, but as a component of the traditional balancing of the two major powers that the US faces as adversarial to its global preeminence. The two objectives of this balancing are, obviously, Russia's resurgence; and the rise of China. This assessment of US-India relations can be supported by the recently released American document called the National Security Strategy (NSS)- 2015. President Obama's NSS-2015 is actually a blueprint to understand, how the US is going to respond to the newer foreign policy challenges and advance its own national interests. One of four goals outlined in the NSS-2015 is enhancement of international cooperation in favour of the US by "*strengthening and growing [our] global alliances and partnerships, forging diverse coalitions, and leading at the UN and other multilateral organizations.*"<sup>4</sup> The document also describes the rebalancing to Asia-Pacific through increased diplomacy, stronger alliances and partnerships, expanded trade and investment, and a diverse security posture. The NSS- 2015 has been rightly viewed by a former Indian diplomat as "*bearing an imprimatur of the US President keenly aware of the limits of the US power*".<sup>5</sup>

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3. Brahma Chellany, "Deconstructing the Modi Foreign Policy" *The Hindu*, December 4, 2014.

4. Tanya Somanader "President Obama's National Security Strategy in 2015: Strong and Sustainable American Leadership", *The White House Blog*, at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2015/02/06/president-obamas-national-security-strategy-2015-strong-and-sustainable-american-lea>. Accessed on February 23, 2015.

5. Ajai Shukla, "India Pivotal in Unfolding New Global Relationship", *The Business Standard*, February 7, 2015.



Then how should the recent US presidential visit to India be assessed? President Obama's visit throws light on three important counters of US foreign policy. The three-day visit may be understood well by Obama's Delhi town hall speech.

President Obama intelligently signalled to New Delhi a forthcoming possibility of the two democracies transforming their engagement into more than just a political partners. No labels such as 'friends' and 'close allies' were put forward, as this would have compelled China to take more careful note of the US-India bonhomie. Yet the US' recognition of India's growing national power and its probable impact on international relations too was conveyed. The townhall address suggests that Obama's India visit may be understood as a tacit American gesture of politics on three issues: (a) US-India relations (b) US balancing of the China-Pakistan relations and (c) American multilateralism

#### **US-INDIA RELATIONS: A NEW MOMENT?**

President Obama's referring to a "*new moment*" in US-India relations leads one to ponder over the current status of the bilateral relationship between the two countries. While this rhetoric is assuring of a steady continuity in the relationship between the two countries, an astute assessment is needed. This visit has offered the promise of a range of high end military and sensitive technology to India. The US has also proposed the joint development and production of the Unmanned Combat Aerial Vehicles (UCAVs). Seventeen advanced technologies have been offered under the Defence Technology Trade Initiative (DTTI). One such technology includes the Electromagnetic Aircraft Launch System (EMALS) representing the latest in the American research for the US Navy. However, India has agreed for the production of the RAVEN. Reports suggest that New Delhi is responding with traditional caution to these offers.<sup>6</sup> The US offer to India of a range of fresh military technology is representative of a slight amendment in the US thinking. On the other hand, India too has reciprocated in a subtle way. India had asked its refiners to slash the oil buys from Iran in the months of February- March 2015, to keep

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6. Vishal Thapar, "US Offers India High End Military Technology", *The Sunday Guardian*, January 25, 2015.

the oil imports in line with the previous year's fiscal level. India is the second-largest buyer of Iranian oil: in the current fiscal year, oil imports to India reached 40 per cent over, in the first nine months. This was the time when sanctions were eased on Iran<sup>7</sup>. A steady sale of Iranian oil has the potential to influence the P-5-Iran negotiations as this would provide Iran with some economic relief. One must recognise that both the P-5 and Iran are supposed to finish the political negotiations by the end of March 2015 so that the next round of technical negotiations may begin, to conclude a comprehensive agreement by June 2015. The Indian role appears significant in this context. On the Indian side, this represents a consideration of the effort of the P-5+1 in the nuclear negotiations in which the US has the highest stakes. Of course, this is not a 'new moment' as India had already voted against Iran's nuclear programme at the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), but it is clear that it is a gesture of continuity. A continued effort to remove the irritants in the US-India relations may also be seen in the US' acceptance of India's stand on its nuclear liability law. A seven-year logjam on the law is reported to have been broken. President Obama's meeting with PM Modi has also been seen as conveying of personal warmth between the two. It was said, "*Feelings based proximity of leaders acts as a talisman to channelize hard bargaining between states... Obama-Modi friendship would act as a balm to soothe divergence on concrete issues...*"<sup>8</sup>. The personal chemistry between the two leaders is indeed emblematic of the current state of US-India bilateral ties. Both countries have come to an understanding that they have to dilute their differences in order to forge a continued partnership. The 'new moment' in the US-India ties may be attributed to the fact that both countries are now "*ready to talk to, not at, each other*".<sup>9</sup>

The assurance of continuity of the bilateral ties through renewed defence agreements and ironing out of the nuclear differences on the nuclear liability clause not only reveals a symbolic continuity of US-India ties but also translates much into

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7. Nidhi Verma, "India Asks Refiners to Cut Iran Oil Imports Ahead of Obama Visit: Sources", *The Sunday Guardian*, January 25, 2015.
  8. Sreeram Chaulia, "Barrack and I", *Foreign Pulse, The Asian Age*, January 28, 2015.
  9. C. Raja Mohan, "India-US Ready to Talk to Not at Each Other", *Indian Express*, January 27, 2015.

practice. The very fact that both countries are keen on working on the nuclear question reflects the progressive maturity of both. India too made visible symbolic adjustments by not showcasing its military might through the display of its missile programme. However, a peaceful projection of atomic energy's prowess was put forward as the Department of Atomic Energy's tableau marched down Rajpath at the Republic Day Parade. US-India relations have seen many highs and lows, from Eisenhower's apprehension to Nixon's hatred, and Kennedy's appreciation. President Obama's visit represents both the continuity of US-India ties since the time of President George W. Bush, and, at the same time, a cautious American balancing of interest vs ideas.

#### **CHINA-PAKISTAN BALANCING BY THE US**

It was said that the first 45 minutes of the Obama-Modi meeting were dedicated to discussions on the balancing of China. PM Modi's assessment of China's rise and its strategic impact in the East Asian region surprisingly resembles that of President Obama.<sup>10</sup> However, China reacted sharply to this India-US joint statement on the disputes in the South China Sea by declaring that it is for the involved countries only to work together to resolve the problems.<sup>11</sup>

As expected, Pakistan's opposition to the Indian bid for NSG membership and US support for India's inclusion in the UNSC came immediately. The Pakistani Prime Minister's adviser on national security even stated that the "*move towards political and economic expediencies would have a detrimental impact on the deterrence and stability in South Asia*".<sup>12</sup> India watchers in Pakistan acknowledge the visits by the heads of states, not just of America but of China and Russia in the recent months as a measure of the "*growing strategic importance of India for the three great powers*".<sup>13</sup> The US-India bonhomie is being

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10. Peter Baker and Gardiner Harris, "US and India Share Sense of Unease Over China" *New York Times*, January 26, 2015.

11. Sutirtho Patranobis, "China Reacts Sharply to India-US Statement on South China Sea Dispute" *The Hindustan Times*, Beijing, at <http://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/china-reacts-sharply-to-india-us-statement-on-south-china-sea-dispute/article1-1310840.aspx>. Accessed on January 30, 2015.

12. "Nuclear Deal to Have a Detrimental Impact", *The Asian Age*, January 28, 2015.

13. Majid Mehmud, "India's Global Balancing Act in the Context of Recent Developments", *CISS Analysis*, January 27, 2015, Centre for International Strategic Studies, Pakistan, at [http://ciss.org.pk/pages\\_inner.php?page\\_id=108](http://ciss.org.pk/pages_inner.php?page_id=108). Accessed on January 28, 2015.

viewed as India's alignment with the US, not only for catering to the American interests but also as assistance to India for fulfilling its ambition of becoming a regional hegemon. It is also anticipated in one of the two scenarios that as the developments unfold post the Modi-Obama meet, a complete tilt by India towards the US might become a reality.<sup>14</sup>

There may be similarities in the views of PM Modi and President Obama on China's role in the Asian region, but to label the meet as an alliance against China's political, military and economic clout would be wrong. First, it is not only America or India that is concerned about the implications of China's rise — there is a generic overall apprehension, which emanates from China's assertive foreign policy. Second, if India and the US are compelled to forge strong ties in the backdrop of a rising China, they would be cautious in doing so as this might unsettle the US-India bilateral relationship. Furthermore, the US-India 'open-alliance' might compel Pakistan and China to bolster their ties even further. The possibility of a more robust military relationship cannot be overlooked. This would directly impact stability in the South Asian region. One must not forget that maintenance of stability in the region is of great importance to all three: the US, China and India. Thus, all three players are likely to exercise caution in building 'friendships'. US-India, India-China and US-China, all three share bilateral trade relations and global security concerns: while a balancing is expected from their interactions in international relations, a blatant opposition to one another could be referred to as interpretation of a superfluous quality. Hence, the Modi-Obama meet should be viewed as an inevitable continuity of the US-India strategic partnership, not as a partnership against another country.

Furthermore, one needs to factor in the evolving understanding that has been getting shaped by the Russia, India and China grouping. A few days post the Modi-Obama euphoria, India extracted endorsements from Russia and China for its inclusion in an expanded Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) as well as membership of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO). In fact, India has actually given its consent to the launching of the Free Trade Area

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14. Ibid.

of the Asia-Pacific (FTAAP), which, according to some observers, stands as opposed to<sup>15</sup> Washington's initiative of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) that excludes Beijing. If this is to be assessed as a part of India's current foreign policy goals, it would not be correct to argue that India is only attempting to incorporate the key aspects of NAM, mainly strategic autonomy.

### AMERICAN MULTILATERISM

Near and immediate threats like the Islamic State of Syria (ISIS) have generated the need for the US to ally with many more countries. In the mission to fight Islamic fundamentalism, the obvious partner of the United States in the Asian region is India, a country with secular characteristics embedded in its Constitution. India too is motivated to lean in with the US as it is grappling with the same issue. Recently, India has reluctantly admitted the spread of the ISIS in states such as UP, Assam, West Bengal, Kerala and Maharashtra. Officials now admit that the number of people who have joined the ISIS from India has crossed the four-figure range.<sup>16</sup> A decade-long campaign against the global war on terror has made the US realise the importance of multilateralism. The US foreign policy today will have to answer to newer realities in international politics. While the degree of American decline can be debated, the 'rise of the rest' phenomenon is widely recognised in the recent American strategic behaviour as well. US foreign policy has to function in the realm of polycentricity, and with legitimacy. Military might could be a determinant of victory on the ground, however, the US has realised that an absolute victory is inclusive of material and ideational victory. The US has realised that if it has to sustain its preeminence not just militarily but otherwise, it has to strike a correct balance among the American promotion of soft power, diplomacy and military might.

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15. Atul Aneja, "India Sees RIC Meeting as a Getaway to Eurasia", *The Hindu*, February 3, 2015.

16. Madhav Nalapat, "ISIS Volunteers in India Cross a Thousand", *The Sunday Guardian*, January 25, 2015.

**CONCLUSION: EXPECTATIONS FROM THE US**

Clearly, on the last day of his India visit (January 27, 2015), President Obama managed to convey a subtle message of American power. His Delhi town hall speech reflected a carefully crafted balance of ideas and interests that forms the basis of influence in the American foreign policy. He not only brought greetings and friendship from the United States but also US expectations for India to consider in the structural design of growing US-India ties. The president's speech, indeed, charmed the audience. In a way, the frequent applause by the crowd reflected the public's acknowledgement of the president's world view: one that consisted of the ideals of freedom, especially freedom of religion, equality, education and women's empowerment.

One must recognise that these narratives are not Obama's own but those of America. In fact, these adjectives are descriptive of the characteristics that appear closer to democratic states and institutions. Conveying the world view in the heart and capital of the world's largest democracy is, indeed, symbolic; nevertheless, the message is clear. Obama's town hall speech is significant as it clearly sketched the contours of American foreign policy expectations and objectives towards India.

At the very outset of his speech, Obama expressed the possibility of the US-India partnership becoming the defining relationship of the 21st century. He laid out a strategic canvas of the role that India can or might play as a rising power. By mentioning that the US and India can work closely on the Asia-Pacific or Indo-Pacific, President Obama expressed the US' acknowledgment of India's role in containing China but towards the end left a 'fill in the blanks' for India to figure out its own role by mentioning that only *India can decide its own role in the world*.

# INDIA-ASEAN COOPERATION ON CYBER SECURITY: OPPORTUNITIES, CHALLENGES AND CAPACITY BUILDING

**A K GUPTA**

India's emergence as a powerful economy in the world and its historical acquaintances and links with most of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) members, are central to its relationship and shared positive vibes. In the era of liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation, the synergistic collaboration and shared interest between the two is the pivot to economic prosperity, strategic consideration and social development of the region. India has signed various declarations and treaties with the ASEAN countries to promote free trade, combat terrorism and ensure security in the region. The natural progression to this is ascendance of the ASEAN-India dialogue relations from a sectoral dialogue partnership in 1992 to a full dialogue partnership in December 1995.<sup>1</sup> On November 17, 2014, India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi used the ASEAN Summit in Myanmar's capital Nay Pyi Taw to unveil India's new "Act

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1. "Overview of ASEAN-India Dialogue Relations", at <http://www.asean.org/news/item/overview-of-asean-india-dialogue-relations>. Accessed on January 25, 2015.

East Policy”,<sup>2</sup> aimed at boosting ties with the region and to convince the Southeast Asian counterparts of the precedence accorded by the Indian government in this context. In an attempt to signal a more action-oriented outlook, in contrast to the earlier “Look East Policy (LEP)”, the prime minister laid down the framework for furtherance of ASEAN-India economic relations over the next few years, including building information highways and inviting the ASEAN countries to participate in India’s ongoing economic transformation.

Under the LEP, India has embarked on a mutually supportive, consistent and interdependent partnership with the ASEAN members, pushing for greater regional integration, political and economic consolidation and *exploration of new avenues for cooperation*. As a result, the region is reaping rich dividends due to integrative and supportive interactions in the areas of energy, education, disaster management, tourism and enhancing connectivity. To move forward, *in a collective consensus, India and the ASEAN countries have identified ‘cyber space’ as an entity for proactive and inclusive cooperation*.

Cyber space is today the fifth domain of human activity, in addition to land, sea, air and outer space. The unequivocal dependence on cyber space for social, governance, security, and economic activities poses new challenges. Prompt and unencumbered access to information, transcending international boundaries, empowers individuals, emancipates governments and capacitates businesses. However, the all-pervasive use of the internet and cyber space, with its tentacles encompassing and entwining almost all facets of the world’s commercial, military, social and political activities, has turned cyber space into a potential venue for exploitation by a number of rogue elements and inimical actors. While addressing the summit of the five-nation grouping, BRICS (Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa), at Fortaleza in Brazil in July 2014, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said, “...while cyber space is a source of great opportunity, cyber security has become a major concern. BRICS countries, should take the lead in preserving cyber space, as a global common good.”<sup>3</sup> Though the

2. “ASEAN Summit: PM Narendra Modi’s Look East Policy at Play”, *The Financial Express Times*, November 12, 2014, at <http://www.financialexpress.com/article/economy/asean-summit-pm-narendra-modis-look-east-policy-at-play/7902/>. Accessed on January 25, 2015.
3. “PM Narendra Modi’s Full Statement at BRICS Summit”, *NDTV*, July 15, 2014, at <http://www.ndtv.com/article/india/pm-narendra-modi-s-full-statement-at-brics-summit-559242>. Accessed on January 25, 2015.



address was made at the summit of BRICS, the meaning and *relevance is not lost* in the context of the ASEAN countries.

At the ASEAN Summit in Kuala Lumpur in December 1997, all the members pledged to work towards transforming ASEAN into a stable, prosperous and highly competitive region with equitable economic development and reduced poverty and socio-economic disparities.<sup>4</sup> The collective economic might of ASEAN can be gauged by the fact that if ASEAN were a single country, it would already be the seventh-largest economy in the world, with a combined Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of \$2.4 trillion in 2013. It is projected to rank as the fourth largest economy by 2050. In December 1997, "ASEAN VISION 2020"<sup>5</sup> was released. It was a reaffirmation of the commitment for "establishing a peaceful and stable Southeast Asia where each nation is at peace with itself and where the causes for conflict have been eliminated, through abiding respect for justice and the rule of law and through the strengthening of national and regional resilience". In order to realise the goals as espoused, ASEAN envisions a secure and resilient information infrastructure to sustain the region's economic growth. It is also making concerted efforts to facilitate interconnectivity and interoperability among Information and Communications Technology (ICT) systems by the amalgam of the capabilities of the respective national networks, transforming these into a robust regional information infrastructure. For achieving this, a action framework is being developed, with emphasis on the following:

- Facilitate high-speed connection among all national information infrastructures.
- Step up capacity building, mutual cooperation and training programmes for the national Computer Emergency Response Teams (CERTs), strengthen their capability, capacity, fostering mutual trust, and reinforce the region's cyber security network.
- Encourage stakeholders from the private sector, government, academia, civil society and non-governmental organisations to

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4. "Highlights of the Second Informal ASEAN Summit, Malaysia, 14 - 16 December 1997", <http://www.asean.org/news/item/highlights-of-the-second-informal-asean-summit-malaysia-14-16-december-1997>. Accessed on January 25, 2015.

5. "ASEAN VISION 2020", <http://www.asean.org/news/item/asean-vision-2020>. Accessed on January 25, 2015.

participate in the policy development process, utilisation and development of ICT.

- Strengthen sectoral ICT applications to improve their effectiveness and productivity.
- Deepen the regional policy and regulatory framework to deal with the opportunities.

ASEAN has been at the pole position in the region's efforts to address cyber security challenges. In 2003, the ASEAN telecommunications and Information Technology (IT) ministers adopted the Singapore Declaration with greater stress on the need to harness technological advances in ICT to create digital opportunities and enhance competitiveness<sup>6</sup>. The declaration also reaffirmed commitment on the part of all ASEAN members to establish the ASEAN Information Infrastructure with an aim to promote interoperability, interconnectivity, security and integrity of the cyber system.

However, there is a perceptible and glaring digital divide within ASEAN. In the region, there are pockets and communities which are either out of the gamut of ICT services or have very limited access. In order to bridge the digital divide with enhanced penetration levels within the individual countries and across the region and to leverage ICT resources collectively to achieve greater competitiveness, the ASEAN ICT Master Plan 2015 lays down a definitive roadmap.<sup>7</sup> In the Master Plan, acknowledging ICT as the driver in all aspects of nation building, ASEAN has firmed up its resolve to embrace the future driven by innovation and technology that has propelled the this region into an era of prosperity and economic consolidation over the last decade. The Master Plan embodies the collective desire to deliver four key outcomes.<sup>8</sup>

- **ICT as an Engine of Growth for ASEAN Countries:** ASEAN recognises ICT as one of the key economic sectors as well as an enabler to increase competitiveness for other industry sectors.

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6. ASEAN Statement and Communiqués 2012, "MACTAN CEBU Declaration Connected ASEAN: Enabling Aspirations", <http://www.asean.org/news/asean-statement-communications/item/mactan-cebu-declaration-connected-asean-enabling-aspirations>. Accessed on January 25, 2015.

7. "We're Stronger When we're Connected: ASEAN ICT Master Plan 2015", <http://www.asean.org>. Accessed on January 25, 2015.

8. Ibid.

- **Recognition of ASEAN as a Global ICT Hub:** It will be the collective endeavour to be recognised as a region of high quality ICT infrastructure, skilled manpower and technological innovation.
- **Enhanced Quality of Life for the People of ASEAN:** The people of ASEAN will be provided with the means to be engaged, relevant and informed, by a pervasive adoption of ICT. This will bring in constructive and perceptible changes in the ways people interact socially, earn their livelihood and remain globally relevant.
- **Contribution Towards ASEAN Integration:** Greater collaborative engagement between businesses and citizens through comprehensive and pervasive adoption of ICT will lead to the integration of ASEAN.

The shared vision is driven by six strategic thrusts to deliver these outcomes:<sup>9</sup>

- **Economic Transformation:** Creation of a conducive business environment to provide impetus to trade, investment and entrepreneurship in the ICT sector. It will also be the driving force that transforms other sectors of the economy.
- **People's Empowerment and Engagement:** To enhance the quality of life through affordable and equitable ICT. It also stresses on the need to bring into the folds of the ICT revolution the areas with comparatively low standards of living and limited penetration of mobile and broadband services.
- **Innovation:** To foster a creative, innovative and green ICT sector. It also impresses upon the governments in ASEAN to create the ICT infrastructure to promote creativity and innovation at all levels. By leveraging in-home expertise and core competencies of countries, it is envisioned to establish centres of excellence to augment one another's expertise.
- **Infrastructure Development:** Development of ICT infrastructure to strengthen the provision of services across the whole spectrum of ASEAN communities. The actions envisaged include establishment of an ASEAN broadband corridor, an ASEAN internet exchange network, and development of a common framework for network security.

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9. Ibid.

- **Human Capital Development:** Development of competent and skilled human capital in ICT to sustain the growth of the ICT sector and leverage this growth to transform other sectors. This involves two main thrust areas: ICT training for capacity building and ICT skills certification quality standardisation of ICT talents.
- **Bridging the Digital Divide:** To bring on a common platform of equitable development and adoption of ICT among countries and across the region. ASEAN will also focus on bridging the digital divide by promoting greater adoption of ICT.

In order to develop a thriving and resilient ICT ecosystem, various institutional frameworks, policies and regulations have been developed. More than 78 percent of ASEAN's population is using ICT in various facets of their lives, and ICT services and applications widely used in the developed nations are available across ASEAN. In at least five ASEAN member states, mobile penetration has breached the 100 percent mark, with the other member states rapidly making their way towards that mark.<sup>10</sup> Though the strides made in the ICT field are substantial, the time is not yet ripe for ASEAN to adopt a complacent outlook and to feel smug about it. Over the last decade, ministers, policy makers, regulators and industry have come together to develop the ICT landscape within ASEAN. Whether we deserve to pat ourselves on our backs depends very much on the angle at which we view our achievements. With more than 500 million people calling ASEAN home, many areas of ASEAN still remain isolated from ICT.<sup>11</sup>

Since India's ascendance as a full dialogue partner of ASEAN, the synergistic collaboration fostered between the two has acquired political and security dimensions going beyond the realm of functional cooperation. India has participated in a series of consultative meetings with ASEAN, which include summit and ministerial meetings, and meetings at the experts' level. India has actively and constructively participated through dialogue and cooperation frameworks, such as the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), Post Ministerial Conference (PMC) 10+1, East Asia Summit

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10. Ibid.

11. Ibid.

(EAS), Mekong-Ganga Cooperation and Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multisectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC).<sup>12</sup> India's commitment and shared interest to ensure peace, security, stability and development in Southeast Asia culminated in its accedence to the "Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC)" during the 2nd ASEAN-India Summit in October 2003.<sup>13</sup> ASEAN and India also signed a joint declaration for "Cooperation in Combating International Terrorism", a reaffirmation of collective resolve to step up cooperation in the fight against global terrorism. Though the volume of trade and investment between ASEAN and India is relatively low in comparison with other dialogue partners of ASEAN, both sides are conscious of the economic potential of closer linkages. Additionally, both sides recognise the potential and opportunities for deepening trade, and there is willingness on both sides to negotiate a framework agreement for the establishment of an "ASEAN-India Free Trade Area" (FTA), including an FTA in goods, services and investment. The future fruition of the proposed the "India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway Project" and its extension to Laos and Cambodia will facilitate greater ASEAN-India physical connectivity.<sup>14</sup> The successful culmination of the project will result in extension of the ASEAN highway network with the existing highway system in eastern India. The Indian efforts have been well recognised, appreciated and lauded as a catalyst for accelerating regional integration and enhancing regional dialogue. The "ASEAN-India Partnership for Peace, Progress and Shared Prosperity", which lays down the roadmap for long-term ASEAN-India engagement, was signed in November 2004. In order to give further impetus to ASEAN-India dialogue relations, India has appointed an ambassador to the ASEAN Secretariat at Jakarta. In November 2012, ASEAN and India launched the ASEAN-India Centre in Research and Information System (RIS) for Developing Countries in New Delhi to promote trade, investment, tourism and cultural exchanges.<sup>15</sup>

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12. ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit 2012, "ASEAN-India Partnership for Peace and Shared Prosperity", <http://www.aseanindia.com/summit-2012/>. Accessed on January 15, 2013.

13. n.1.

14. Ibid.

15. Ibid.

A natural corollary of this comprehensive and inclusive engagement is identification of new avenues for more coordinated and *collaborative cooperation*. Recognising India's capabilities in the field, a formal request was made by the ASEAN Secretariat to conduct an "ASEAN-India Conference" to explore new avenues for cooperation in the field of cyber security. Taking cognisance of the request made, and the importance of various issues related to cyber security, the Hon'ble Minister of External Affairs, Smt. Sushma Swaraj, during the 12th ASEAN-India Foreign Ministers' Meeting in August 2014 in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar, agreed for India to host this conference. Consequent to this, the **India-ASEAN Conference on Cyber Security**, under the aegis of RIS, was held in New Delhi on January 19, 2015. The conference was a culmination of the collective desire on the part of the ASEAN countries and India to strengthen 'cyber security' by exploring the possibilities of cooperation and by learning from the experiences of others.

At the conference, the issue of cyber security was central to everyone's speeches, and the speakers dwelled on this subject from the perspective of their expertise and experiences. The field of cyber security encompasses a myriad issues, ranging from cyber warfare and cyber terrorism to cyber espionage, application of cyber laws and critical infrastructure protection. The need of the hour is learn through shared experiences and adopt collaborative measures. During the conference, the focus was on the following issues:

- The exploitation of interconnected cyber space by rogue elements and malicious actors for carrying out identity theft, financial fraud, terrorist activities and stealing of corporate information, under the shroud of anonymity and without attributability.
- The role of state actors to conduct espionage, disrupt critical infrastructure and plant malicious software with nefarious intents.
- Preservation of the core values of liberty and freedom of expression and applicability of the rule of law in cyber space.
- The future of "Internet Governance" and the choice of the ideal model: "multistakeholder" or "multilateral".
- A robust and pragmatic legislative and institutional framework to deal with the challenges to cyber security.

- Bilateral, multilateral and international cooperation to arrest cyber criminal activities having a transnational dimension.
- Protection of interdependent Critical Information Infrastructures (CIIs) riding on, and residing in, cyber space.

India, in its effort to bolster cumulative capability building measures, has established Centres of Excellence in Software Development and Training in all the CLMV countries (i.e. Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Vietnam). India has also established an Information Technology Resource-cum-Study Centre for ASEAN and CLMV countries at the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC), NOIDA, and provides assistance in the development of the IT curriculum and in IT teachers training to CLMV countries.<sup>16</sup> Yet, the potential for future collaboration is immense. Establishment of an institutionalised system for sharing information on cyber security between India and ASEAN will facilitate swift *identification, mitigation and containment* of cyber crimes. The enhanced deterrence quotient by this measure will dissuade potential cyber criminals. A collaborative initiative in fostering highly skilled human resources in the field of cyber space will mutually benefit both India and ASEAN. Both can explore the possibility of undertaking joint Research and Development (R&D) projects to protect and secure cyber space.

Both India and ASEAN, in unison, affirm the requirement of balancing national security imperatives with protecting the privacy of individuals. Both, in their concurring opinion, expounded on the absence of universally agreed, uniformly interpreted and legally enacted rules and regulations governing cyber space. A dimension to cyber attacks has been added by their application as state and non-state tools for achieving strategic objectives or tactical advantages, which fit into the larger geo-political context in the form of asymmetric actions short of military action. While ASEAN and India have taken steps to firm up their cyber security

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16. "Inaugural Address by Secretary (East) at the ASEAN-India Cyber Security Conference in New Delhi", January 19, 2015, at [http://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/24700/Inaugural\\_Address\\_by\\_Secretary\\_East\\_at\\_the\\_ASEANIndia\\_Cyber\\_Security\\_Conference\\_in\\_New\\_Delhi\\_January\\_19\\_2015](http://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/24700/Inaugural_Address_by_Secretary_East_at_the_ASEANIndia_Cyber_Security_Conference_in_New_Delhi_January_19_2015). Accessed on January 25, 2015.

regimes, a strong relationship in this domain is yet to be formalised, even though huge strides have been made in the collaborative agenda on other fronts. In future, bolstered by the “Act East policy”, India and ASEAN will engage more constructively with an institutionalised mechanism in place to rid the region of the scourge of this menace.



# US-NATO DRAWDOWN FROM AFGHANISTAN: CHALLENGES FOR XINJIANG

UDAY DESHWAL

The past few months have seen various conflicting reports in the global media about the purported increase in the presence of the Islamic State (IS) in Afghanistan, including the apparent killing of an Afghan Taliban commander by supposed IS militants in the Charkh province.<sup>1</sup> When juxtaposed with the drawing down of the US-NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation) forces last year, and the imminent withdrawal of the coalition forces by 2016, along with the various terrorist safe havens around the Af-Pak borders, a big question mark appears to loom over the future of the overall stability and security of Afghanistan. The obscure nature of the threat of Afghanistan reemerging as a bastion for global *jihād*, at a time when new forces are at play, is bound to have wider regional implications. It is in this regard that the neighbouring Chinese restive region of Xinjiang, is likely to face spillover effects, adding to the already widespread instability, especially with the increasing intensity of the violence in Xinjiang, as was evident with yet another incident of a

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1. David Sterman (comp.), "ISIS Reportedly Kills Afghan Taliban Commander", The South Asia Daily, *Foreign Policy*, February 2, 2015, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/02/02/isis-reportedly-kills-afghan-taliban-commander-modi-to-visit-china-pakistan-tests-cruise-missile/>. Accessed on February 5, 2015.

bombing in the Hotan prefecture on February 13, 2015, resulting in the death of at least eight people.<sup>2</sup>

### THE CONFLICT IN XINJIANG

Xinjiang, located in the northwestern part of the People's Republic of China (PRC), has been a restive region for over four centuries through the period of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), the Republican era (1912-1949) and since the formation of the PRC in 1949. Over these years, the indigenous and Muslim Uighur people, who form the majority of the population (approximately 10 million) of a region that occupies a sixth of China's total landmass, have developed various socio-economic grievances against the Chinese rule.

Some of the Chinese policies (post-1949) that have diluted the Uighur identity include a massive restructuring of the society in Xinjiang by promoting the migration of the Han Chinese into the region, which has led to a massive transformation of Xinjiang's demographic break-up, from 80-90 percent Uighur and 5-10 percent Han in 1950 to an almost equal (approximately 50 percent each) percentage of the population's break-up today. In terms of ethnic identity, the Chinese policies have severely undermined the Uighur identity, reducing the importance of the Uighur language. One of the examples is how since 2002 at the higher education level, the Xinjiang University has stopped teaching in the Uighur language; apart from that, and in fact, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has issued its own "official" history of the Xinjiang region which has been "emasculated, folklorised, prettified, Hanified...but [which] precludes any hint of opposition in the past or present."<sup>3</sup> The Muslim identity of the Uighurs has also been undermined, with Beijing almost dictating the way the local population must follow their religion, through the issuance of such policies and laws that prohibit children under the age of 18 from practising religion, and banning adults from preaching to them. In addition, the state

2. Michael Forsythe, "Suicide Bomber Kills Up to 8 in Xinjiang, Radio Free Asia Reports", *The New York Times*, February 17, 2015, [http://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/18/world/asia/suicide-bomber-kills-up-to-8-in-xinjiang-radio-free-asia-reports.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/18/world/asia/suicide-bomber-kills-up-to-8-in-xinjiang-radio-free-asia-reports.html?_r=0). Accessed on February 18, 2015.
3. J. Todd Reed and Diana Raschke, *The ETIM: China's Islamic Militants and the Global Terrorist Threat* (Santa Barbara, California: Praeger, 2010), pp. 17-35.

also pre-approves any publication that discusses religion, and all religious professionals live under constant surveillance and state controls. Government informers often attend prayer services, and police drop-ins on gatherings partaking in *iftar* to monitor those who have been observing the fast, are also frequent. Last year (on July 3, 2014), the Chinese government went a step ahead and imposed a ban on all Uighur Muslims fasting during the holy month of *Ramazan*. Economically, while the region has progressed and developed in terms of infrastructure and Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth, the distribution of this development has been uneven (favouring the Han Chinese) and the areas of Xinjiang with a predominantly Uighur population remain among the poorest in the region. Job opportunities and other socio-economic privileges are also mostly reserved for the Han Chinese.<sup>4</sup>

All of these grievances have increasingly stirred up feelings of agitation, discrimination and subjugation among the Uighurs in Xinjiang, as they fear a complete loss of their ethno-religious identities. The events of the Tiananmen Square incident in 1989 and the break-up of the Soviet Union, resulting in the establishment of neighbouring Islamic republics in the region, the likes of Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, etc., led to a renewed sense of nationalism and independence among the Uighurs, as they saw their ethnic Turkic brethren in Central Asia gaining freedom. The majority of the Uighur people only wants the Uighur ethnic identity to remain intact and values the role of Islam in the Uighur way of life. They want to achieve these goals within the construct of the state as long as their grievances are fairly addressed. However, a section of separatists, disgruntled as a result of the Chinese policies, has also emerged: these believe in an armed struggle for the complete independence of "East Turkestan."<sup>5</sup>

#### **LINKAGES OF ETIM TO THE TERRORIST ORGANISATIONS IN AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN**

Along with the Central Asian states, Xinjiang also shares its borders with Afghanistan and Pakistan, the two countries that have become hotbeds of the *jihadi* terrorist agenda over the last two decades. As the

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4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

activities of the Uighur militant groups increased in the 1990s, so did the influence of groups like the Taliban and Al Qaeda in Afghanistan at the same time. Hasan Mehsum, after spending time in Afghanistan and meeting the local Taliban leaders, in fact, established the East Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM) in September 1997 in Pakistan, in a region along the Afghanistan border, and the group is still believed to be running its operations from the Af-Pak border region. The ETIM defines itself as a “group of workers for Islam and the Mujahideen in the cause of Allah in order to liberate Turkistan,” with a goal to “establish an Islamic Caliphate in the light of the Book and the *Sunnah*.”<sup>6</sup>

Ever since then, the ETIM maintained close ties to the Taliban till around 2003, and, at the same time, established relations with Al Qaeda and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), which it maintains till today. In 2005, Abdul Haq, the head of ETIM after Mehsum, was reportedly inducted as a member of Al Qaeda’s ‘Shura Council’. On November 16, 2008, in an incident outlining the close association between the ETIM and Al Qaeda, a self-proclaimed Al Qaeda spokesperson allegedly released a statement declaring the appointment of a certain “Abdul Haq Turkistani” by Bin Laden as the head of two organisations: “Al Qaeda in China” (in particular, Xinjiang) and “Hizbul Islam Li-Turkistan” (Turkistan Islamic Party or TIP, synonymous with the ETIM).<sup>7</sup> Some other sources have claimed that Abdul Haq Turkistani, a.k.a, Abdul Shakoor al-Turkistani, had also previously served as an Al Qaeda commander in Pakistan’s tribal areas, having replaced the Egyptian Saif al-Adel.<sup>8</sup>

Reportedly, since the late 1990s, at least 200-1,000 plus ETIM operatives have received training in the Af-Pak border areas, including camps in Mazar-i-Sharif, Kunduz, Vardak, Kandahar, Herat and other areas in Afghanistan. Al Qaeda has also over time issued statements of solidarity towards the cause of the Uighur Muslims. Records have also hinted that between 1999 and 2001,

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6. Rohan Gunaratna, Arabinda Acharya and Wang Pengxin, *Ethnic Identity and National Conflict in China* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p. 72.
  7. *Ibid.*, pp. 54-58.
  8. Zia ur Rehman, “ETIM’s Presence in Pakistan and China’s Growing Pressure”, *NOREF Report*, Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre, August 2014, p. 2.

Bin Laden and the Taliban may have provided funds amounting to approximately \$300,000 to the ETIM. In addition, Bin Laden apparently asked the ETIM leadership to broaden their area of operation from only Xinjiang to an increased presence in Central Asia, mainly Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. This saw the emergence of an association between the ETIM and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) and the Islamic Jihad Union (IJU). Together, the groups managed to orchestrate attacks against Chinese targets in Central Asia.<sup>9</sup>

Over time, the group has also been involved in closer relations with a number of *jihadi* groups in Pakistan, which has served as a “liaison and logistics hub” for the Uighur groups. Post 2006, a number of ETIM militants along with IMU and IJU members have been known to be seeking refuge in the Mirali region, Ghulam Khan and Miranshah areas of North Waziristan in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), Pakistan. The exact figure is unavailable, but a report citing statistics compiled by Pakistani intelligence agencies suggests that, as of 2013, at least 300-400 ETIM fighters were operating in North Waziristan.<sup>10</sup> Experts and related intelligence have suggested that while the IJU offers protection to the ETIM, the “larger umbrella of protection” for both the IJU and ETIM is provided by the Tehreek-e-Taliban (TTP).<sup>11</sup>

### **IMPLICATIONS FOR XINJIANG AND THE UIGHUR GROUPS POST-DRAWDOWN**

The withdrawal of the US-NATO forces from Afghanistan is likely to pose a serious concern regarding the operation of Uighur militant groups in the areas along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border, as there may be a spike in the movement of ideologies and militants in and out of Xinjiang, with Afghanistan established as a safer “safe haven”. Instability in Afghanistan would also result in an increase in the production of opium and, consequently, an increase in drug trafficking into China through Xinjiang. In fact, the situation has already been worsening in the recent years with the Xinjiang police

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9. Gunaratna, n.6, pp. 54-58.

10. Rehman, n.8, p. 2.

11. Gunaratna, n.6, pp. 61-68.

detecting at least 15 cases related to drug trafficking from Afghanistan in 2010 alone. Another 46 cross-border drug cases were reported in areas around the Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran borders, and around 54 kg of drugs were seized.<sup>12</sup> According to the Chinese academics, Afghanistan poses “the most serious threat from outside”, which has had, and will continue to have, a “strong influence on the security situation in Xinjiang.”<sup>13</sup>

Al Qaeda, having already announced the formation of its regional branch, Al Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS), and in order to establish regional supremacy, aided by its historical ties with the ETIM, thus, could very well involve itself in Xinjiang. At the same time, the Islamic State (IS) has also expressed interest in establishing its presence in Central Asia, and the IMU’s leader, Usmon Ghazi, has sworn allegiance to Baghdadi in September 2014.<sup>14</sup> That comes in the wake of a number of TTP commanders also having pledged allegiance to the IS. Thus, with Al Qaeda, TTP and IMU and, consequently, the IS, all having ties to the ETIM, Xinjiang may well be susceptible to coming under the influence of a number of these actors.

Hence, the Xinjiang issue vis-à-vis the impending departure of the coalition forces from Afghanistan, is of great concern to Beijing. This is indicated in China’s insistence on including the issue as part of its bilateral security arrangements with both Pakistan and the United States. A document describing China-Pakistan bilateral relations states, “Pakistan firmly supports China’s position on Xinjiang”, despite the fact that the Uighur population is Muslim and Pakistan is an Islamic republic. A corresponding US-China document describes the Xinjiang conflict as a “prominent issue” in US-China bilateral relations.<sup>15</sup>

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12. “Police in Xinjiang Focused on Anti-Drug Trafficking from the Golden Triangle”, *Chiangrai Times*, March 10, 2013, <http://www.chiangraitimes.com/police-in-xinjiang-focused-on-anti-drug-trafficking-from-the-golden-triangle.html>. Accessed on February 20, 2015.

13. Zhao Huasheng, “China and Afghanistan: China’s Interests, Stances and Perspectives”, *A Report of the CSIS Russia and Eurasia Program*, Centre for Strategic and International Studies, March 2012, pp. 11-12.

14. Shawn Snow, “ISIS Looks for a Foothold in Central Asia”, *The Diplomat*, January 18, 2015, <http://thediplomat.com/2015/01/isis-looks-for-foothold-in-central-asia/>. Accessed on January 29, 2015.

15. Rajan Menon, “When America Leaves Asia After the Afghan War”, *The American Interest*, vol. 7, no. 5, April 5, 2013, <http://www.the-american-interest.com/2012/04/05/when-america-leaves-asia-after-the-afghan-war/>. Accessed on January 30, 2015.

### *Role of the United States*

Many peaceful and political Uighur advocates have been seeking the US' support on the lines of the "Free Tibet Movement", appealing to the United States' stated commitment to the concepts of freedom, equality and human rights. However, apart from the granting of asylum to Uighur leader Rabiya Kadeer, the issue hasn't found many takers in the US, and Washington has been careful about choosing sides over the ETIM issue. The US State Department did not hesitate to put the ETIM on its list of "Specially Designated Terrorist" groups, and, at the same time, has maintained a "measure of neutrality towards the Uighur conflict in Xinjiang."<sup>16</sup> A possible reason for this lack of publicity towards the Uighur cause, in comparison to the Tibetan cause, could be the Islamic fervour around the issue and the region. In addition, the initiation of a facet of the US-China partnership through a convergence on Islamist terrorism issues is also a possible factor that has prevented more vocal US support, post-9/11, towards the Uighur cause. So, there is some scope for an increased US role in this issue, and also through a more active role in Xinjiang, the US can maintain a presence in the region even post the Afghanistan drawdown, due to the region's close proximity to both Pakistan and Afghanistan.

### *Role of Pakistan*

With the recent attacks in Peshawar, China should also put pressure on Pakistan to intensify its military campaigns against the various terrorist groups operating out of North and South Waziristan, and, consequently, also specifically target all the areas and camps from where the ETIM is suspected to be operating. China's urgent insistence on firm and absolute action on the part of Pakistan, can be attributed to a November 2014 threat issued by an offshoot of the Pakistani Taliban, the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan Jamaat-ul Ahrar, which warned Beijing "to stop killing Uighurs" and held out the threat of Mujahideen attacks if it didn't change its anti-Muslim policies.<sup>17</sup>

16. Malik Ayub Sumbal, "How the ETIM Enigma Haunts Pakistan-China Relations", *The Diplomat*, May 22, 2013, <http://thediplomat.com/2013/05/how-the-etim-enigma-haunts-pakistan-china-relations/>. Accessed on February 17, 2015.

17. Bethany Matta, "China to Neighbours: Send us Your Uighurs", *Al Jazeera*, February 18, 2015, <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2015/02/china-neighbours-send-uighurs-150217103722697.html>. Accessed on February 19, 2015.

In addition, the Chinese investment and interests in Pakistan, along with the the Pakistani diplomatic and military dependency on China, enable China to dictate terms, and, thereby, push Pakistan towards adopting more robustness in its anti-insurgency and anti-terrorism campaigns in Waziristan and other parts of Pakistan. In the past, the Pakistan Army had killed the then ETIM leader, Hasan Mehsum, in 2003, and Islamabad has from time to time handed over a number of Uighur rebels and innocent refugees to Beijing. Thus, there is definite scope for a larger role for Pakistan in the case of Xinjiang, which China should look to exploit.

### THE WAY FORWARD

As has been pointed out earlier, the majority of the population in Xinjiang does not aspire for an armed struggle for independence, hence, curtailing the influx of extremist ideologies into Xinjiang might not be impossible. Dru Gladney, an anthropologist who studies ethnic identities in China, points out that even the handful of Uighurs who have reportedly gone and joined the IS in Iraq, were more likely to have done so out of their “resentment to China” and to get militant training to fight the state and to probably establish an independent “East Turkestan”, rather than their proclivity towards the “aims of global *jihad*” and interest in “creating a global caliphate.”<sup>18</sup>

Thus, the onus lies with the Chinese government, that must distinguish between the radical separatist elements and the common, disgruntled Uighurs, and roll back its military and colonial control of Xinjiang, along with a prompt and fair redressal of the Uighur population’s social, religious and economic grievances. Failure to do so and continuation of coercive armed law enforcement tactics will only make matters worse, and, consequently, even enable the militants and other radicalised nationalists to very easily tap such negative sentiments to both validate their actions and to recruit supporters for their agenda. In fact, it can even be said that the violent and extreme nature of the security crackdown conducted by the Chinese forces since the early 1990s, has forced the marginally

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18. Justine Drennan, “Is China Making Its Own Terrorism Problem Worse?”, *Foreign Policy*, February 9, 2015, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/02/09/is-china-making-its-own-terrorism-problem-worse-uighurs-islamic-state/>. Accessed on February 18, 2015.



radical Uighur separatists to exile themselves into highly volatile neighbouring countries such as Pakistan and Afghanistan, where they became easy targets for religious indoctrination and come under the influence of the global *jihadi* agenda, with exposure to organisations like Al Qaeda and the Taliban.

The Chinese government's paranoia has led it to react hastily and harshly to even small expressions of Islamic culture and individualism, which have been misconstrued as "separatist" sentiments, and, thus, there is a clear need for an overhaul of the Chinese policies in Xinjiang with a need to focus on impartial and rational standards of dealing with the populace, and separating the "people" from the "problem" to ensure more integrative solutions towards allaying the Uighurs' fears of losing their ethno-religious identity. In fact, it would only be appropriate on China's part to assure the Uighurs' claims and rights, being a country that has ratified the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, Article 1 of which states, "All peoples have the right to self-determination... freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social, and cultural development."<sup>19</sup>

In addition, the continuation and further expansion of the Chinese economic development strategy in Afghanistan is also likely to directly aid the process of ensuring greater stability in Afghanistan and, consequently, lowering the possibility of the earlier discussed spillover effects into Xinjiang.

Thus, the resurgence of radical elements in the Afghanistan-Pakistan border areas along with the possible entry of the Islamic State, and the extended and direct relation of the influence of these elements on the increasingly violent nature of the conflict in Xinjiang, comprise a cause for concern for both China and the other states in the region, including India. The only way to keep this in check and prevent a snowballing of the Uighur grievances owing to the Chinese policies, aided by the promulgation of radical influences in the region, is through the adoption of a moderate and more inclusive approach to managing the Uighurs in Xinjiang on the part of Beijing, and ensuring their social, religious, economic and political security.

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19. UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*, January 3, 1976, <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/cescr.htm>. Accessed on February 15, 2015.

# INDIAN PRINT AND TELEVISION MEDIA LANDSCAPE: AN OVERVIEW

**KRITI SINGH**

Google 'India as a superpower' and there will be more than 43,80,000 results in 0.25 seconds, flooded with countless articles, opinions, media reports, highlighting India as a superpower in the making. Equally interesting is the range of reasons, calculations, predictions, anticipation and criticism on the same topic. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that India has been able to carve a prominent place for itself in almost all the major international platforms. Its multi-dimensional development, despite its multitude of challenges emanating from a multiplicity of ethnicities, languages, cultures, demography, etc., has made the country unique in itself. One such dimension where India has made continuous progress is the media industry, which is the subject of this paper.

Indeed, the Indian media landscape has optimistically evolved in the last six decades. It has continuously endeavoured to keep itself abreast with the fast paced technological advances, diverse media consumption patterns, competitive markets, challenging economy, dynamic globalisation and various emerging patterns in mass communications. The journey of the Indian media, at the dawn of independence, began with a modest print and radio media and then

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to the coming of television after a decade. Thereafter, the opening of the Indian economy during the last decade of the 20th century changed the very dynamics of the Indian media landscape. And, today, we see a robust media industry which according to the CII-PwC (Confederation of Indian Industry-Pricewaterhouse Coopers) 2013 report is “expected to grow at an annual average growth rate of 18% to touch Rs. 2,245 bn by 2017.”

Along with the tremendous economic growth, the Indian media has also played a significant and indispensable role in the country’s history: from awakening of the youth and mobilising them for the cause of freedom during the pre-independence days to informing the masses, and for education, entertainment, forming public opinion, etc. post independence. Being the media of the world’s largest democracy comes with numerous challenges, however, and it is a miracle to see how the Indian media has grown and flourished despite various odds.

This paper is a modest attempt to cover these aforesaid dimensions. In a bid to capture the very essence of the Indian media landscape, this paper presents an overview of this in terms of two broad categories viz. print media and television media.

## **INDIAN MEDIA LANDSCAPE**

The speedy advancement of the Indian media highlights the unique diversity of the country — many languages, many cultures, sharing the same spaces. And this diversity is also reflected in the kinds of media as well as media consumption patterns of the country. The second main trigger for the landmark transformation of the Indian media has been the rapid liberalisation, deregulation, and easing of rules towards multinational companies, in the 1990s. It was the “onslaught from the skies” that radically changed the Indian media with the arrival of international satellite-distributed television.<sup>1</sup> Keeping pace with the changing times, India was able to change its image from that of a poverty-stricken country to an emerging superpower. When Reliance Communication quietly acquired 50 percent distribution rights to DreamWorks SKG, an iconic movie studio started by three

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1. Shakuntala Rao, “‘Chindia’ and Global Communication: Two Media and Journalism in Transition and What it Means for the Rest of us,” <http://web.mit.edu/commforum/mit7/papers/MIT7PaperRao.pdf>. Accessed on June 10, 2014.

famous faces in Hollywood, Steven Spielberg, David Geffen, and Jeffrey Katzenberg, India not only emerged as a regional media giant but as a global media powerhouse.<sup>2</sup> In recent times, with mandatory digitalisation occurring as per the government decision, the Indian landscape is heading towards complete digitalisation.<sup>3</sup>

### **CHARACTERISTICS OF INDIAN MEDIA LANDSCAPE**

- The Indian media works under the parliamentary democracy set-up.
- Most of the media is privately owned.
- There is cross-media ownership, which according to the oxford dictionary is, “When an organisation owns more than one type of media company, for example, a newspaper and a television station.”
- According to the Freedom in the World 2014, India scores 2.5 (1= Best, 7=Worst) for freedom rating.
- Presently, a majority of media platforms — be it print, or electronic — is heading towards digitalisation in order to increase reach and quality.
- It is very dynamic and alternating at a very high speed.
- There is a highly complex, fragmented and competitive media market.
- Equally diverse, complex and fragmented is the Indian media consumption pattern.

### **MIGHT OF INDIAN MEDIA INDUSTRY**

According to the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) and Klynveld Peat Marwick Goerdeler (KPMG) 2013 report, “The Indian media and entertainment industry grew from INR 728 billion in 2011 to INR 820 billion in 2012, registering an overall growth of 12.6 percent.”<sup>4</sup> The same trend has been witnessed in the

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2. Ibid.

3. Digitisation is a process which converts information into the digital format. In this format, information is organised into discrete units of data (called bits) that can be separately addressed (usually in multiple-bit groups called bytes). Digitisation helps to preserve the data for long-term use.

4. Press Release, FICCI-KPMG Report 2013, <https://www.kpmg.com/IN/en/Press%20Release/FICCI-KPMG%20Press%20Release.pdf>. Assessed on June 20, 2014.

current year. The latest report, released in March 2014, titled “Economic Contribution of the Indian Motion Picture and Television Industry”, by the leading financial services firm, Deloitte, says, “The Indian motion picture and television industry is one of the largest and fastest growing sectors, contributing USD 8.1 billion (c. INR 50,000 Cr.) to the country’s economy, equating to 0.5% of GDP, in 2013.” The sector also supports a significant 1.8 million (18.8 lakh) jobs.<sup>5</sup> These facts and figures display the might of the Indian media industry (see Table 1).

## INDIAN PRINT MEDIA

### *Key Features*

The Indian print media has been able to keep pace with the changing times. From movable type, to offset printing to digital printing, Indian newspapers have maintained their position as a persuasive medium of the Indian media landscape. The impact of newspapers is second only to that of television. The main objective of newspapers before independence revolved around the freedom struggle and to mobilise the Indian masses, especially the youth, to join the cause. Post-independence, the press in India has maintained a steady growth. Post-liberalisation, the Indian press has transformed itself. The pre-independence mentality “to publish for the nation and causes related to the nation” transformed into the “money making market.” Presently, regional language newspapers have the highest level of circulation, though English language newspapers still dominate the nation-wide circulation figures. According to the KPMG analysis (2013), “Contrary to the prevailing trends in global print media, where there is intense competition from digital media, the print sector in India is showing a strong upsurge.”<sup>6</sup> The print media is still considered a dependable platform by advertisers.

### *Historical Snapshot*

- 1556: Printing technology was introduced in India.
- 1780: First newspaper *Calcutta General Advertiser* or the *Hicky’s Bengal Gazette* was printed.

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5. “FICCI FRAMES 2014: Indian Media Industry Contributes 0.5% Of GDP,” *IndiaTimes*, March 13, 2014. Assessed on June 24, 2014.

6. n.4.

Table 1: Overall Industry Size and Projection

Overall industry size (INR billion) (For calendar years)	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	Growth in 2012 over 2011	2013P	2014P	2015P	2016P	2017P	CAGR (2012-2017)
TV	211.0	241.0	257.0	297.0	329.0	370.1	12.5%	419.9	501.4	607.4	725.0	847.6	18.0%
Print	160.0	172.0	175.2	192.9	208.8	224.1	7.3 %	241.1	261.4	285.6	311.2	340.2	8.7%
Films	92.7	104.4	89.3	83.3	92.9	112.4	21.0%	122.4	138.3	153.6	171.7	193.3	11.5%
Radio	7.4	8.4	8.3	10.0	11.5	12.7	10.4%	14.0	15.4	18.7	22.7	27.4	16.6%
Music	7.4	7.4	7.8	8.6	9.0	10.6	18.1%	11.6	13.1	15.3	18.3	22.5	16.2%
OOH	14.0	16.1	13.7	16.5	17.8	18.2	2.4%	19.3	21.1	23.0	25.0	27.3	8.4%
Animation and VFX	14.0	17.5	20.1	23.6	31.0	35.3	13.9%	40.6	46.9	54.2	63.1	73.5	15.8%

Source: Press Release, FICCI-KPMG Report 2013, <https://www.kpmg.com/IN/en/Press%20Release/FICCI-KPMG%20Press%20Release.pdf>. Assessed on June 20, 2014.

- 1820: First Indian owned newspaper *Sambad Kaumud*, by the social reformer Ram Mohan Roy, was printed in the Bengali language.
- 1888: South India's most prominent *The Malayala Manoramam* weekly was launched.
- 1780- 1947: More than 120 newspapers were published in English and regional languages.
- 1919: Press Information Bureau (PIB) was formed.
- 1952-54: First Press Commission of India, was established under the chairmanship of Justice J. S. Rajadhyaksha.
- 1966: The Press Council of India was established in order to regulate the press.
- 1974: First National Readership Survey began with a sample population size of 50,000 urban readers.
- 1978: Second Press Commission of India was formed.
- 1960- 70: There was tight government control, high costing of printing due to imported printing machines, high investment in procuring new technologies and censorship.
- 1977: Post the emergency, Indian newspapers witnessed a transformation due to the scrapping of anti-press laws, increasing literacy rate, advancement in printing and communication technologies and the emergence of capitalism.
- 1980: The Media Advisory Committee was formed to make recommendations regarding the working of media organisations, including the print media.
- 1990's: Expansion of the print media during the post liberation era was witnessed. Import became easier; the press was taken over by a business mentality.
- 1995: Satellite TV changed the concept of the print media in terms of timeliness of news; therefore, news expanded itself in terms of 'edition, product, revenues and size'.
- 1997: There was a decline in advertisement revenue in the print media due to the increased dominance of television. Emergence of local newspapers was witnessed.
- 2002: The government approved 26 percent of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the Indian print media but with a lot of restrictions.

- 2003: First big investment deal worth Rs 1 billion in the print industry was finalised between Henderson Asia-Pacific Equity Partners and HT Media.

### *Recent Past*

- 2013: India's first digital newspaper – E Newspaper of India was launched by the BAG Network. The E Newspaper of India is a unique product meant exclusively and specifically for the digital consumer who is constantly on the move. It is the only newspaper in India that is brought out multiple times in the day – at 1 pm, 7.30 pm and 00.30 am.<sup>7</sup>
- According to the KPMG analysis (2013), "The calendar year 2013 saw the print industry in India grow by 8.5 % from Rs 224 billion in 2012 to Rs 243 billion."
- The magazine division of the print media generated business of Rs 14 billion.
- During the year 2013, newspapers brought the maximum share of revenue into the print media, an estimated 94.4 percent.
- English dailies continued to witness subdued growth in comparison to the overall industry growth, and regional and vernacular markets performed exceedingly well on the back of low media penetration, high population growth and rising income and literacy levels. Hence, Hindi largely drove the growth of the overall print industry and the vernacular print markets. The Hindi print market grew by 10.5 percent from Rs 68 billion in 2012 to Rs 75 billion in 2013 and vernacular grew by 10 percent from Rs 69 billion in 2012 to Rs 76 billion in 2013.<sup>8</sup>
- There was an increase in online news consumption.
- The 'White Print magazine', the first magazine for the visually impaired was launched in India.
- Newspaper vending machines were introduced in ten cities across Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand and Uttarakhand.

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7. "BAG Network Launches India's First Digital Newspaper," *New24Online*, April 18, 2013. [http://news24online.com/bag-network-launches-indias-first-digital-newspaper\\_LatestNews24\\_16962.aspx](http://news24online.com/bag-network-launches-indias-first-digital-newspaper_LatestNews24_16962.aspx). Accessed on June 19, 2014.

8. FICCI-KPMG, "The Stage is Set: Indian Media and Entertainment Industry Report 2014" (Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry and KPMG: 2014), p.51.



### *Present*

- The current print media environment is progressive despite many challenges.
- Advertisement remains the main source of revenue generation in the print media.
- The main challenges before the print media, like for other media, are the slowdown in the economy, tight controls on operational costs and keeping pace with the growing readership demands.
- Publishers are trying to incorporate innovative strategies to get hold of advertisers' attention and also to keep the readers satisfied.
- The year 2014 saw a lot of money invested in the print media, in addition to other forms of media, during the general elections. Political parties spent billions of rupees on their media campaigns.

### *Future*

According to the KPMG analysis (2013), "The print industry is expected to grow at a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 9 percent or 2013-18, as against an estimated 8.7 percent expected last year." Digitalisation is expected to change the way a publication house works. However, the real influence of digitalisation will take time to be felt in the Indian print media. In order to generate greater revenues, in the future, more newspaper-enabled applications will come into play. According to the Deloitte prediction (2014), growth in new newspaper publication is estimated at around 6 percent every year. Besides, the trends also indicate a decline in magazine readership which will force publishers to plan innovative strategies to keep the readers' interest. In terms of investment, digital printing is expected to be one of the choices of the investors. The future trends also indicate a positive time ahead for the digital technology vendors and also for the technology users. The long-term growth in the sector looks promising, with industry players witnessing strong growth and a possible future demand in the regional market.<sup>9</sup> Due to greater penetration of digital technologies, the newspaper readership will

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9. Ibid., p.55.

also increase. In addition to this, more expansion is expected in the regional print media. Compared to the English language press, a greater boost is expected in the vernacular and Hindi press.

## INDIA TELEVISION MEDIA LANDSCAPE

### *Key Features*

Television is one of the most popular mediums of entertainment. According to the global Deloitte study on “Media Democracy” in 2010, which was done with 2,000 respondents, Indian TV “dominates the Indian Media & Entertainment landscape as the preferred choice of entertainment.” After the US and China, Indian television households comprise the third largest number in the world. India has approximately 71 million Cable and Satellite (C&S) households. The television industry in India is estimated at Rs 417 billion in 2013, and is expected to grow at a CAGR of 16 per cent over 2013-18, to reach Rs 885 billion in 2018.<sup>10</sup> The digital penetration of Indian television is around 36 percent. From the content perspective, Indian television is very disorganised. Hindi and regional General Entertainment Channels (GECs) continue to be the key drivers of television viewership, accounting for 48 per cent of total viewership in 2013.<sup>11</sup>

### *Historical Snapshot*

- September 15, 1959: First official launch of Indian Television, christened *Doordarshan*, under All India Radio (AIR)
- 1975-76: **Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE) Project:** The Department of Atomic Energy of the Government of India entered into an agreement in 1975 with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) of the USA to conduct jointly a Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE) with a view to provide informal education to the rural population of India through an intimate medium of communication. Accordingly, the SITE programme was launched on August 1, 1975. The stakeholders were NASA, Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and All-

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10. Ibid., p.11.

11. Ibid.

India Radio (AIR). The SITE programme was introduced in 2,400 villages in 20 districts of Rajasthan, Bihar, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka.<sup>12</sup> For the first time in the history of Indian television, TV was used for education, instructional and entertainment purposes.

- 1976: Doordarshan (DD) broke away from All India Radio (AIR) and became a separate entity.
- 1982: First national telecast was done (coverage of the 9th Asian Games).
- 1982: First colour TV was introduced.
- 1983: Expansion of DD began and by the end of the decade, DD covered approximately 75 percent of India.
- 1997: Formation of an autonomous statutory body known as *Prasar Bharti* took place with the intention to bring DD and AIR out of government control / influence.
- 1990: DD lost its monopoly with the arrival of private channels. The country witnessed the first cable television network explosion.
- 1990: Satellite Television of Asian Region (STAR) from Hong Kong and ZEE TV from India agreed to launch the first Hindi satellite channel; however, the agreement could not materialise.
- 1995: The Supreme Court broke the monopoly of the Indian government on airwaves. This was followed by the emergence of various regional channels like SUN TV. Subsequently, international channels like British Broadcasting Cooperation (BBC), Cable News Network (CNN) and Discovery entered the Indian media scene.
- 1997: In a bid to regulate private service providers and create a “fair and transparent policy environment”, the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) was established under the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India Act.

### *Recent Past*

- 2001-03: International channels like Home Box Office (HBO), History Channel, Disney, VH1, etc. entered the Indian television landscape.

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12. “Evaluation Report on Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE) – 1981,” Planning Commission of India, January 1, 1981, <http://planningcommission.nic.in/reports/peoreport/cmpdmpeo/volume2/erosi.pdf>. Accessed July 10, 2014.

- 2002: The Cable Act 1995 was amended to mandate that millions of customers could select and pay for channels of their choice without being forced to pay for a package of unwanted channels.<sup>13</sup>
- 2003: There was drastic growth in news channels.
- 2003 (September): Conditional Access System (CAS) cable TV services were started in Chennai. CAS gave the consumer a choice over the pay channels beamed into his home.<sup>14</sup>
- 2003 (December): The Delhi High Court upheld the introduction of CAS, saying it was in the interest of a vast multitude of customers but ordered the appointment of a regulator to oversee the sector.<sup>15</sup>
- 2004 (January): The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) was made the broadcast and cable regulator by the government.<sup>16</sup>
- 2006: The process of implementing CAS was reinitiated with lot of hiccups.
- 2009: The government gave approval for the Headend-In-The-Sky (HITS) technology. HITS is a digital delivery mode of distribution of TV channels which would speed up the process of digitalisation of cable services located in non-CAS areas of the country.<sup>17</sup>
- 2010: In August 2010, TRAI recommended to the government to complete Digitisation with Addressability (DAS) by December 2013, in a phased manner.<sup>18</sup>
- 2011: The Lok Sabha passed a Bill to make digitisation of cable television mandatory in India, starting with the top metros, on / or before June 30, 2012, and pan-India by 2014.<sup>19</sup>

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13. Ravi Mansukhani, "Indian Cable Industry - Analog to CAS to DAS," Broadcast and Cablesat, <http://www.broadcastandcablesat.co.in/indian-cable-industry-analog-to-cas-to-das.html>. Accessed on August 20, 2014.

14. A conditional access system usually has two packages bundled together. One, the basic free-to-air channels and the second, pay channels which are chosen by the consumer. A set-top box is installed at the consumer's end. This set-top box is configured to receive pre-determined signals from the cable operator's end. The set-top boxes have an additional cost that may be shared by the cable operator and consumer.

15. Manusukhani, n.13.

16. Ibid.

17. "Headend in the Sky (HITS)," Press Information Bureau. November 12, 2009, <http://www.pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx?relid=54034>. Accessed on June 26, 2014.

18. Manusukhani, n.13.

19. "Cable TV Digitisation: Top 10 Facts," *NDTV*, April 30, 2012, <http://www.ndtv.com/article/india/cable-tv-digitisation-top-10-facts-204388>. Accessed on August 20, 2014.

### *Present*

- In 2013, the television industry continued its journey down the game-changing path that it had embarked on in 2012. The television industry experienced an unpredictable operating environment in 2013 with digitisation of cable achieving various levels of success in different regions.<sup>20</sup>
- 2014: The Information and Broadcasting Ministry deferred the timelines proposed by TRAI and pushed the proposed sunset date for analog cable distribution from December 2013 to March 2015.<sup>21</sup>
- 2014 (August): According to media reports, the Information and Broadcasting (I&B) Ministry is considering extending the deadline for Phase III of digitisation to December 2015 and the deadline for Phase IV, under which the entire country would be covered, to December 2016. The main reason stated behind the extension is to allow more time to domestic manufacturers of Set Top Boxes (STB) to meet the demands of digitisation of cable television systems.<sup>22</sup>

### *Future Trends*

The future trends indicate that the television industry will continue to march towards complete digitalisation in a planned manner as per TRAI's recommendation. The shift from analog cable technology to digital technology is inevitable. More value added services like, videos on demand, gaming, internet surfing, etc., along with television viewing will be provided to the customers. Better addressability and increase in subscription revenues for Multi-System Operators (MSOs) and broadcasters are expected to happen over the next three years.<sup>23</sup> In terms of production, advancement in digital production and post-production technologies are expected. The trends also indicate that

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20. n.8. p.10.

21. "Digitization of Cable TV Systems," Broadcast and Cablesat, January 1, 2014, <http://www.broadcastandcablesat.co.in/digitization-of-cable-tv-systems.html>. Accessed on August 22, 2014.

22. "Government Considering Extending Deadline of Digitization Drive", *Livemint*, August 23, 2014, <http://www.livemint.com/Politics/zCtU1qfNLgfmYfYJt09PL/Government-considering-extending-deadline-of-digitization-dr.html>. Accessed on August 24, 2014.

23. n.8. p.11.

a significant role for corporate houses is expected in the process of digitalisation. The HITS services will help in increasing the penetration of the cable market further into rural areas where it has been absent and will also help in further reduction of prices of set top boxes, while leading to a further consolidation of the cable market.<sup>24</sup> Digitalisation will make the Indian television industry an attractive destination for investors. The centralisation of the digital infrastructure system is also expected. From the government's perspective, one can expect greater transparency in government policies. From the consumers' perspective, the viewers will be getting a better quality digital experience at an affordable price. TV viewing will be based on the viewers' choice and demand. Moreover, according to the Celestial Tiger Entertainment's Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Todd Miller, "Multi-screen content viewing would become fundamental in India in the next ten to fifteen years." The trends also indicate that in the future, there will be more buyers for Direct to Home (DTH) and CAS services. In terms of the future growth rate, as per the report released by FICCI and KPMG in 2011, the television industry is expected to grow at a compound annual growth rate of over 15 per cent till 2015.

## CONCLUSION

The future prospects of the Indian media depend on various factors. Firstly, the economic robustness of country will be a determining factor in the future. Economists expect the growth of the Indian economy to be 6-7 percent in the long-term. The increase in the buying capacity of the Indian consumer will definitely bring in more money to the media industry. Secondly, the demographical variation and distribution, accompanied with increase in buying capabilities, will open new avenues in media related products and services. Thirdly, new distribution systems like DTH, CAS and high paced digitalisation will change the viewers' experience, and lead to an increase in subscription revenue. Fourthly, keeping pace with the increase in digital platforms, there will be more money in the industry.

The diversity of Indian culture is mirror in the Indian media landscape also. An understanding of the media landscape helps us

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24. n.17.

to plan the media strategies better to get the desired results. The prominent example is the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) election campaign in the recent past. The future of the Indian media industry is indeed promising. Increasing proliferation of digital platforms, the rapid rise of internet usage, high penetration of smart phones, digital advertising, wireless broadband, digital content consumption and regulatory interventions<sup>25</sup> have made the Indian media landscape more dynamic than ever, bringing a range of new opportunities to connect with the general masses. There is endless optimism about the role India will play in the future of content creation and distribution.<sup>26</sup> The paper was an attempt to provide an overview of the Indian media landscape for a better understanding of and engagement with, different media and also to connect India's media landscape, modest past, rich present and a promising future.

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25. "India Entertainment and Media Outlook 2013," PricewaterhouseCoopers, <http://www.pwc.in/india-entertainment-media-outlook/index.jhtml>. Accessed on August 25, 2014.
26. "The New New Media: Global Lessons on the Future of Media, Content, and Messaging," IBM. [http://www.ibm.com/ru/gio/pdf/gio\\_media\\_and\\_content\\_report\\_final.pdf](http://www.ibm.com/ru/gio/pdf/gio_media_and_content_report_final.pdf). Accessed on August 25, 2014.

# AGENDA 'SOMEWHAT' SET FOR THE NPT REVIEW CONFERENCE, 2015

**MANISHA CHAURASIYA**

The conclusion of the 2014 Preparatory Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) at the United Nations Office (UNO) in New York marked an end to the three mandatory Preparatory Committees (Prep-Com) before a Review Conference (Rev-Con). Perceptibly, the process hasn't moved remarkably from uncertainty and confusion towards any clear-cut and relevant agenda. The long and tiring process witnessed clashes of opinion, pessimism, cleavages between the Nuclear Weapon States (NWS) and the Non-Nuclear Weapon States (NNWS) and several bottlenecks on specific issues. But the year will see the Review Conference in the month of May, which is salient not only because it marks a milestone, that is, the 20th anniversary of the indefinite extension of the NPT, but is also expected to introduce and incorporate in itself, a whole new range of issues and challenges in the nuclear domain; adding to the existing ones.

Rev-Con 2015 is indeed a ripe time to contemplate on where the treaty has reached, and more so, the future it is heading towards. The agenda is 'somewhat' set. There will be continued thrust on the noble idea of disarmament, along with a resurrection of faith in arms reduction measures. The thrust will also be on

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the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons (HINW), nuclear safety and security, Iran's nuclear negotiations, and the debate on the Middle East Nuclear Weapon Free Zone, and, finally, the recommendations of adoption and ratification of a number of documents like the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), Additional Protocols, Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement, etc. The following are some broad issues that will probably form the core agenda of the meet.<sup>1</sup>

### **DISARMAMENT**

Disarmament will be the foremost agenda of the NPT Rev-Con 2015, though it is likely to end up serving old wine in a new bottle. As always, the NNWS are more seriously focussed on this subject than the NWS. The former refer to Article VI more often, whereas, the latter desire equal importance to all the three pillars of the NPT: non-proliferation (Article I), peaceful uses of nuclear technology (Article IV) and disarmament (Article VI). However, optimism is evident from the assertion, "...to avoid complacency in the face of lack of progress on the issue of nuclear disarmament, an issue that was expected to be at the center of deliberations."<sup>2</sup> Therefore, a reduced role for nuclear weapons in the NWS' security doctrines and policies to discourage developing new types of nuclear weapons or qualitative improving of existing stockpiles will form a core issue in the meet. It would be interesting to see the answerability of the NWS regarding the unfulfilled promise of Article VI, especially when the call is "not to let the 'D' of disarmament to be replaced in time with the 'D' for dissuasion."<sup>3</sup>

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1. As hinted through a series of debates in the Preparatory Conferences in 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014. The action plan of the chairman, a working paper that surfaced after the 2014 Prep-Com, also mentions so. For more details, see [http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Publications/2010ActionPlan/NPT\\_Action\\_Plan\\_2014.pdf](http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Publications/2010ActionPlan/NPT_Action_Plan_2014.pdf). Accessed on January 16, 2015. For details on the conclusion and recommendations, see the "2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons", 2010, at [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=NPT/CONF.2010/50%20%28VOL.I%29](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=NPT/CONF.2010/50%20%28VOL.I%29). Accessed on January 16, 2015.
  2. "Prep-Com 2014", at <http://npsglobal.org/eng/prepcom-2014.html>. Accessed on January 15, 2015.
  3. Ibid.

## **ARMS REDUCTION MEASURES**

The New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) aims at “Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms”,<sup>4</sup> and also other arms reduction measures have gained currency in the recent times. The call for reduction in the amounts of Highly Enriched Uranium (HEU) aims to reduce the chances of their slippage into wrong hands. Arms reduction, which is both time-bound and mutual, will form the core of the expectations at the Rev-Con, especially when the NWS are endowed with a “special responsibility” of setting a precedent on arms reduction.

Overall, the issue of arms reduction will definitely be an item of salience that would rejuvenate the belief of the NWS, who claim it as a direction that leads to the realisation of the long pending Article VI, of course, through the step by step approach<sup>5</sup>. Contestation will come from disbelievers (NNWS) who desire nothing short of a clear ban on, and delegitimisation of, nuclear weapons to reach disarmament. Whatsoever the debate, reducing nuclear arms would not appear a bad idea even to the NNWS for sure. Thus, arms reduction measures would be welcomed and promoted in the Rev-Con.

## **HUMANITARIAN IMPACT OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS**

Concern for the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons (HINW) echoed all through Prep-Com 2014. The issue basically tries to address the devastation that would be visited upon all humankind by any use of nuclear weapons. It calls for strengthening “the humanitarian imperative in all global efforts dealing with nuclear weapons and nuclear disarmament” along with a keen study into the impacts of nuclear weapon explosions, nuclear testing, the risks of nuclear weapons use, challenges and capabilities regarding the use of nuclear weapons; and existing international norms and laws.<sup>6</sup>

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4. “The New Start Treaty”, US Department of State, at <http://www.state.gov/t/avc/newstart/index.htm>. Accessed on January 17, 2015.

5. Under the step by step approach comes the proliferation of regional Nuclear Weapon Free Zones (NWFZ) and arms reduction measures by the NWS, etc., which they believe could lead to disarmament some day.

6. Chair’s Summary of the “Third Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, Vienna, 2014”, For details, see “Vienna Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons”, December 8-9, 2014, at <http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/vienna-2014/ChairSummary.pdf>. Accessed on January 16, 2015.

There is evidence that suggests rigorous discussions on the lack of competent international capacity to address the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons. The Working Papers also suggest that it is high time that states “comply with applicable international law, including international humanitarian law on the issue of HINW.”<sup>7</sup> Pressure would increase on the NWS that had boycotted the humanitarian conferences of 2013, calling the whole subject a “distraction” in the NPT negotiations. The call by the December 2014 Vienna Conference on HINW is loud and clear: “The overwhelming majority of NPT States Parties expects that the forthcoming 2015 NPT Review Conference should take stock of all relevant developments, including the outcomes of the Conferences on the HINW and determine the next steps for the achievement and maintenance of a nuclear weapon free world.”<sup>8</sup>

The enthusiasts on HINW who are numerous, are now calling for an “urgent start”. The 2014 Rev-Con and the December 2014 Vienna Conference will synergise into some substantial deliberations on HINW in the upcoming Rev-Con.

### **NUCLEAR SAFETY**

The Fukushima nuclear accident proved to be a lesson for the entire nuclear industry on the issue of nuclear safety. The greatest lesson is to overcome complacency, “as the accident was clearly ‘man-made’, where the root causes were the organisational and regulatory systems that supported faulty rationales for decisions and actions.”<sup>9</sup> Thus, the issue of nuclear safety and corporate responsibility will get the deserved attention in Rev-Con 2015. Sharing of the best practices, in the areas of both nuclear safety and security, as well as initiatives like the “gift basket”, introduced in the Nuclear Security Summit (NSS) process will be mooted further. Rev-Con 2015 would be one of the few events having a majority of the countries in possession of nuclear technology sitting at one table, since the NSS process initiation. The

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7. For details, see “2010 NPT Prep Com: Day 10”, at <http://www.sipri.org/research/disarmament/2014-npt-prepcom/day-10>, Accessed on January 16, 2015.

8. n. 6.

9. The National Diet of Japan, *Official Report of the Fukushima Nuclear Accident Independent Investigation Committee* (Japan: National Diet of Japan 2012), at [https://www.nirs.org/fukushima/naaic\\_report.pdf](https://www.nirs.org/fukushima/naaic_report.pdf). Accessed on January 15, 2015.

concerns of the NSS that rejuvenated urgency and attention towards nuclear safety and security, will predictably surface at the Rev-Com. There will also be focus on the necessary discussion on the issue of universalising the treaties on nuclear security and safety, such as the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Materials (1979), and the International Convention on the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism (2005).

### NUCLEAR SECURITY

The risk of non-state actors getting access to Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) represents the most serious threat to international security in contemporary times and Nuclear Security Summits have tried to address the issue. It is, therefore, little surprise that the Prep-Com focussed on the issue of nuclear security, suggesting the “highest possible standards” of security and physical protection of nuclear materials and facilities’.<sup>10</sup> The Rev-Con will raise the urgency of universal adoption and full implementation of the UN Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 1540, which emphasises establishment of “domestic controls to prevent proliferation of nuclear, chemical, or biological weapons and their means of delivery, by establishing appropriate controls over related materials.”<sup>11</sup> The call will be, on the one hand, for a qualitative rise in national capabilities to detect, deter and disrupt the illicit trafficking of nuclear materials and, on the other, promotion of international multilateralism efforts like, the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism (GICNT), etc. There is a rejuvenated thrust on universalising the participation of various countries in such “conventions on nuclear security.”<sup>12</sup> Apart from these issues, the role of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) as ‘the’ authority on nuclear security will find a respectable place in the Rev-Con, with an enhanced role to play in the post-summit period, 2016, when the Nuclear Security Summits are likely to sign off.

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10. For details, see Action 40 of the NPT Action Plan Monitoring Report March 2014, Summary of Implementation of Actions, at [http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Publications/2010-Action-Plan/NPT\\_Action\\_Plan\\_2014.pdf](http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Publications/2010-Action-Plan/NPT_Action_Plan_2014.pdf). Accessed on January 16, 2015.

11. “UNSCR-1540”, at <http://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/sanctions/Documents/1540.pdf>. Accessed on January 15, 2015.

12. The Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and the International Convention on the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism

## **IRAN NUCLEAR NEGOTIATIONS**

One of the successes of the NWS in the recent times has been the initiation of the Iranian nuclear negotiations. The P5+1 (Germany) negotiations with Iran mark an important breakthrough which calls for a “comprehensive solution” that “would enable Iran to fully enjoy its right to nuclear energy for peaceful purposes under the relevant Articles of the NPT in conformity with its obligations therein.”<sup>13</sup> The process has allowed Iran to be relieved of its burdens of the unbearable sanctions on it. In the forthcoming Rev-Con, the Iranian nuclear negotiations will be viewed as a part of the agenda, setting both a precedent of inclusion in the nuclear regime and also discussions and deliberations on the future path of the negotiations to ensure success. The whole initiative communicates optimism in the NPT.

## **MIDDLE EAST NUCLEAR WEAPON FREE ZONE (MENWFZ)**

The nuclear weapon free zone is definitely on the agenda of the NPT Rev-Con in 2015. The last Rev-Con had put a lot of emphasis on the initiation of negotiations on the MENWFZ. The Rev-Con 2010 had concluded, “states parties agreed on ‘practical steps’ to implement the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East.”<sup>14</sup> The conference was planned for 2012 with Finland as the host state and the appointed “facilitator” was Jaakko Laajava. All said but nothing done, the conference and the ‘practical steps’ on MENWFZ never fructified due to various factors: lack of collective will on the part of the states of the region as well as the USA’s intentional negligence and stepmotherly treatment to this particular NWFZ issue. Other roadblocks have been Iran’s nuclear ambitions and Israel facing an existential threat in the region and its resulting hesitance in surrendering its undeclared nuclear weapons for reasons of national security and survival. The angle of power politics, thus, has delayed and led to major failure of the MENWFZ.

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13. Shannon N. Kile, “Iran and Nuclear Proliferation Concerns,” *SIPRI Yearbook 2014* (SIPRI: Oxford University Press, 2014), at <http://www.sipri.org/yearbook/2014/files/sipri-yearbook-2014-chapter-7-section-i>. Accessed on January 16, 2015.

14. “NPT Action Plan Monitoring Report, March 2014, Section on Developments Regarding a Potential Weapon of Mass Destruction Free Zone in the Middle East (MEWMDZFZ)”, at [www.gcsp.ch/content/download/8886/105587/download](http://www.gcsp.ch/content/download/8886/105587/download). Accessed on January 17, 2015.

It is widely recognised that any disruption in peace and security in the Middle East region has always had an impact on the peace and stability of the world. The problem in the present context is magnified by the fact that there is ample presence of fissile material in this region, and wide ranging proliferation as well as nuclear security threats. The Prep-Com 2014 noted the importance of the implementation of the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East, which did resonate in the 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences. But this time, the issue will form a serious ingredient of the agenda for the NPT Rev-Con 2015, not just because of the length of its existence in the purview of the NPT but also because of the rejuvenated instability in the region.<sup>15</sup> Some serious steps towards the MENWFZ in the Rev-Con actually, hold the key to the future of the NPT. The commencement of the postponed 2012 Conference will be deliberated along with some progress on the MENWFZ issue, as the NPT is in dire need to save face.

#### **UNIVERSALISING THE NPT AND OTHER TREATIES**

It had been a continuing debate that unless the NPT has universal membership and includes all the nuclear technology capable countries under its umbrella, it would not be able to achieve its objectives. Signing and ratification of treaties like the CTBT, Additional Protocols and Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement, firstly, by all the NPT members themselves, and later, the non-members too, would be the nucleus of the agenda. Universal adherence to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Materials and the International Convention on the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism is also salient along with the abovementioned which will definitely be on the Rev-Con menu card.

#### **EVALUATION**

Pessimism has surrounded the NPT Rev-Cons due to the lack of progress in past promises, where, on one side, it appears to be a

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15. "Rejuvenated instability" in the region due to the recent unrests: overthrow of the long rooted authoritarian governments, rise of Islamic fundamentalism in a majority of the states, Al Qaeda, Islamic State in Libya and the like, plus the intractability of the Israel-Palestine conflict and the periodic reversals of violence, has led to the worst fears about the non-nuclear states getting hold of the Weapons of Mass Destruction's (WMD's) more serious shape.

ceremonial ritual for the USA to conduct the conference, carefully steering away from all controversial issues; and, on the other, the rest of the nuclear powers too, seem to have lost faith in the credibility of time-bound disarmament or disarmament ever turning into reality. The bitterness in relations between the USA and Russia due to the recent episode over Crimea is a probable roadblock in the smooth navigation of issues in the Rev-Con. The above are some of the issues that will be central in the agenda this time, as carved out from the past documents and discussions. The rift between the NWS and NNWS members of the NPT on the above issues is likely to continue. Nevertheless, this Rev-Con will reveal whether the grand bargain that took place more than three decades ago was credible.

The forthcoming Rev-Con is certainly a moment to contemplate on what has been achieved as well as on what has not. Apart from the abovementioned agendas, how to bring them into the fold would remain at the heart of the NPT. As a result, these states will also have an eye on the deliberations and discussions in the forthcoming Rev-Con, with hopes of some alteration in the long held NPT prescription for the non-members to adhere to it "promptly and without conditions".

Indian eyes are definitely on the Rev-Con — a non-member of the NPT does not in any way discount its interest and stakes in the salient nuclear issues of the world. India, being one of the oldest advocates of disarmament, has both genuine interest in, and gains benefit from, any substantial progress towards it. Arms control, being a part of the agenda, is again of salience to India, it being at the nucleus of South Asia, a region which is running a non-productive, mad arms race. On the issue of HINW, the Indian stance is already clear — favoring a dialogue process. India desires that "further discussion on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons...be conducted in an inclusive manner with the participation of all states....in terms of process, it should do no harm to the established disarmament machinery."<sup>16</sup> On the issue of nuclear safety and security, India has been utmost serious and has been a member of all the treaties on

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16. "Statement by India at the Second Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons at Nayarit, Mexico, 2014", at, <http://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/22936/Statement+by+India+at+the+Second+Conference+on+the+Humanitarian+Impact+of+Nuclear+Weapons+at+Nayarit+Mexico>. Accessed on January 15, 2015.

nuclear safety and security till date. This shows India's dedicated support to any multilateral deliberations on the issue in future, regardless of whether their source lies in the NPT or elsewhere. India recognises the fact that it is in its national interest as well as a responsibility that comes upon it with the possession of sensitive nuclear energy. The 2014 NSS National Progress Report that India submitted, has already won wide acclaim and appreciation in the international sphere, signalling that India regards nuclear security and safety with utmost priority. Having had prolonged experience of countering the nuanced proxy warfare and frequent hits by Pakistan sponsored terror elements on its land, India has grown stronger and ultimately fool-proof on nuclear security. It also recognises the lack of progress on the issue of the MENWFZ and the proliferation risks in the region.

Thus, India sees its interest coinciding with the agenda which is somewhat set for the NPT Rev-Con 2015, as a result of which it will be keenly observing the deliberations and progress that will be made at the meet.



# PINNACLE ISLANDS: A STUDY IN MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES

SNIGDHA MONGIA

## INTRODUCTION

In 1968, a report by the United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (UNECAFE) suggested that the area in the vicinity of the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands, called the Pinnacle Islands, from a neutral perspective, was a potential reserve of oil and natural gas, probably the largest in Asia.<sup>1</sup> This region is in close proximity to important shipping lanes and rich fishing reserves, and is also in a strategically important location. Determination of territorial sovereignty over these islands located 200 nautical miles east of the Chinese Mainland, 120 nautical miles northeast of Taiwan and 200 nautical miles southwest of Okinawa Island of Japan, may be functional in establishing an exclusive economic zone which may extend up to 200 nautical miles from the baseline,<sup>2</sup> so as to obtain exclusive rights to utilise the natural resources around the aforementioned region.

If a statistical analysis of recent territorial disputes in the international scene is carried out, one finds China to be the common

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1. "Economic Survey of Asia and the Far East, 1968", *Economic Bulletin of Asia and the Far East* (Bangkok), 1969.
2. United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea - Part V, Article 57, "Breadth of the Exclusive Economic Zone".

denominator in a majority of the conflicts. Is this just a coincidence or the manifestation of the Red Dragon's new found confidence?

The arguments between China and Japan have mostly been in respect to acquisition on the basis of discovery-occupation and prescription<sup>3</sup> respectively, along with the Treaty of Shimonoseki of 1895 and the Sino-Japanese Peace Treaty 1952. On the other hand, Taiwan's claim has been based on its geographical position with respect to the islands as well as its former association with China. Presently, the islands are under Japanese administration as part of Ishigaki city, Okinawa prefecture. China and Taiwan claim that the islands are part of Daxi village, Toucheng township, Yilan county, Taiwan province.<sup>4</sup>

In this context, the claims of all three countries have been further studied in detail for a better understanding of the legitimacy and strength of their contentions. This article aims at, first, to clarify the contention of all three countries, and the evidence that they have to support their claim to the islands. It further aims at providing a legal analysis of the strength and authenticity of the stronger claims. Other developments to this case have also been studied, so as to provide an idea of how the diplomacy and the general public of each country have been manoeuvring this issue.

### CHINA'S POSITION

The basis of assertions on the part of the China are as follows:

- According to China, its discovery of the Senkaku Islands (called the Diaoyu Islands in China) dates back to the 14th century. It then follows that the primacy of the claim of discovery legitimises the claim to sovereignty by the principle of discovery-occupation as discovery of a territory gives the title of sovereignty.
- The Diaoyu Islands were used by Chinese navigators and merchants as navigational guides near the mainland. They were also used as outposts to keep a lookout for Japanese pirates until the end of the first Sino-Japanese War and the Treaty of

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3. R. Jade Harry, "A Solution Acceptable to All? A Legal Analysis of the Senkaku-Diaoyu Island Dispute", *Cornell International Law Journal*, vol 46, 2013, p. 674.

4. "The Republic of China's Sovereignty Claims over the Diaoyutai Islands", at <http://www.mofa.gov.tw/en/cp.aspx?n=38CD1D3C91067AEC>. Accessed on January 15, 2015.

Shimonoseki (1895), thus, lasting over five centuries, which means there was open, public and peaceful occupation of the land for a considerable length of time.<sup>5</sup>

- The terms of the Treaty of Shimonoseki<sup>6</sup> included, among others, that China cedes to Japan in perpetuity full sovereignty of the Pescadores group, Formosa (Taiwan) and the eastern portion of the bay of Liaodong peninsula, together with all fortifications, arsenals and public property. However, China argues that this treaty did not specifically include the Diaoyu Islands and even if it did, these islands were consequently to be returned under the subsequent Sino-Japanese Peace Treaty (1952)<sup>7</sup> in which Japan had to return all the territories ceded by China during the war.

### JAPAN'S POSITION

The Japanese position on the dispute over the Senkaku Islands has remained absolute in the recent past. The Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs regularly states that the Senkaku Islands comprise inherent territory of Japan. Until recently, the Japanese government had denied outright even the existence of a dispute regarding sovereignty over the islands and it counters China's claims with the following assertions:

- The islands had been uninhabited and showed no trace of having been under Chinese control prior to 1895. Thus, Japan found these islands as *terra nullius*,<sup>8</sup> or unclaimed territory, when it first began its administration of the islands. This opposes China's claim of the islands based on "historical reasons" and its right over the island through its original discovery-occupation. The Japanese also state that there were no formal records or traces of Chinese occupation or administration on these islands.

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5. Peaceful and continuous exercise of sovereignty is one of the legal requirements for China to prove occupation.

6. "Treaty of Shimonoseki", at [www.taiwandocuments.org/shimonoseki01.htm](http://www.taiwandocuments.org/shimonoseki01.htm) , Accessed on January 18, 2015.

7. Treaty of Peace between the Republic of China and Japan Signed at Taipei, April 28, 1952 entered into force, August 5, 1952, by the exchange of the instruments of ratification at Taipei, at [www.taiwandocuments.org/tapei01.htm](http://www.taiwandocuments.org/tapei01.htm). Accessed on March 1, 2015.

8. *Terra nullius* refers to "unclaimed territory". This is the land which is not claimed by any person or state. However, this does not necessarily mean "undiscovered."

- With reference to the Treaty of Shimonoseki, Japan claims that the islands were neither part of Taiwan nor part of the Pescadores Islands which were ceded to Japan by the Qing Dynasty in May 1895. Thus, these islands were not later renounced by Japan under the Sino-Japanese Peace Treaty which was signed post World War II.
- Japan approved a resident of the Okinawa prefecture to run manufacturing and gathering businesses on the islands as early as 1896.<sup>9</sup> The ability to provide approval to an individual for such an enterprise, according to Japan, serves as proof of Japan's valid control and authority over the islands.
- The Japanese allege that Taiwan and China only started claiming ownership of the islands in 1971, following the United Nations report that large oil and gas reserves may exist under the seabed near the islands.<sup>10</sup> However, it should be noted that the UN report that identified potential oil and gas reserves in the vicinity of the islands in 1969 preceded the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Japan in 1972. Despite knowing about the potential value of these islands, both nations decided to shelve this issue for a significant period of time.

### **TAIWAN'S POSITION**

Geographical proximity to its coastline forms the basis for Taiwan claiming ownership of the Senkaku Islands; however, proximity is not an adequate ground for claiming sovereignty over land as per modern-day international law. An interesting point to note is that despite the involvement of three countries and governments in this dispute, the dispute is considered to be primarily between China and Japan, and Taiwan and Japan. Moreover, despite the diplomatic

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9. William B. Heflin, "Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands Dispute: Japan and China, Oceans Apart", *Asian-Pacific Law & Policy Journal*, vol. 1, no. 2, 2000, p.4.

10. "The Basic View on the Sovereignty over the Senkaku Islands", Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, May 8, 2013, at [http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/senkaku/basic\\_view.html](http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/senkaku/basic_view.html), accessed on February 3, 2015. The fact that China expressed no objection to the status of the islands being under the administration of the United States under Article III of the San Francisco Peace Treaty clearly indicates that China did not consider the Senkaku Islands as part of Taiwan. It was not until the latter half of 1970, when the question of the development of petroleum resources on the continental shelf of the East China Sea came to the surface, that the Government of China and Taiwan authorities began to raise questions regarding the Senkaku Islands.

stalemate between China and Taiwan, both governments agree that historically, the islands are part of Taiwan as part of the Toucheng township in Yilan county.

- Taiwan is not a member of the UN and, hence, does not have the right to negotiate with Japan over sovereignty issues. However, Taiwanese citizens have regularly emphasised the need for China and Taiwan to work together to resolve this dispute—one of the reasons cited for this includes fishing, which provides a livelihood for a significant part of the Taiwanese population.
- However, the Taiwanese government has made it clear that it does not intend to work with China in the dispute. The history between the two countries and the international isolation faced by Taiwan prohibit cooperation in this regard.

#### **APPLICATION OF THE LAW**

From the above-listed arguments and considering that contiguity does not legalise claim to territory under international law, it is evident that the stronger contenders of the islands are China and Japan. The legality of the claims of the two with respect to modern-day international law will be further enumerated in the succeeding paragraphs.

One of the most influential precedents in the area of territorial conflicts is the Island of Palmas<sup>11</sup> case between Netherlands and the United States of America. The facts of the case were similar to those of the Pinnacle Islands case. The disputed islands were ceded to the United States of America by Spain in the Treaty of Paris of 1898. Though transfer of title via cession is legitimate even in contemporary international law, the question was whether or not Spain had the authority to cede the islands in the first place. Spain claimed ownership over the islands based on the principle of discovery-occupation, but it had not exercised any authority over the same post-discovery. Netherlands, on the other hand, had been exercising actual, open and public authority over the island since 1677. The arbitrator, Max Huber, gave his decision in favour of Netherlands where he put exercise of authority as a superior contention to claim to territory over mere discovery. Judicial precedent or previous decisions of judicial or

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11. "Reports of International Arbitral Awards", The United Nations, at [http://legal.un.org/riaa/cases/vol\\_II/829-871.pdf](http://legal.un.org/riaa/cases/vol_II/829-871.pdf). Accessed on February 1, 2015.

arbitral bodies, though not binding, comprise an important source of interpretation of the law.<sup>12</sup> In the case of the Pinnacle Islands, despite China's historical claim, it has little evidence pertaining to its recent actual sovereignty over the islands.<sup>13</sup> If the conflict were to be legally solved, and the case of the Island of Palmas referred to, the decision is likely to be in favour of Japan.

Another question may be in relation to the Treaty of Shimonoseki, i.e. whether or not the Pinnacle Islands were, in fact, a part of the Pescadores Islands that were ceded to Japan. The answer to this would also make it clear whether or not they were renounced in the San Francisco Peace Treaty. Japan claims that it had conducted thorough surveys before it consolidated the islands into its own territory in 1885, wherein, not even a single trace of Chinese ownership was visible.<sup>14</sup> Based on this information, the Japanese government made a decision in a Cabinet Committee meeting on January 14, 1895, to erect a marker on the islands, thus, incorporating them formally into the territory of Japan as *terra nullius* as per international law of the time.<sup>15</sup> During the consolidation and display of sovereignty, there was no opposition whatsoever displayed by China. If the islands did not belong to China, it couldn't have ceded them to Japan in 1895. China, on the other hand, argues that records by Chen Khan in 1534, and book records of messages from Chong-Shan (1719) state that the islands were recognised as part of the Ryukyu group of islands.<sup>16</sup> If this evidence was to be viewed as absolute, Japan's contention that the islands were *terra nullius* becomes false. Nevertheless, in order to establish sovereignty over a territory via prescription, *terra nullius* is not a necessary condition as per customary international law.<sup>17</sup> But, it must be noted that this method of acquisition has seldom been used in legal theory, and legal practitioners and arbitrators have decided few cases based on its prescription.

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12. James Parker Hall, "The Force of Precedents in International Law", *International Journal of Ethics*, vol. 26, no. 2 January 1916, pp. 149-167.

13. Harry, n. 3, p. 674.

14. "Senkaku Islands Q&A-Answer-5, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, at [http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/senkaku/qa\\_1010.html](http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/senkaku/qa_1010.html). Accessed on February 5, 2015.

15. n. 2.

16. "Japanese Territory", at [http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/senkaku/qa\\_1010.html](http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/senkaku/qa_1010.html). Accessed on February 2, 2015.

17. John O'Brien, *International Law* (London: Routledge, 2001).

Furthermore, Chinese publications, including an article in a newspaper and a map published in 1953 and 1958 respectively have referred to the islands as 'Senkaku Islands', which is the Japanese term for the same, and the latter has also recognised it as a part of the Okinawa prefecture.<sup>18</sup> This fact strengthens Japan's assertion that China's claim is based on an ulterior motive, for it did not lay claim to the territory before 1968.

With the knowledge of Japan's strength to the claim, China is not likely to take the issue to the International Court of Justice, or for that matter agree to solve the conflict by arbitration. So far, international law has not played a vital role in this issue: but will the countries agree to cooperate to find a just solution to the problem?

#### **FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS**

In 1970s, there was a series of demonstrations by Taiwanese students in North America. They demanded that the Taiwan government should participate in the joint resource development talks with the Japanese government only after clarifying the ownership position of the islands. These demonstrations set the trend of the occasionally recurring popular protests by the Taiwanese, Hongkongers and overseas Chinese over the issue.

The "Seirankai" or "Clear Storm Group", the Japanese right wing nationalist group, erected a lighthouse on the biggest of the islands in 1978. The objective was to pressurise the Chinese government into recognising Japanese sovereignty over the disputed islands. In 1990, Taiwanese athletes and journalists attempted to land on the islands when they learnt that the "Nihon Seinensha" or "Japan Youth Federation" was repairing the "Seirankai" lighthouse.<sup>19</sup>

In 1971, an agreement was signed between the United States of America and Japan, wherein the US returned to Japan "all and any powers of administration, legislation and jurisdiction" which the United States had held under the Japan Peace Treaty.<sup>20</sup> This

18. "The Senkaku Islands", 2012, p. 12 at <http://www.lk.emb-japan.go.jp/eg/contents/culture/SenkakuIslands.pdf>. Accessed on February 3, 2015.

19. Chien-peng Chung, *Domestic Politics, International Bargaining and China's Territorial Disputes* (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 2.

20. Treaty on Reversion to Japan of the Ryukyu and Daito Islands, signed on June 17, 1971, 23 U.S.T. 446.

agreement—the Okinawa Reversion Treaty—explicitly mentions the islands in question to be a part of the territory so returned to Japan.

In 1992, China enacted the *Law of the People's Republic of China Concerning the Territorial Sea and the Contiguous Zone–1992*, under which the Pinnacle Islands were formally declared a part of China's territory.<sup>21</sup> China has been sending its vessels into the territorial waters of the islands and has also been making incursions into Japanese waters since 2008.

In April 2012, Japan used public money to purchase three islets in the Senkaku Islands from a private Japanese owner. This move by Japan had antagonised China, triggering public and diplomatic protests, as a result of which Japanese goods were condemned and destroyed in riots and protests that spanned across several Chinese cities.<sup>22</sup> Japan deemed this move necessary for its national security. China has warned that building any structures on these islets will negatively affect Sino-Japanese ties. This move by Japan further legitimises its claim to the islands, but also raises questions as to how the islands fell into private hands. The islands had been lent –“illegally”, as per China- as early as 1932 to an entrepreneur. They were then sold “illegally” to businessman Kunioki Kurihara in 1972.<sup>23</sup> During the renting and selling of these islands, there were no protests on China's part. This inconsistency in the Red Dragon's temper may work against it in its effort to establish its claim on the islands on the basis of historical attachments or cultural interests.

Till 2014, Japan had claimed that the islands were its inherent territory and that there was no dispute at all.<sup>24</sup> In order to secure a

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21. Law on the Territorial Sea and the Contiguous Zone of 25<sup>th</sup> February 1992, Article 2, at [http://www.un.org/depts/los/LEGISLATIONANDTREATIES/PDFFILES/CHN\\_1992\\_Law.pdf](http://www.un.org/depts/los/LEGISLATIONANDTREATIES/PDFFILES/CHN_1992_Law.pdf). Accessed on February 6, 2015. (The PRC's territorial land includes the mainland and its offshore islands, Taiwan and the various affiliated islands including Diaoyu Island, Penghu Islands, Dongsha Islands, Xisha Islands, Nansha (Spratly) Islands and other islands that belong to the People's Republic of China).

22. Ian Johnson and Thom Shanker, “More Protests in China Over Japan and Islands”, *New York Times*, September 18, 2012, at <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/19/world/asia/chinawarns-japan-over-island-dispute.html>. Accessed on February 4, 2015.

23. “How Diaoyu Islands Fell into ‘Private Hands?’”, *CCTV*, October 9, 2010, at <http://english.cntv.cn/program/asiatoday/20120910/107455.shtml>. Accessed on February 10, 2015.

24. Japan, “Japan's Position”, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, September 25, 2010, at <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/china/pdfs/facts1010.pdf>. Accessed on February 5, 2015.



meeting with Xi Jinping, Shinzo Abe caved into China's demand to acknowledge the dispute and that China has a case as well. This acknowledgement was one of China's preconditions to agree to the heads of states meeting.<sup>25</sup>

China's acts, as observed, have been rather coercive, while those of Japan have been predominantly peaceful and in consonance with international law. Japan considers its relationship with China to be important, and wants to continue to promote "the Mutually Beneficial Strategic Relationship" with it.<sup>26</sup>

### THE ROAD AHEAD

On January 18, 2013, Hillary Clinton expressed opposition to "any unilateral actions" and formally acknowledged that the Senkaku Islands are under the administration of Japan. However, she also mentioned that "the United States does not take a position on the ultimate sovereignty of the islands" and that the conflict needs to be solved through peaceful means by all the parties involved.<sup>27</sup> However, the "Okinawa Reversion Treaty" poses contradiction to the USA's attempt at a neutral stance. As per Article II of the treaty:

*...treaties, conventions, and other agreements concluded between Japan and the United States of America, including, but without limitation to the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between Japan and the United States of America... become applicable to the Ryukyu Islands and the Daito Islands as of the date of entry into force of this Agreement.*<sup>28</sup>

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25. Zachary Kack, "Japan Caves to China on Senkaku Island Dispute", *The Diplomat*, October 18, 2014, at <http://thediplomat.com/2014/10/japan-caves-to-china-on-senkaku-island-dispute/>. Accessed on February 5, 2015.

26. "The Senkaku Islands, Seeking Maritime Peace Based on the Rule of Law, Not Force or Coercion", Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan, at <http://www.mofa.go.jp/files/000018519.pdf>. Accessed on February 5, 2015.

27. "Recent Developments of Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands", *Free University Berlin*, January 21, 2013, at <https://www.asianperceptions.eu/chinese-review/recent-developments-diaoyusenkaku-islands>. Accessed on February 6, 2015.

28. Mark E. Manyin, "Senkaku (Diaoyu/Diaoyutai) Islands Dispute: US Treaty Obligations", *Congressional Research Service*, January 22, 2013, at <https://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R42761.pdf>. Accessed on February 6, 2015.

If conflict were to erupt between China and Japan, Japan would expect the US military's back-up as the US-Japan security alliance<sup>29</sup> allows for the US to protect Japan in case of an attack. In fact, US President Barack Obama also confirmed that the security pact applies to the islands but warned that escalation of the current row would harm all sides.

But, with its new found confidence and in the garb of 'peaceful rising', China has, however, pursued an assertive posture towards Japan and other countries in and around the South China Sea and East China Sea. Moreover, in the current global order, China is fast emerging as a potential global power and is believed to affect US global influence in the near future. Hence, despite Japan's close proximity with the US, many political analysts believe that US interest in the region has diluted despite its call for rebalancing as the US enjoys a strong economic engagement with China. Moreover, in the case of any confrontation between China and Japan in the future related to such disputes, an active US role in this regard would be doubtful as the US is currently in no mood for any military adventurism with China. Japan, on its part, has made efforts to break free of its dependence on the US and has developed closer ties with countries like India as it is in search of robust partnerships with countries other than the US and, hence, views India as a reliable partner which shares mutual concerns over China's rise in the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean region. However, it can be stated that in both China and Japan, the dispute continues to spark nationalist discussions and arguments, putting pressure on the respective governments and continuously making it harder to find an agreeable solution.

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29. Richard L. Armitage and Joseph N. Nye, *The US-Japan Alliance: Anchoring Stability in Asia*, (Washington D. C.: CSIS, August 2012), at [http://csis.org/files/publication/120810\\_Armitage\\_USJapanAlliance\\_Web.pdf](http://csis.org/files/publication/120810_Armitage_USJapanAlliance_Web.pdf). Accessed on February 6, 2015.

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