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No. 221

Emerging Powers and Cooperative Security in Asia

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Singapore**

20 December 2010

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Abstract

Asia has witnessed considerable security challenges for the past two decades such as armed rivalries, both inter- and intra-state, as well as non-traditional threats including terrorism. Though none of them has so far evolved into a real security threat affecting regional stability, Asia is perennially under the threat of a potential military conflict. Unresolved security challenges include the Sino-Japanese and Sino-Indian territorial disputes, and maritime security issues such as in the South China Sea and the potential rivalry between India and China in the Indian Ocean Region could upset the current status quo that has emerged after the end of the cold war. China, the emerging power in Asia, should be considered both as a benign power as well as a security threat for larger peace and stability in Asia. It is necessary for the regional countries, particularly major powers of Asia (India, China and Japan), to develop a constructive security mechanism to ensure long-term peace and stability in Asia. Thus “cooperative balancing” is the norm for Asian security, which has a twin-layered structure for engagement and security cooperation in Asia. The first one is an inner layer of India, China and Japan that interact bilaterally in both balancing as well as being cooperative in nature; in multilateral interaction, the ASEAN countries play a crucial role. The second one is the outer layer in which the United States and other major international stakeholders will play a stabilising role.

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Emerging Powers and Cooperative Security in Asia

INTRODUCTION

Asia's cooperative security mechanism is inextricably linked to multilateral institutions such as ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and East Asia Summit (EAS). In fact these two institutions, in which all the three major powers namely India, China and Japan are formal members, have contributed significantly in bringing peace and stability to the region. However, such mechanisms have not adequately resolved many of the regional issues and have not been able to create a vibrant institutional structure for security in Asia. As a result, it is imperative for the major powers in Asia to create an environment in which a possible military conflict has to be contained. For this purpose, they need to develop more constructive engagement platforms and templates bilaterally, as well as multilaterally, which could eschew armed conflict and mistrust in Asia.

A major problem for the creation of a constructive security mechanism in Asia is that the major countries continue to distrust one another deeply, for example, China's unresolved disputes with Japan and India. China has had a territorial dispute with Japan over Senkaku/Diaoyu islands in the East China Sea and Himalayan border dispute with India, especially over the status of the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh. These decade-old disputes have been managed well under bilateral mechanisms, but no country is ready to compromise with the demand of the other. However, many times small incidents related to the territorial disputes have turned into virtual diplomatic stalemate that shows the disputes can undermine the current peace and stability in Asia.¹ China has resolved 17 out of 23 territorial disputes mostly on the western border, largely through compromise from the Chinese side, while it has procrastinated regarding a final settlement of the dispute with the other six which include Taiwan problem, East China Sea dispute with Japan, over Paracel and Spratly

¹ Despite India and China's agreement to continue the status quo after the 1962 war, China has not accepted Arunachal Pradesh as an Indian-administered state, while raised this issue at international forum as a disputed territory. In August 2009, China successfully blocked part of a loan worth \$60 million to India from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) earmarked for projects in Arunachal Pradesh and argued that ADB cannot fund projects in "disputed areas" like Arunachal Pradesh. Similarly, China has encroached Japan-administered water body in the East China Sea, sometimes by sending nuclear powered submarines, illegal fishing and Chinese warships passing through the coast of Okinawa, apart from periodically conducting military drill in the Chinese-controlled waters, which invited strong diplomatic protest from Japan.

islands in the South China Sea with ASEAN countries and the border dispute with India.²

Today, an important component of the Asian security structure is to avoid a major war between states. This logic is evident in the *East Asia Strategy Report 1998* of the United States Department of Defense which states that “instability and uncertainty are likely to persist in the Asia-Pacific region, with heavy concentrations of military force, including nuclear arsenals, unresolved territorial disputes and historical tensions, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery serving as sources of instability”.³ There is the possibility of a war or a low intensity military conflict between China and a country with which it has disputes; more so because China has used military posture to annex the disputed territory against Vietnam in 1979 and 1988 and against the Philippines in 1995 over Mischief Reef in the South China Sea. In spite of China’s “peaceful” emergence, it is not certain what its policy would be with regard to Taiwan and its various border disputes once its military modernisation is completed—possibly by 2025. The role of the United States may decline in the Asia-Pacific region, given the importance of war on terror led by the United States and the prevailing “regional security complex”⁴ in the Middle East with which the United States is inextricably linked. Therefore, to avert the transformation of a “peaceful” China into a revisionist state or a hegemon is the responsibility of not the United States alone, but the regional countries including India, Japan and the Association of South East Asian Nation (ASEAN) members. For this purpose, all the major stakeholders of the region need to interact in a cooperative way to ensure long-term peace and stability in Asia.

In a cooperative security mechanism, I argue that there must ideally be a two-layer engagement and security cooperation in Asia. The first one is an inner layer that will play a crucial role and in which the three powers of Asia—China, India and Japan—

² Joshy M. Paul, “Territorial Dispute in the East China Sea and its Effects on China-Japan Relations”, *Maritime Affairs*, Vol. 4, No. 1, 2008, p. 3.

³ United States Department of Defence, *The United States Security Strategy for the East Asia-Pacific Region*, November 1998, p. 62.

⁴ Regional security complex is a complex security issue affecting all the regional countries, which also has international ramifications. Security of one state is inextricably linked to the security of one another. For details, see Patrick Morgan, “Regional Security Complexes and Regional Orders”, in David A. Lake and Patrick A. Morgan, *Regional Orders: Building Security in a New World* (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997).

must interact bilaterally and multilaterally. In the multilateral mechanism, the ASEAN members play a major role. The second one is the outer layer in which the United States will play a crucial role as a stabilising factor. In the outer layer, all the other major international stakeholders such as the EU, Russia and Australia are involved. The inner layer works bilaterally through confidence-building mechanisms, military exchange and other diplomatic channels that avoid military skirmishes that might emerge from suspicion and security dilemma. All the major countries in the region have enhanced their military profile substantially in recent times. At the same time, Indo-Japan defence cooperation is growing steadily, with the aim that no single country should dominate the Asian landscape. In a way, the three countries could develop a conducive atmosphere to advance their cooperation to the maximum. In this process, ASEAN would play an effective role for the coordination of the three as ASEAN maintains friendly relationship with them.

The outer layer will act as a benevolent factor. There is considerable suspicion against China's long-term ambition in both Japan and India. In this scenario, the presence of the outer layer could effectively counter a belligerent move by any particular actor without indulging in military posturing or by joining hands with the other. In due course of time, the outer layer's importance will gradually diminish as the inner layer stabilises by way of increasing regional coordination and bilateral interaction. In this way, an effective and enduring cooperative security mechanism could emerge in Asia.

ASIAN SECURITY AND THE ROLE OF MAJOR POWERS

While considering the power structure of Asia, China deserves the term "centrality".⁵ Geographically, China occupies a central position in Asia and shares borders with almost all other parts of Asia—Central Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia and Northeast Asia. Today, the economy and politics of these regions are inextricably linked to China. Although its long-term political intentions may cause concern and apprehension in the region, the region significantly benefits from China's economic growth. China's economic growth appears to be status quo oriented at the regional level while slightly revisionist at the systemic level.⁶ Its approach towards various

⁵ Varun Sahni, "From Security in Asia to Asian Security", *International Studies*, Vol. 41, No. 3, 2004, p. 248.

⁶ Ibid.

territorial disputes with regional countries, especially towards the other two regional powers, is seen as contradictory to how a power wanting to maintain the status quo should behave. At the same time, if China's economic growth and military modernisation continue for another 15–20 years, it would certainly become a great power in Asia.

From an Asian perspective, India can best be adjudged as an “emerging power”.⁷ An emerging power may lack the capacity to challenge the way the great powers behave in the international system, but its size, resources and role, and capacity to influence a specific situation cannot be ignored by the great powers.⁸ Emerging powers are on the ascendant and have the capability and intention to manoeuvre their way into great power status. India, with around six to eight per cent growth rate for several years now, is obviously seeking an “independent” and “influential” role in the management of international relations in Asia.

Since Junichiro Koizumi's premiership, Japan has undergone a process of “normalisation” of its foreign and security policy. Tokyo has sought to play more of a “functional role” in its alliance with the United States beyond traditional geographical confines. Japan's policymakers became cautious and selective about the actual level of commitment to overseas military operations under the U.S. leadership.⁹ Japan's recent military support to foreign expedition under the U.S. umbrella was based upon careful calculation of its national interest. Tokyo seeks a more “independent” role in regional and global issues, even as it calibrates its policies on the lines of the United States' global interest. Japan's “normalisation” is discussed in this work later.

Almost all international theories have been used by various scholars to define the “Asian security”¹⁰ scenario differently. Muthiah Alagappa argues that there is no single pathway for the management of Asian security affairs, rather there are multiple pathways that sustain the present security order, including “hegemony, balance of

⁷ Ibid., p. 249.

⁸ Ibid., quoted from Carsten Holbraad, *Middle Powers in International Politics* (London: Macmillan, 1984).

⁹ Christopher W. Hughes, “Japan's Military Modernisation: In Search of a ‘Normal’ Security Role”, in Ashley J. Tellis and Michael Wills, *Strategic Asia – 2005–2006: Military Modernisation in an Era of Uncertainty* (Washington D.C.: The National Bureau of Asian Research, 2005, p. 106).

¹⁰ Here, I use Asia, which includes the regions of South Asia, Southeast Asia and Northeast Asia.

power (including alliance), concert, global and regional multilateral institutions, bilateralism and self help. All play key roles but with different functions”.¹¹ Alagappa further says the role of the United States is not just the only factor for stability in Asia, since it rests on several pillars. With almost half-a-century experience working as independent states, the regional countries have graduated to the nature of modern nation-state systems with all the structural conditions for rule-governed interactions. The concept of security in Asia has grown as mutually assured survivability rather than as destructive mentality. Rapid economic growth and social development through participation in the global economy contributed to the consolidation of Asian states that helped to strengthen regional interaction in a more inclusive way.

Concretely, a common principle that connects various theories on Asian security is that it places China at the centre of the security mechanism. According to hierarchists, China’s supremacy will be accepted by the regional countries because of historical reasons. David Kang in his “hierarchical” order of Asian security says that a strong China could bring stability in Asia. According to him, “historically it has been China’s weakness that has led to chaos in Asia. East Asian regional relations have historically been hierarchic, more powerful and more stable than those in the west”.¹² However, Amitav Acharya conclusively rejects Kang’s view and says that India, another emerging power, was never part of the China-led tributary system; rather, India is in the pursuit of balancing China.¹³ Meanwhile, liberalists believe that given the kind of economic inter-dependence between China and other regional countries, its great power ambition would be constrained. Multilateralists concur with this view and argue that the participation of China in various multilateral institutions will restrain it from growing into a revisionist state.¹⁴

¹¹ Muthiah Alagappa, “Introduction: Predictability and Stability Despite Challenges”, in Muthiah Alagappa (Ed.), *Asian Security Order: Instrumental and Normative Features* (California: Stanford University Press, 2003, p. 18).

¹² David C. Kang, “Getting Asia Wrong: The Need for New Analytical Frameworks”, *International Security*, Vol. 27, No. 4, 2003, p. 66.

¹³ Amitav Acharya, “Will Asia’s Past Be Its Future?”, *International Security*, Vol. 28, No. 3, 2003/04, p. 150.

¹⁴ Aaron Friedberg, “Ripe for Rivalry: Prospects for Peace in Multipolar Asia”, *International Security*, Vol. 18, No. 3, 1993/94, p. 16. See also Evelyn Goh, “Great Powers and Southeast Asia Regional Security Strategies: Omni-Enmeshment, Balancing and Hierarchical Order”, *RSIS Working Paper No. 84*, July 2005.

However, the regional institutions that have emerged in the Asia-Pacific region are focusing more on transnational issues,¹⁵ while it has failed to develop as a mechanism for conflict resolution.¹⁶ Realists predict that China seeks great power status, as the ultimate aim of every great power is to maximise its share of world power and eventually become a hegemon. In this regard, Asia will experience a balance of power as the United States, the prevailing hegemon, attempts to balance against China—the emerging great power.¹⁷ In this game of balancing power, the regional countries of India, Japan, Vietnam, Singapore and South Korea will join in a U.S.-led balancing coalition to check China’s rise.¹⁸ However, Varun Sahni says it is highly unlikely that India would ever join a U.S.-led coalition or power bloc to contain another country (China) because of New Delhi’s quest for “strategic autonomy”¹⁹ in its foreign and security policy. As a result, in this work I argue that the best possible way to provide enduring peace and stability in Asia is through “cooperative balancing”, a balancing against China by the second-order powers—India and Japan—and cooperative security by all the regional countries.

CHINA: A POTENTIAL HEGEMON OR A BENEVOLENT STATUS QUO POWER?

A major development in the post cold war international relations is the emergence of China as a “potential great power” in the global arena. The power vacuum, created by the retraction of super power rivalry from East Asia, has been filled by China with its economic outreach and military development programme. China’s defence budget has doubled in about 19 years (except the current fiscal with a modest 7.5 per cent increase from the previous one), and is the second largest in the world with \$78 billion.²⁰ China’s military modernisation programme actually started in the late 1980s

¹⁵ Deepak Nair, “Regionalism in the Asia Pacific/East Asia: A Frustrated Regionalism”, *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, Vol. 31, No. 1, 2009, p. 121.

¹⁶ Sheldon W. Simon, “Whither Security Regionalism? ASEAN and the ARF in the Face of New Security Challenges”, in Amitav Acharya and Evelyn Goh (Eds.), *Reassessing Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific: Competition, Congruence, and Transformation* (Massachusetts: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 2007, p. 122).

¹⁷ Kenneth Waltz, “Structural Realism After the Cold War”, *International Security*, Vol. 25, No. 1, 2000, p. 32.

¹⁸ John J. Mearsheimer, “Structural Realism”, in Tim Dunne, Milja Kurki and Steve Smith (Eds.), *International Relations Theories: Discipline And Diversity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007, p. 84).

¹⁹ Varun Sahni, “India and the Asian Security Architecture”, *Current History*, April 2006, p. 164.

²⁰ *China Daily*, 4 March 2010.

but was spurred by the lessons of the 1990–1991 Gulf War.²¹ Although China is two decades behind the United States in terms of military technology and capability, it is now “pursuing a deliberate and focused course of military modernisation”.²² According to the Council on Foreign Relations’s Task Force Report on Chinese Military Power, “China is developing limited power projection capabilities to deal with a range of possible conflict scenarios along its periphery especially in maritime areas”.²³ Its naval capabilities are aimed to deter a possible political independence of Taiwan, but will have an impact beyond the immediate neighbourhood, certainly into the Indian Ocean Region. China will become a predominant military power in the Asia-Pacific region within two decades and People’s Liberation Army (PLA) will possess power projection across land borders that will affect the regional countries, especially those embroiled in a territorial dispute with China. Interestingly, “PLA is acquiring weapons that neutralise key U.S. positions in the Pacific, with ballistic missiles and supersonic sea-skimming missiles that can target the U.S. aircraft carriers in the region; an enlarged submarine fleet including nuclear submarines; home-grown satellite reconnaissance and communication capabilities; and recently, the demonstrated capability to eliminate satellites and intercept ballistic missiles”.²⁴

Realists believe that power is the currency of international politics. Great powers, at least the emerging ones, play careful attention to how much relative economic and military power they have.²⁵ China presently wants to ensure that it remains the pre-eminent power in the region, a great power in the Asian context. Offensive realism predicts that great powers “maximise their relative power” and “the ultimate goal is to be the hegemon in the system”.²⁶ Offensive realists believe that “status quo powers are rarely found in world politics, because the international system creates powerful incentives for states to look for opportunities to gain power at the expense of rivals, and to take advantage of those situations when the benefits outweigh the costs”.²⁷ A potential hegemon is the most powerful state in a regional system and might seek to

²¹ Barry Buzan and Gerald Segal, “Rethinking East Asian Security” *Survival*, Vol. 36, No. 2, 1994, p. 8.

²² “Chinese Military Power”, *Council on Foreign Relations’s Task Force Report* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 2003, p. 24).

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Drew Thompson, “Think Again: China’s Military”, *Foreign Policy*, Mar/Apr 2010, p. 88.

²⁵ John J. Mearsheimer, “Structural Realism”, *op. cit.*, p. 72.

²⁶ John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2001, p. 21).

²⁷ *Ibid.*

expand its influence and control beyond its immediate periphery. They try to increase the influence because it enhances their security and prosperity.²⁸ In doing so, a potential hegemon tries to ensure a “marked gap” between the size of its economy and army and that of the second most powerful state in the system.²⁹ Once a state becomes stronger, it attempts to establish hegemony in its own region while making sure that no “peer competitor” could challenge its supremacy. They will seek to prevent the rise of “peer competitors”—the other hegemonists—in the same region. “Potential hegemonists always aspire to be hegemonists, and they will not stop increasing their power until they succeed”.³⁰ In this asymmetry of power relations, China will likely try to dictate the boundaries of acceptable behaviour to neighbouring countries by means of intimidation or through coercive diplomacy, before resorting to direct military expedition.³¹

According to Mearsheimer, “it is a good strategic sense for states to gain as much power as possible and, if circumstances are right, to pursue hegemony”.³² Almost 32 years of high economic growth has provided the economic base for a sustained build-up for China’s military capabilities. The double-digit growth of defence expenditure for almost two decades boosts Beijing’s power projection capability considerably in both conventional and nuclear terms. Avery Goldstein argues that “China’s contemporary grand strategy is designed to engineer the country’s rise to the status of a true great power that shapes, rather than simply responds to, international system”.³³

States have various choices as they emerge as a great power. An emerging power does not necessarily become a hegemon. It has a choice to pursue a status of hegemony or not. However, structural factors greatly decide a state’s freedom to choose whether to seek a great power status.³⁴ “Eligible states that fail to attain great power status are

²⁸ Denny Roy, “Assessing the Asia-Pacific ‘Power Vacuum’”, *Survival*, Vol. 37, No. 3, 1995, p. 48.

²⁹ Glenn H. Snyder, “Mearsheimer’s World-Offensive Realism and the Struggle for Security: A Review Essay”, *International Security*, Vol. 27, No. 1, 2002, p. 152.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 151–152.

³¹ Joshy M. Paul, “India and Japan: Reluctant Idealism to Practical Realism”, *South Asian Survey*, Vol. 15, No. 1, 2008, p. 115.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ Avery Goldstein, “The Diplomatic Face of China’s Grand Strategy: A Rising Power’s Emerging Choices”, *China Quarterly*, Vol. 168, December 2001, p. 836.

³⁴ Christopher Layne, “The Unipolar Illusion: Why New Great Powers Will Rise”, *International Security*, Vol. 17, No. 4, 1993, p. 7.

predictably punished”.³⁵ Christopher Layne says China had enjoyed a commanding position in Asia till the nineteenth century but collapsed because it did not attempt to acquire great power status. Considerably, the difference between nineteenth century China’s downfall and the downfall of Japan and Germany in the twentieth century is that the defeat of Japan and Germany was the defeat of their power and glory, too. On the other hand, China was colonised by foreign powers before it could augment its power and glory. So the Chinese elite certainly will endeavour to reclaim the “lost” glorious period of China.

Great power emergence was not driven primarily by the need to counter-balance the prevailing hegemony. The shadow of pre-eminence was an important factor.³⁶ Beijing will attempt to re-establish the historical order that served China’s power and status so well in the region, once its current effort of accumulation of national power succeeds. If Beijing decides to pursue a policy of asserting China’s centrality in the Asia-Pacific security order, conflict with the United States and other regional countries would almost certainly occur. In this situation, however, America’s balancing of China, as predicted by the realists, is doubtful. This is because China has acquired a robust second-strike nuclear capability including delivery systems that can hit the west coast of the United States. Realists say that a nuclear weapon is the most successful deterrent in today’s international security.³⁷ In a nuclear war, both sides have a survivable retaliatory capability. Neither gains an advantage from striking first. At the same time, unconventional war between nuclear-armed states—such as between the United States and China—is possible but unlikely, because of the danger of escalation to the nuclear level.³⁸ In this regard, a direct conflict between China and the United States may not happen in real terms.

In Mearsheimer’s scheme of offensive realism, great powers tend to favour buck-passing over balancing.³⁹ Buck-passing is the principal strategy that great powers use to prevent immediate rivals from upsetting the power structure of their favour. China has time and again attempted to pass the buck to its so-called trusted allies, North

³⁵ Ibid., p. 8.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 31.

³⁷ Mearsheimer, “Structural Realism”, op. cit., p. 76.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Powers*, op. cit., p. 139.

Korea and Pakistan, to check both India and Japan from emerging as a rival to it. China wants to see a Japan that is subservient to the United States in its neighbourhood than an independent and powerful one. With tacit support from Beijing, North Korea has adopted belligerent positions against Tokyo many times, including the testing of the Teopodong I and Teopodong II missiles over the Sea of Japan, which eventually forced Japan to depend on the United States for its security rather than building its own defence infrastructure gradually. Besides, when the Japan-U.S. relationship strained over the Futenma air base issue during Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama's tenure, including his attempt to give Japan an "independent" role in the regional matters, North Korea allegedly torpedoed a South Korean naval ship *Cheonan*, thereby creating uncertainty in Northeast Asia. This forced Tokyo to follow the U.S. line on the airbase issue that ultimately cost Hatoyama his premiership.⁴⁰ During the entire *Cheonan* incident, Beijing took an ambivalent stand and was reluctant to accept the findings of the investigation conducted by multi-national Joint Civilian Military Investigation group on the incident.

Similarly, China has provided military technology and various other types of military hardware to Pakistan to help it attain parity with India in South Asia. Beijing has also clandestinely supported Islamabad's attempts to acquire nuclear weapons technology. Recently, China has pledged a civilian nuclear deal to Pakistan on the lines of the Indo-U.S. nuclear deal, based on the logic of "restoring nuclear balance in South Asia",⁴¹ conveniently ignoring Pakistan's dubious track record on proliferation. China is using Pakistan in its effort to counter India's emergence as a peer competitor for Beijing.

Avery Goldstein says China could follow a "Bismarckian" strategy in Asia,⁴² similar to that followed by Germany in the latter part of the nineteenth century under Otto van Bismarck. Bismarck annexed the areas which he considered to be allied to Prussia

⁴⁰ Joshy M. Paul "The Fall of Hatoyama: What Went Wrong?", *RSIS Commentary*, 15 June 2010, available at www.rsis.edu.sg/publications/Perspective/RSIS0612010.pdf

⁴¹ T. P. Srinivasan, "The Nuclear Suppliers Group's Shameful Silence", *The Wall Street Journal* (Asia edition), 28 June 2010.

⁴² Avery Goldstein, "An Emerging China's Emerging Grand Strategy: A Neo-Bismarckian Turn?", in G. John Ikenberry and Michael Mastanduno (Eds.), *International Relations Theory and the Asia-Pacific* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003).

under the banner of the common German culture, and for that purpose he used force against Austria and France. After that, he deliberately pursued a status quo policy and stopped further expansion of Germany lest other powers should unite against Germany. However, China has not reached a position comparable to what Prussia had reached by 1870. On the other hand, Beijing believes Taiwan, Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands, Arunachal Pradesh of India and a large part of maritime territory in the South China Sea shall be part of a unified China. In a way, China may pursue a military posture for its “unification” strategy, which would spell disaster for Asia.

Under such circumstances, the priority now is how to avoid a Chinese hegemony in Asia. Cooperative security has to be put in place in which cooperative balancing is the best viable mechanism. The cooperative security mechanism will seek to avoid a major conflict in Asia that will ultimately bring enduring peace and stability in Asia.

COOPERATIVE SECURITY IN ASIA

Although the concept of cooperative security in Asia is derived from the common security concept of Europe that evolved after the Helsinki process, in Asia it is more similar to comprehensive security. Cooperative security becomes more relevant when one side tries to strengthen its security unilaterally, while collective security does not work because it lacks unity among the affected countries. In other words, “it is a concept formulated from the recognition that there must be a measure to strengthen security on both sides as they experience an ‘imaginary war’ and ‘imaginary destruction’”.⁴³ Cooperative security structures can be the means of maintaining regional peace and stability that will effectively deter the transition from security dilemma to virtual anarchy. Cooperative security permits deeper understanding of the mutuality of security as well as broadens the definition of security beyond the traditional military concerns. It is based on mutually assured survivability and acknowledgment of others’ legitimate security concerns. “Security, therefore, is more than the absence of war. It is the presence of a stable and prosperous peace”.⁴⁴ However, for a stable and prosperous peace, states need to avoid any perceived threat and create confidence of its own survivability.

⁴³ Sugio Takahashi, “Redefinition of Cooperative Security and ‘Regional’ Security in the Asia Pacific”, *NIDS Security Report*, National Institute of Defence Studies, Tokyo, No. 1, March 2000, p. 106.

⁴⁴ Craig A. Snyder, “Building Multilateral Security Cooperation in the South China Sea”, *Asian Perspective*, Vol. 21, No. 1, 1997, p. 13.

As a policy option, cooperative security promotes confidence-building measures, defence exchanges, security dialogues and promotion of multilateral framework. It advocates increased “transparency” of military forces that can reduce the mistrust between states by facilitating effective threat assessment by participating countries. Greater transparency is achieved through the sharing of intelligence reports, exchange of observers at military exercises and joint inspection of military bases.⁴⁵ A major component of cooperative security is confidence and security building measures (CSBMs) that enhance more transparency throughout the region. In recent times, countries are progressively working for CSBMs that provide an environment conducive for economic pursuits. CSBMs are made by means of reciprocal visits of senior military officers, joint exercises and training programmes, sharing of military information, advanced intimation about internal military exercises, joint geological survey and joint projects in disputed territory. It also includes transparent weapons acquisition programme, demilitarisation of common borders, joint development projects especially in the disputed territories, growth triangles, mutual exchange of defence policy papers, and greater interaction and consultation among regional policymakers.⁴⁶

Since the early 1990s, cooperative security has been the main principle of security order in Asia. The ARF has emerged as an institutional mechanism for cooperative security, which is formed on the ASEAN model of consultation and consensus building.⁴⁷ It has brought all the major stakeholders of the international security including the United States, Russia, China, India, Japan, the EU and ASEAN to a single platform and discusses regional and global security issues which inextricably affect the Asia-Pacific region. However, keeping the ARF tied to the ASEAN way of multilateralism limits its relevance to security problems of other regions, especially Northeast Asia and South Asia. It prevents the ARF from emerging as an effective and conclusive, albeit non-binding, security organisation. The ASEAN way of informal, consultative and multilateral mechanisms are not giving enough room for resolving bilateral issues such as border disputes. More importantly, China is reluctant to accept ARF as a problem solving mechanism through binding security agreements.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 14.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 14–15.

⁴⁷ Amitav Acharya, “Recording Asia: ‘Cooperative Security’ or Concert of Powers?”, *RSIS Working Paper No. 3*, 1999, p. 8.

It prefers to keep the ARF primarily as a vehicle for dialogue and consultation and this prevents the development of the ARF into a mature institution. Beijing has vehemently opposed any role of the ARF in preventive diplomacy on the ground that it may reduce its comparative advantage in its disputes with neighbouring countries, and also views it as an outside interference in its domestic affairs (including Taiwan).⁴⁸ Thus, the ARF has become more of a “talk shop” than a binding security mechanism in Asia. As a result, “contentious issues that have long dogged the ARF continue to hog the limelight—the Korean peninsula, Myanmar, the South China Sea—with no regional solution in sight, none at least that the ARF can satisfactorily furnish”.⁴⁹

In this regard, a constructive security mechanism has to evolve in order to bring peace and stability in the long-term. For this purpose, the relationship of all the four major actors—China, India, Japan and ASEAN are very important. As discussed earlier, in the cooperative security mechanism there must be a two-layer mechanism. The first one is an inner layer in which all these four players interact bilaterally and multilaterally, and the outer layer work as a “watchdog” to ensure no country, especially China, will “disturb” the status quo. In the inner layer mechanism there are three devices—national resurgence, bilateralism and multilateralism. As a result, a “cooperative balancing” will emerge as the new security concept with regard to Asian security architecture. This cooperative balancing is a combination of realists’ balance of power and cooperative security.

National Resurgence

National resurgence can be interpreted through the prism of “internal balancing” of the realist framework. Structural realists argue that the international system favours increasing power capability of nations for their own security. Waltz says, instead of seeking maximisation of power, states can strive for an appropriate amount of power.⁵⁰ In recent times, almost all countries in the Asia-Pacific region have spent significant amounts towards increasing their military profile. From 1999 to 2008, military expenditure in East Asia including Southeast Asia has grown by 56 per cent.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 9.

⁴⁹ Tan See Seng, “ARF: Ad hoc Regional Forum?”, *The Strait Times*, 30 July 2010.

⁵⁰ Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (California: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1979, p. 40).

In South Asia it has grown at the rate of 41 per cent compared with 14 per cent of Europe.⁵¹ Between 2000 and 2008, Malaysia's military budget more than doubled from US\$1.67 billion to \$3.47 billion, Indonesia; \$2.24 billion to \$3.8 billion, a 72 per cent increase, while Thailand increased its military expenditure by 43 per cent from \$1.98 billion to \$3 billion.⁵² Singapore's defence expenditure has increased to \$5.8 billion from \$4.6 billion during the same period. Altogether, Southeast Asian countries' military expenditure rose by at least 50 per cent in real terms between 2000 and 2008.

Southeast Asia: This high rate of military spending has increased the confidence and self-assurance among the elites of the countries of the Southeast Asian region vis-à-vis China. The Southeast Asian countries have been involved in a shopping spree of arms and ammunitions in the international market during this period. Singapore has recently acquired F-15 jet fighters from the United States, while Malaysia and Indonesia have bought SU-30s from Russia, and Thailand has already ordered Grippens from Sweden,⁵³ apart from other weapons acquisitions. Meanwhile, Vietnam is increasing its naval capability with the aim of being self reliant by acquiring three corvettes outfitted with German engines and British and American radars.⁵⁴ It signed a major arms deal with Poland in 2005 for 10 maritime patrol M-28 aircraft. Moreover, Hanoi is building up to 40 new indigenous 400-ton offshore patrol vessels and six 150-ton coastal boats.⁵⁵

In order to strengthen its naval capability, Vietnam has reportedly signed to buy six Kilo-class diesel-electric submarines from Russia, at a cost of US\$2 billion.⁵⁶ With these vessels joining the navy, Hanoi can protect its EEZ resources and project its power to the areas of territorial disputes. Vietnam was already involved in military skirmish with China in 1979 and 1988 and the dispute over Spratly Islands still continues. Beijing has adopted an aggressive posture towards the islands by banning

⁵¹ Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, *SIPRI Year Book 2009* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009, p. 180).

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 233.

⁵³ Richard A. Bitzinger, "A New Arms Race? Explaining Recent Southeast Asian Military Acquisition", *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, Vol. 32, No. 1, April 2010, p. 51.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

⁵⁶ Nga Pham, "Vietnam Orders Submarines and Warplanes from Russia", *BBC News*, 16 December 2009, available at news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8415380.stm

fishing in the disputed waters and has sent naval ships to patrol the area. China is getting increasingly assertive in the South China Sea, as the U.S. Navy surveillance ship *Impeccable* was allegedly “harassed” by Chinese naval patrol boats near Hainan island in March 2009.⁵⁷

Japan: Since the time of Junichiro Koizumi, Japan has begun to increase its strategic profile in Asia by undertaking a “normalisation” process. Japan initiated its military modernisation programme with the issuance of the “Araki report” by the Prime Minister’s Council on Security and Defence Capabilities in October 2004. The report called for an “integrated security strategy” for Japan and proposed a two-pronged approach to strengthen the Japanese Self Defence Force (JSDF):

1. The traditional function of preventing direct threats from having an impact on Japan; and
2. A new emphasis on international cooperation outside Japan’s own territory to prevent the rise of security threats⁵⁸

Followed by the Araki report, Japan brought out its third National Defence Programme Guidelines (NDPG) in December 2004, which stressed the need to establish the JSDF as a “multi-functional, flexible and effective” force to fulfil the regional and global “responsibilities” of Japan.⁵⁹ The NDPG also called for building Japan’s “own efforts” to avoid any threats from reaching Japan, apart from the Japan-U.S. alliance system. Similarly, the defence white paper *Defense of Japan 2006* puts forth a new concept that aims to transform defence forces from “deterrent effect-oriented” to “response capability-oriented” in Japan’s security strategy.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ “Chinese Ships ‘Harass’ U.S. Vessel”, *BBC News*, 9 March 2009, available at news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/7933171.stm

⁵⁸ The Council on Security and Defence Capabilities, “The Council on Security and Defence Capabilities Report: Japan’s Visions for Future Security and Defence Capabilities”, October 2004–2007, quoted in Christopher W. Hughes, “Japanese Military Modernisation: In Search of a ‘Normal’ Security Role”, in Ashley J. Tellis and Michael Willis (Eds.), *Strategic Asia 2005–2006: Military Modernisation in an Era of Uncertainty* (Washington, D.C.: National Bureau of Asian Research, 2005, pp. 117–118).

⁵⁹ National Institutes for Defense Studies Japan (NIDS), *East Asian Strategic Review 2007*, *The Japan Times*, Tokyo, p. 228.

⁶⁰ Ministry of Defence, *Defense of Japan 2006* (Tokyo: Government of Japan, p. 101).

Importantly, the 2004 NDPG has mentioned that North Korea and China are the “major threat” for Japan.⁶¹ For the first time China has been mentioned in such a manner. Similarly, the mid-term defence plan 2005–2009 called for modifying the structural functioning of the JSDF; a quantitative build-down from Japan’s cold war style forces.⁶² It also advocated the modernisation of JSDF by inducting large tanks (Type-74MBT), interceptors (E-2C early warning aircraft and F-15 fighters), and anti-submarine warfare forces (destroyers, minesweepers and P-3C patrol aircraft). In the fiscal 2010 defence budget, the government earmarked funds for acquiring new tanks and building a new helicopter-carrying destroyer to enhance deterrence and response capabilities. In November 2009, Japan commissioned a 248-metre long naval ship DDH-22—Japan’s largest military vessel since World War II. Defined as a “helicopter-carrying destroyer”, it is expected to, among other roles, keep China’s active maritime activities in the disputed area in check. Indeed, a robust naval capability is the centrepiece of Japan’s changed security policy.⁶³ Recently, Japan had unsuccessfully sought to purchase the most modern fifth-generation fighter aircraft F-22 Raptor from the United States, but finally had to concede to F-35 Lightning II of Lockheed Martin.⁶⁴

India: As the fourth largest military power and an emerging economic giant, New Delhi will play a crucial role in the security apparatus of Asia. India has spent billions of dollars in the arms market and “is expected to spend about \$80 billion on defence acquisition in the next five years”, according to a Deloitte report.⁶⁵ Apart from the current credible force structure for the three services, India is strengthening its capability manifold. India is buying 126 multi-role combat aircraft at the cost of \$12 billion. India has joined the Russian fifth-generation fighter aircraft development programme as a co-developer which will compete with the F-22 Raptor in the same category. India and Russia have jointly developed supersonic Brahmos missile, the most sophisticated in the world in its category, and the cooperation between the two

⁶¹ National Institute for Defense Studies Japan (NIDS), *East Asian Strategic Review 2005*, *The Japan Times*, Tokyo, p. 228.

⁶² Hughes, “Japan’s Military Modernisation”, op. cit., p. 118.

⁶³ Joshy M. Paul, “Japan-China Spat Over Nuclear Arsenal: Is Tokyo Hardening Its Security Policy?”, *RSIS Commentary No. 77*, 14 July 2010, available at www.rsis.edu.sg/publications/Perspective/RSIS0772010.pdf

⁶⁴ “Japan Leans Towards Buying F-35 Fighter Jet: Media”, *Reuters*, 22 November 2009, available at www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE5AM0CQ20091123

⁶⁵ “India Set to Spend \$80 billion in Defence Acquisition”, *The Indian Express*, 20 July 2010.

continues in 200 joint projects including the transfer of technology for licensed assembly of T-90 tanks in India.⁶⁶ A \$2.3 billion Russian-made 45,000 ton aircraft carrier Admiral Gorkshov will join the Indian Navy as INS Vikramaditya by 2013. India is building a 40,000-ton indigenous aircraft carrier at Cochin Shipyard Ltd, which will have 29 Russian-made MiG-29K fighters and Indian-made Light Combat Aircraft (LCA), and will be commissioned by 2014.⁶⁷ Indian Air Force aims to have 42 fighter squadrons by 2022, up from the existing 32, with progressive induction of 270 Sukhois, 126 multi-role combat aircraft, 120 indigenous Tejas Light Combat aircraft and batches of fifth-generation fighters.⁶⁸ India has recently launched a 6,000 ton nuclear submarine INS Arihant,⁶⁹ which will help to fulfil its “nuclear triad”, a second strike nuclear capability from land, air and sea.

India’s missile programme continues robustly, featuring both offensive and defensive capabilities, including the objective of countering threats from China. India’s integrated guided missile development programme (IGMDP) has five types of missiles which include Prithvi (surface-to-surface missile with 150–350 km range), Agni (intermediate range surface-to-surface with 700–6,000 km range), Nag (a third-generation anti-tank guided missile with 3–7 km range), Akash (medium range surface to air missile with maximum intercept range of 30 km) and Thrishul (short range surface-to-air missile with 9–12 km range). Among these, Prithvi and Agni are capable of carrying nuclear warheads. Agni-III is considered as credible deterrence against Pakistan and China, while nuclear capable Agni-V could even reach China’s northeastern city of Harbin. India’s Defence Research Development Organisation (DRDO) is developing MIRV (multiple independently targetable re-entry vehicles) warheads for Agni missiles.⁷⁰ An MIRV payload on a missile carries several nuclear warheads, which can be programmed to hit different targets. Hence, a flurry of such missiles can completely overwhelm China’s ballistic missile defence (BMD) systems.

Like the missiles, India is also developing its own BMD system. The Prithvi series missiles are to be used for BMD system and various stages of test trials are taking

⁶⁶ Sitharth Srivastava, “India’s Crippled Arms Purchase”, *Asia Sentinel*, 25 March 2010.

⁶⁷ “India Depends on Russia for Indigenous Aircraft Carrier Too”, *The Indian Express*, 21 February 2009.

⁶⁸ “IAF Boosting Air Power with New Units, Upgrading Airfields”, *The Times of India*, 13 August 2010.

⁶⁹ “PM Launches INS Arihant in Visakhapatnam”, *The Times of India*, 26 July 2009.

⁷⁰ “N-Tipped Agni-V can Hit All of China, Pakistan”, *The Times of India*, 12 February 2010.

place. The Prithvi Air Defence (PAD) is an anti-ballistic missile system developed to intercept incoming ballistic missile at both endo (up to an altitude of 30 km) and exo (up to an altitude of 50–80 km) atmospheric stages. India is also developing an air defence system along the lines of the U.S. Patriot system. India has recently test fired an interceptor missile to achieve its Advanced Air Defence (AAD) capability as part of its full-fledged multi-layer BMD system.⁷¹ Like the Patriot, Akash is really an air defence SAM that has proved its manoeuvrability and the system provides air defence coverage of 2,000 square km. It is a supersonic missile system and can neutralise multiple aerial targets attacking from several directions simultaneously in all-weather conditions. Recently, India has decided to deploy the Akash air defence system on the northeastern border with China to counter possible threat posed by Chinese fighters, helicopters and drones in the region.⁷² India considers its northeastern region bordering China as a major thrust area for its security and is upgrading its airbases in the area such as Chabua, Dibrugarh, Jorhat, Mohanbari, Hasimara, Guwahati and Bagdogra.⁷³ The Tezpur airbase, which was upgraded last year, houses Sukhoi-30, the mainstay of India's air capability vis-à-vis its enemy. All the recent defence modernisation programme of India is actually aimed at deterring China's future military adventure against India.

Bilateralism

In the light of China's increasing military modernisation programme and the helplessness of multilateral institutions, Asia has been experiencing a "strategic alliance" system in the recent past. Majority of these defence cooperation is by and large targeted to constrain China's offensive posture. Balance is the key to avoiding conflicts and helping the region act in a peaceful and productive manner. The defence cooperation is increasingly going on at various stages like joint military exercises, exchange of defence personnel, joint training, high level meeting of military personnel and sale of military hardware. India and Singapore held a joint naval exercise SIMBEX (Singapore India Maritime Bilateral Exercises) near the coast of

⁷¹ "India Successfully Test-Fires Interceptor Missile", *The Economic Times*, 26 July 2010.

⁷² "India to Deploy Akash Missiles in North-East to Deter China", *The Economic Times*, 16 February 2010.

⁷³ "IAF Boosting Air Power with New Units, Upgrading Airfields", *The Times of India*, 13 August 2010.

Andaman and Nicobar Islands in April 2010.⁷⁴ India and Vietnam are increasing strategic cooperation, which includes “greater cooperation in defence matters and the use of civilian nuclear technology”.⁷⁵ Earlier on, India had agreed in principle to sell its Prithvi missile to Vietnam.⁷⁶ In this context, Indo-Japan cooperation is the important component of balance of power mechanism in Asia.

Structural realism visualises balancing behaviour as the typical response to hegemonic aspirations of nations. As and when a threatening power arises, other states tend to join together against it. If left unopposed, a potential great power would challenge the system, but will not be powerful enough to dominate the region against the alliance of its neighbours. In the unequal power scenario, there is always a tendency to cooperate between the less powerful countries against the most powerful one. For instance, France’s rivals (Britain, Russia, Prussia and Austria) formed two coalitions between 1793 and 1804 against Napoleon’s hegemonic aspiration in Europe. However, Napoleon had continued his ambition to rule the entire Western Europe, but could not overcome the combined military strength of the balancing coalition and was defeated decisively in the battle of Waterloo in 1815.⁷⁷

Considering the balance of power structure in Asia, the Indo-Japan strategic relationship is one of the most significant developments in the international relations of Asia Pacific in the twenty-first century. The relationship could prove to be a catalyst for a solid foundation for an enduring security architecture in Asia. The relationship can be considered as a counter-mechanism to China’s future hegemonic ambition in Asia. The strategic cooperation has begun with the Koizumi administration’s “normalisation” of Japan. Prior to that there was no common interest for both the countries, while the relationship was predominantly enmeshed in nuclear squabbles. However, China’s pursuit of pre-eminence in Asia and the emergence of India as a prominent economic and political power in Asia have accelerated the need to bridge the gap between the two.⁷⁸ While these two countries are cautious about openly aligning militarily against China, strong defence cooperation could deter

⁷⁴ Pankaj Jha, “India-Singapore Defence Exercises”, *IPCS Commentary* 3105, 3 May 2010.

⁷⁵ “India, Vietnam Deepen Defence, Nuclear Ties”, *The Hindustan Times*, 6 July 2007.

⁷⁶ Rahul Bedi, “Strategic Realignment”, *Frontline*, Vol. 20, Issue 13, 21 June – 4 July 2003.

⁷⁷ John J. Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Powers*, op. cit., p. 277.

⁷⁸ Joshy M. Paul, “India and Japan: Reluctant Idealism to Practical Realism”, op. cit., p. 110.

China's possible revisionist aspirations. In this respect, an Asian balance of power is slowly but surely emerging in Asia, with latent support of the ASEAN countries.

It was during Prime Minister Koizumi's visit to New Delhi in 2005 that the relationship received the much-needed momentum. He signed the "Japan-India Partnership in a New Asian Era: Strategic Orientation of Japan-India Global Partnership", as well as an action plan called the "Eight-fold Initiative for Strengthening Japan-India Global Partnership" with his Indian counterpart, Dr. Manmohan Singh.⁷⁹ Since then, Indian and Japanese Prime Ministers have made reciprocal visits every alternate year. The pursuit of security cooperation further blossomed with a May 2006 meeting in Tokyo between Indian Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee and Minister of State for Defence Fukushima Nukaga of Japan, resulting in a joint statement concerning bilateral defence cooperation. This statement set forth such objectives as:

- Defence exchanges to enhance mutual understanding and promote wide-ranging cooperation;
- Service-to-service exchanges, including capacity building, which could lead to cooperation in disaster relief, maritime security or other areas of mutual interest;
- Exchange of information and experiences in tackling regional and global issues, including international terrorism, proliferation of WMD and their means of delivery, disaster relief and PKO; and
- Cooperation in technical areas⁸⁰

Similarly, during Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's second visit to Japan in October 2008, he and Prime Minister Taro Aso issued a landmark "Japan-India Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation", the third such document on defence cooperation Tokyo has signed with a foreign partner, apart from its alliance treaty with the United States and the 2007 agreement with Australia.⁸¹

Promoting deeper interaction between the forces of two countries further, Japanese Maritime Self Defence Force (MSDF) participated along with the U.S. and Singapore

⁷⁹ "Japan-India Partnership in a New Asian Era: Strategic Orientation of Japan-India Global Partnership" (Tokyo: MOFA, Government of Japan), available at www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/india/partner0504.html

⁸⁰ *East Asian Strategic Review: 2008*, NIDS, p. 221.

⁸¹ "The New Security Architecture: Binding Japan And Australia, Containing China", *Nautilus Institute*, 15 March 2007, available at www.nautilus.org/~rmit/forum-reports/0707a-tanter.html

navies in a multilateral maritime exercise called “Malabar 07-2” hosted by the Indian Navy in the Bay of Bengal from 4-9 September 2007. Subsequently, a bilateral naval exercise was conducted in Mumbai from 23-26 August 2008, in which MSDF Kashima Training Ship and Asagiri and Umagiri frontline destroyers participated. Before that, India and Japan had held their first-ever naval exercise near the Boso Peninsula in central Japan on 16 April 2007. Apart from this, the Coast Guard of India and the MSDF conducts joint exercises, alternately in Indian and Japanese waters. Taking their ties to new heights, India and Japan have decided to hold senior-level dialogues of Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Defence. The first meeting was held in New Delhi on 10 July 2010, during which they discussed ways to enhance security cooperation and reviewed bilateral ties, including commencement of talks for the nuclear pact.⁸² For the first time Japan has engaged in a dialogue known as the “2+2 dialogue” with India, as Tokyo has been involved in such consultation only with mutual allies, the United States and Australia. In fact, the “2+2 dialogue” signifies the importance Tokyo has given to New Delhi for a joint management of security concerning Asia.

Cooperative Security

Ironically, India, Japan and China cooperate bilaterally as well as multilaterally in a cooperative security mechanism. Bilaterally, India and China have agreed to strive for a “strategic cooperation partnership” that was promulgated in April 2005 during Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao’s visit to New Delhi.⁸³ The strategic partnership emphasises a shift from competition to cooperation in a mutually beneficial manner. In recent times, both countries have developed a coordinated approach in international affairs by cooperating in the Doha round of World Trade Organisation (WTO) discussion; climate change negotiations; counter-terrorism activity; and energy security.⁸⁴ Both countries sought to boost CBMs and conducted two joint military exercises, in 2007 in China and in 2008 in India. Importantly, both countries have decided to continue the special representative level discussion on border dispute; 13 rounds of discussion have been held so far. Economically, total trade between the two countries has grown from \$12.71 billion in 2004–2005 to \$41.84 billion in 2008–

⁸² “India-Japan Engage in ‘2+2 Dialogue’”, *The Hindustan Times*, 10 July 2010.

⁸³ *China Daily*, “China, India Forging Strategic Partnership”, 12 April 2005.

⁸⁴ “India-China Strategic Relationship: Challenges and Prospects”, *India Strategic*, November 2009, available at www.indiastrategic.in/topstories431.htm

2009,⁸⁵ and is expected to reach \$60 billion by the end of the current financial year (April 2010-March 2011).

Notwithstanding historical animosities and territorial disputes between Japan and China, bilateral cooperation in both commercial and political level has developed profoundly. Both the Prime Ministers after Koizumi, Shinzo Abe and Yasuo Fukuda, made their first official visit to China rather than the United States. In fact, Abe's visit in April 2006 was a game-changer because it was the first official visit by a Japanese Prime Minister in five years. The bilateral relations gained momentum with Chinese President Hu Jintao's visit to Japan in May 2008, which resulted in the signing of the China-Japan Joint Statement on Advancing the Strategic Relationship of Mutual Benefit.⁸⁶ It aimed to expand the horizon for cooperation, and to enhance "strategic mutual confidence" between the two countries. During the visit both countries also decided to "support each other's peaceful development" and declared that they "pose no threat to each other".⁸⁷

The new Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) government is more enthusiastic about increasing bilateral relationship with China than the U.S.-oriented Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) regime. Although the administration's foreign policy is still in its nascent stages, mutual visits of important functionaries at both party and government levels are taking place. During the election campaign, the DPJ under former Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama pledged to forge "closer relations with China". The United States also tacitly supports a China-Japan entente. Recently, Japanese Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada and his Chinese counterpart Yan Jiechi have agreed to conclude negotiations and sign a treaty over joint gas field development in the East China Sea.⁸⁸ Although none of the real problems between the two have been resolved, bilateral cooperation is growing strongly.

Multilateral regionalism and its attendant institutions such as the ARF, the ASEAN Plus Three (APT) and the East Asia Summit (EAS) are important components of

⁸⁵ Department of Commerce, "Export-Import Data Bank: Trade", Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India, July 2010.

⁸⁶ "Launching a New Era in China-Japan Relations", *China Daily*, 13 May 2008.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ "Okada, Jang Eye Gas Field Treaty", *The Japan Times*, 23 July 2010.

cooperative security that help in promoting inclusive growth and regional stability in Asia. A major success of these institutions is that China is a part of it and engages with the member countries cooperatively. Concretely, these multilateral conferences and institutions imbibe the Westphalian norms of independence, reciprocity, equality and non-interference within the regional framework.⁸⁹ Each country recognises and respects the others' interest. In this multilateralism, the ASEAN plays a crucial role as a norm builder and facilitator and has achieved great success in bringing all the three major powers on a single platform. In a way the ARF and other multilateral conferences have effectively guaranteed an insurance against strategic uncertainty.⁹⁰ The cooperative security mechanisms and institutions like the ARF have helped to avoid the realist perception of "anarchy" in Asia. Similarly, the Six Party talks provide some kind of stability in Northeast Asia too.

Importantly, it is significant that defence ministers of India, China and Japan have joined ASEAN counterparts in an annual meeting of ASEAN Defence Ministers Plus, and the first meeting was held in Hanoi, Vietnam on 12 October 2010. This kind of meeting would create CBMs and allay the fears of one country's excessive behaviour to sustain its claims and will become more accommodative to the territorial disputes. Similarly, joint military exercise in the disputed area can be conducted that will create mutual trust among the defence forces of the concerned countries. Although major countries continue their distrust and suspicion, peace and stability can be achieved through this level of cooperative security mechanism.

The second layer, comprising "outside" powers such as the United States, Russia, the EU and Australia work as stabilisers in providing a conducive environment in which the bilateral and multilateral engagement and cooperation can work effectively in Asia. The U.S.-led "hub" and "spoke" model security system, especially its alliance with Japan, provides not only a guarantee of security for Northeast Asia, but also works as a "check and balance" against China's aggressive behaviour in its pursuit of a great power status and its attendant hegemony. Similarly, the role of these powers in the multilateral fora like the ARF, EAS, APEC and the ADMM Plus somehow constrains China from taking an overtly offensive position on various regional

⁸⁹ Amitav Acharya, "Will Asia's Past Be Its Future?", *op. cit.*, p. 159.

⁹⁰ Amitav Acharya, "Regional Institutions and Security in the Asia Pacific", *op. cit.*, p. 37.

security issues. Importantly, the ASEAN countries endorse an active U.S. diplomatic role in these multilateral institutions. The United States is also strengthening its strategic relationship with countries like India, Singapore, Thailand and Indonesia with the aim of containing China's increased military influence in the region. Once China is restricted through "cooperative balancing" by the Asian countries, the fear of a possible hegemony can be avoided. This will help Asia to emerge as a stable region and it can perhaps grow like the EU.

CONCLUSION

Asian security has undergone tremendous changes recently. The need for economic growth and prosperity prompts regional countries' search for better security and stability. Since the end of the cold war, countries have experienced relative peace and stability and high rate of economic growth through multilateral mechanism and institutions of ASEAN and the ARF. However, the emergence of China as a pre-eminent power in Asia and shifting of focus of the United States from the Asia Pacific to the Middle East have contributed a new thinking about security consideration for many of the countries in the region. More importantly, China's increasing role in Asia, both as an economic giant and political behemoth, have necessitated that the regional countries interact with one another more actively than before. In this regard, the regional countries are looking for security by themselves and they are increasing their defence preparedness.

The "cooperative balancing" will ensure mutuality of security concern and give assurances to small countries about their security. It seeks to avoid arms race and sabre-rattling. If one country tries to intimidate or decides to act unilaterally, disturbing the status quo, the outer layer will work as a "check and balance" in the security apparatus of Asia. This will stop countries of the inner layer from going into a virtual armed rivalry among themselves. Similarly, the major powers of the inner layer will be cautious about the intentions and actions of other countries, making it impossible for any single country to initiate an outright arms build-up and eventually become a hegemon in the region. It will also help in avoiding a cold war type of situation in Asia between China and the United States. Ultimately, the cooperative balancing will emerge as a constant mechanism that will bring enduring peace and stability in Asia.

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