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The East Asian Peace and The Pax Americana: Challenges for The Co-Existence of Two Peaces

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To cite this article: Oishi, Mikio and Fumitaka Furuoka, "The East Asian Peace and The Pax Americana: Challenges for The Co-Existence of Two Peaces", *Uluslararası İlişkiler*, Volume 10, No 37 (Spring 2013), p. 95-116.

The East Asian Peace and The *Pax Americana*: Challenges for The Co-Existence of Two Peaces

Mikio OISHI and Fumitaka FURUOKA*

ABSTRACT

Since 1979 when China waged a short but devastating war with Vietnam, East Asia has been free of large-scale armed conflicts due mostly to the development of the "East Asian Way of Conflict Management." China has contributed a great deal to this East Asian Way through its experience in handling conflicts on its periphery as a disputant or a mediator. As a result, what may be called a *Pax Sinica* seems to be emanating from China. On the other hand, after more than 30 years of relatively weak presence, the United States has been politically and militarily returning to East Asia since the inauguration of the Obama Administration. China and the U. S. seems to be contending with each other over influence in East Asia, but prospects are that the U.S. eventually withdraw to the Second Islands Chain, leaving East Asia and a large part of Eurasia under the *Pax Sinica*. The paper also looks at the challenges and dilemmas that other East Asian countries face in the process, mostly focusing on Japan.

Keywords: East Asian Peace, *Pax Americana*, The Rise of China, *Pax Sinica*, Conflict Management, Offshore Balancing

Doğu Asya'da Barış ve *Pax Americana*: İki Barışın Bir Arada Yaşamasının Önündeki Engeller

ÖZET

Doğu Asya, Çin'in Vietnam'a 1979'da açtığı kısa fakat yıkıcı savaştan bu güne özellikle "Doğu Asya Tarzı Çatışma Yönetimi" sayesinde büyük çapta bir silahlı çatışmayla karşılaşmadı. Çin bu Doğu Asya Tarzı'na çevresindeki çatışmalarda yüklendiği taraf ya da arabulucu gibi çeşitli roller sayesinde büyük bir katkı sağladı. Sonuçta Çin'den kaynaklanan bir tür *Pax Sinica*'dan bahsedebiliriz. Diğer yandan Obama yönetiminin iş başına gelmesi sonrasında, yaklaşık 30 yıldan daha fazla bir sure bölgede zayıf bir varlık gösteren ABD, Doğu Asya'ya askeri ve siyasi olarak geri dönüyor. Çin ve ABD, Doğu Asya'da etkinlik için rekabet edecek gibi dursa da ABD'nin *Second Islands Chain*'e çekilmiş olması Doğu Asya'nın yanı sıra Avrasya'nın büyük bir kısmının *Pax Sinica*'nın etkisi altına gireceğine işaret ediyor. Bu çalışma özellikle Japonya'ya odaklanmakla birlikte diğer Doğu Asya devletlerinin karşı karşıya kaldıkları sorun ve ikilemlere eğilmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Doğu Asya Barışı, *Pax Americana*, Çin'in Yükselişi, *Pax Sinica*, Çatışma Yönetimi, Uzaktan Dengeleme

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Introduction

Since 1979 when China waged a short but devastating war with Vietnam, East Asia has been free of large-scale armed conflicts. Apart from a small number of minor conflicts, the region has been enjoying the so-called "East Asian Peace", which is characterised by political stability and economic prosperity.[1] What can be observed in the contemporary East Asia that comprises Southeast Asia and Northeast Asia is remarkable if its situation is compared with those in other regions, such as South Asia, Middle East and Afghanistan in between. There are valid questions that can be asked: What factors have contributed to this kind of peace? Where did it originate and how has it spread from thence? Can the East Asian Peace be applied to the management of conflicts in other regions?

What is equally interesting is the fact that China is actively promoting what may be called a "Chinese way of conflict management", which has been developed through its own involvement in regional conflicts, such as those across the Taiwan Straits and in the South China Sea. China is currently applying this approach to managing conflicts that take place on its periphery, such as the Korean Peninsula, Central Asia, South Asia and Iran. In so doing, China is apparently poised to create a *Pax Sinica* in a large part of Eurasia,[2] which is gradually but inevitably pushing out the *Pax Americana* [3] that has been in place for a long time since the end of World War II. In this respect, several questions may be asked as well: What is going on between the two peaces viewed in terms of conflict management? How is the relationship between them? Is it cooperative or hostile? What will be the future of the relationship? How will the relationship affect other regional actors, such as Japan and South Korea, in their international strategy?

This paper overviews signs of the changing regional conflict management mechanisms as a result of the shift in the U.S. regional focus and the "rise of China", both of which are major factors to the receding *Pax Americana* and the emerging *Pax Sinica* in a large part of Eurasia. It first traces the origin of the East Asian Peace, followed by the discussion of the development of the Chinese way of conflict management. It then looks at recent incidents or conflicts that have raised tension in East Asia, taking into account the relationship between the *Pax Americana* and the *Pax Sinica*, and discusses the dilemma of regional countries, especially Japan. It ends with considering prospects for the future of the two *Pax*s and with posing a theoretical question that have arisen through this study as a potential future research agenda.

1 Stein Tønnersson, "What is it that Best Explains the East Asian Peace since 1979?: A Call for a Research Agenda," *Asian Perspective*, Vol.33, No.1, 2009, p.126-127.

2 There are numerous elements that constitute a *pax* as a state of peace and order presided by a powerful nation, such as the military and economic might, system-building capacity and cultural and normative influence. This paper focuses on the power to create and maintain stability, regional or global, through effective management of conflict.

3 For a review on the concept of the *Pax Americana* in a comparative perspective, see Ali Parchami, *Hegemonic Peace and Empire: The Pax Romana, Britanica, and Americana*, London and New York, Routledge, 2009.

Origin of The East Asian Peace

The prototype of the East Asian Peace can be found in the post-World War II Japan. After its blunder in experimenting with imperialism and militarism that had led to the Pacific War, Japan adopted a "peace constitution" and declared that it would never pose any threat to neighbouring countries. Leaving its own defence in the hands of the U.S., Japan had single-handedly pursued economic growth since the mid-1950s. This was the origin of a state model, which is "thick" in economic development, but extremely "thin" in military affairs due to security arrangements with the US.[4] This model inspired the Suharto Administration of Indonesia in the mid-1960s, contributing to the end of its *Konfrontasi* (Confrontation) against Malaysia and resulting in the formation of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 1967.[5] The association's development can be seen foremost as a process of post-conflict reconciliation between the two countries. While embarking on "authoritarian developmentalism", Indonesia pursued military co-operation with the U.S. in order to enhance its external security. Through Indonesia, the Japan model in varying degrees spread within the ASEAN region, which, in turn, has developed its own model of regional stability, peace and prosperity, i.e., the "ASEAN Way of conflict management".[6]

The expansion of the Japan model was not limited to ASEAN. China, in the wake of the short but devastating Sino-Vietnamese War of 1979, took note of Japan's success and decided to prioritise economic growth over ideology and military adventurism, and adopted a foreign policy that would enhance relations with neighbouring countries, including member states of ASEAN. Beijing's shift of emphasis from military to economy has also contributed to the stabilisation across the Taiwan Strait, in its relations with its long-time rival Taipei, as will be discussed later. Since the mid-1980s, China's footsteps have been followed by Vietnam with its "Doi Moi" economic reform policy. With its self-confidence having been boosted by a success in economic development as a result, Vietnam joined ASEAN in 1995. South Korea had already been following a route similar to other countries in East Asia since the early 1960s, emulating the economic success of Japan.[7]

China Has Taken Over the Torch: Development of a Chinese Model of Conflict Management

China has contributed a great deal to the establishment of the East Asian Peace. This has been done to a considerable degree through the management of two conflicts in which it has been involved as a disputant: (1) the conflict across the Taiwan Straits, and (2) territorial disputes in South China Sea.

4 Tønnersson, "What is it that Best Explains," p.130-31.

5 Ibid.," p.126.

6 Jacob Bercovitch, Kamarulzaman Askandar and Miskio Oishi, "The ASEAN Way of Conflict Management: Old Patterns and New Trends," *Asian Journal of Political Science*, Vol.10, No.2, 2002, p.32.

7 Tønnersson, "What is it that Best Explains," p.126-127, p.132.

The Taiwan Straits

The conflict between mainland China and Taiwan originated as a rivalry between the Chinese Community Party and the Nationalist Party (*Kuomintang*). Soon after World War II, a civil war broke out between them and devastated mainland China until the Kuomintang fled to Taiwan in 1949. However, since the late-1960s, both Beijing and Taipei have managed to shift the arena of the conflict from the physical battlefield of the Taiwan Straits to the virtual battlefield of political and international arena. In other words, they have turned the conflict into a competition to build a superior state, which involves obtaining legitimacy from the population over which each of them rules and winning recognition and support from the international community. Legitimacy and international recognition depend on how far they can improve the living standard of the people and how well they conduct themselves on the international stage. Thus, economic development and diplomacy, including foreign aid, have been important weapons for each of them to win the battle.[8]

Both Beijing and Taipei have been equally successful in economic development within the territories under their control, and this has, in turn, created favourable conditions for the growth of economic exchange across the straits such as investment and technology transfer. The ensuing economic integration has pushed up the cost of armed conflict, which, coupled with confidence-building measures, such as conciliatory statements and negotiations on cross-strait flights, has generated restraint or self-deterrence on both sides.[9]

The South China Sea

On the other hand, the bellicose behaviour of China in the South China Sea (SCS) soon after the first arrival of its navy in the Spratly Islands in the late 1980s alarmed the littoral states of the SCS. It highlighted the threat emanating from China, which seemingly began to project its military might onto Southeast Asia. Since then, however, China has gradually been socialised into a manner of conduct, which is considered as appropriate in that part of the region. This has been achieved through a number of mechanisms—bilateral and multilateral, and official Track One and unofficial Track Two— mostly provided by ASEAN. In 2002, China together with all the member states of ASEAN signed a "Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea", which, among other provisions, requires the disputants to exercise self-restraint in activities that may raise tension in the area.[10]

8 The involvement of the U.S. also has played a part in restraining both Beijing and Taipei from resorting to force: The U.S. has successfully persuaded Taipei not to resort to belligerent acts against mainland China, while the U.S. forces, especially the U.S. navy's Seventh Fleet based in Yokosuka, Japan has deterred China from aggression to Taiwan. Thus, a military stalemate has been created across the Taiwan Straits. See Jacob Bercovitch and Mikio Oishi, *International Conflict in the Asia Pacific: Patterns, Consequences and Management,* London and New York, Routledge, 2010, p.98-99.

9 Ibid., p.92-93.

10 Bercovitch and Oishi, *International Conflict*, p.101.

This can be depicted as a story of a "wild dragon" having been tamed in the SCS. At a closer look, it is found that China has been enmeshed in a number of relations, which are mostly economic, but also political, cultural and social. They constitute valued relations between China and ASEAN states, and as such relevant parties have learnt how to restrain themselves in conflict situation. Because of the huge difference in size between China, on the one hand and ASEAN littoral states, on the other, it may be referred to as the "Gulliver approach", by which smaller parties manage to "bind" a giant with numerous threads so that he may not act wantonly in their yard.[11] This approach has proven working despite occasional hiccups in the SCS and the repeated criticism that it lacks any legally binding mechanisms.[12]

The successful establishment of the Gulliver approach has been helped at least by two factors. Firstly, by the time China reached the Spratly Islands for the first time, ASEAN had developed the ASEAN Way of conflict management, which is characterised by avoidance of direct conflict among the parties and by activating the mechanisms of self-restraint. Thus, China has, as it were, played into the hands of regional actors that are adept at operating such mechanisms. Secondly, such an approach has not been alien to China, which has seriously embarked on settling conflict through non-military means since the devastation of its aggression into Vietnam in 1979. It may safely be said that China's experience in the management of the conflict across the Taiwan Straits and territorial disputes in South China Sea has contributed to the development of the Chinese model of conflict management.

Current Conflict Management/Peacemaking Endeavours by China

Currently, China is vigorously applying its own model of conflict management, characterised by the heavy use of economic development and diplomacy, to several conflicts or disputes as a disputant or a third party (i.e., mediator).

The Korean Peninsula

The conflict on the Korean Peninsula arose from the disagreement among the Koreans over what kind of the state the post-colonial Korea should become, especially in terms of its organising ideologies. As one of the hotspots in the global Cold War that had just

11 As these binding acts are performed utilizing institutions of which China and other claimant states are the active members, they are considered as cases of "institutional balancing", which is a specific form of "soft balancing". See, Kai He, "Institutional Balancing and International Relations Theory: Economic Interdependence and Balance of Power Strategies in Southeast Asia", *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol.14, No.3, 2008, p.489-518.

12 Since 2007, there have been several incidents and moves involving the claimant states of ASEAN and China that have raised tension in the SCS. For the background of the current situation in the SCS, see Ian Story, *Southeast Asia and the Rise of China,* London and New York, Routledge, 2011, p.91-94, and 117-20; Tran Truong Thuy, "Recent Developments in the South China Sea: Implications for Regional Security and Cooperation," paper presented to *Conference on Maritime Security Issues in the South China Sea*, organised by Center for Strategic & International Studies, Washington, D.C., June 2011, p.7-15, http://csis.org/files/publication/110629_Thuy_South_China_Sea.pdf (Accessed on 10 November 2011). The tension has been raised dramatically since U.S. Secretary of State Hilary Clinton made a statement on the SCS during the ASEAN Regional Forum meeting in Hanoi in July 2010, as will be discussed later in this paper. Also see Bercovitch and Oishi, *International Conflict*, p.117-18.

begun and due to the way in which the peninsula was occupied by the Allied Forces—the northern half by the Communist Soviet Union and the southern half by the Capitalist United States and its Western allies, a civil war broke out in 1950 between the two halves, with the North supported by the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China and the South by the U.S.-led United Nations forces.[13]

After three years of the devastating war, a ceasefire was signed by the relevant parties except for South Korea in 1953. At that time, there was the perception that the ceasefire would not last long, reflecting the dynamics of the early phase of the Cold War. However, it has never developed into another all-out war thanks to several crisis management mechanisms. Something similar to the Taiwan Straits has happened in terms of conflict management. The fundamental incompatibility in the organising ideologies of the state remained until the early 1990s, but the contention over the incompatibility has been managed rather effectively mostly through non-military means. Both North Korean and South Korea were, as it were, given the space and time in which political leaders were able to pursue policies for state-building as they saw fit. By the early 1990s, it had become evident that the South had successfully developed itself as a prosperous and democratic state while the North's experiment had proven a dire failure. Since then, the conflict on the peninsula has been no longer about the North-South rivalry, but about the survival of the regime of the North Korea, which has from time to time taken desperate actions including the brinkmanship with weapons of mass destruction. Northeast Asia currently faces the challenge of addressing the instability arising from the struggling regime.[14]

After several security arrangements were made to manage the instability without much success,[15] the Six-Party Talks were initiated in 2003. China has been given the responsibility to act as the facilitator of this process.[16] After numerous ups and downs and despite occasional flare-ups of tension among the parties, cautious prospects for a stable North Korea seem to be emerging. China provides a guarantee for the survival of the Kim regime and strenuously encourages the North Koreans to adopt the same economic development model as China's. Apparently, the leadership of the North is opening up to this new economic doctrine. Several joint projects have begun, including development projects spanning two border cities of Dandong on the Chinese soil and Sinuiju on the North Korean one and a trilateral master plan for development in the *Kwanbuk* region where North Korea, China and Russia meet in the Tumen River Delta, facing the Japan/East Sea.[17] There is a cautious expectation that the economic development of North Korea would bring about stability in the country and the Northeast Asian region as a whole, together with beneficial results accompanying it.

13 Bercovitch and Oishi, *International Conflict*, p.46.

14 Ibid., p.76.

15 Among a few concrete results of these security arrangements was the temporal freezing of North Korea's plutonium production by the Agreed Framework of 1994.

16 Bercovitch and Oishi, *International Conflict*, p.63-66.

17 Blain Harden, "Overtures to China may Signal Opening of North Korea's Economy," *Washington Post*, 2 April 2010, http: www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/04/01/AR2010040101244_pf.html (Accessed on 23 April 2011); *Chosunilbo*, "N. Korea, China Grow Ever Closer", 21 October 2010, http://english.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2010/10/21/2010102101079.html (Accessed on 23 April 2011); Russell Hsiao, "Strategic Implications of China's Access to the Rajin Port", *China Brief*, Vol.10, No.2, 2010, p.1-3.

Territorial Dispute Settlement with Russia and Central Asian States Accompanied by Economic Bonuses

It seems that the East Asian Peace approach has found its most suitable platform in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO). Having started in the early 1990s as the "Shanghai Five" and established itself in 2001 as the current six-member state organisation, it originally aimed at settling the long-standing territorial disputes between China and four republics of the former Soviet Union, i.e., Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Prioritising regional stability and economic benefits, China gave up larger chunks of the disputed territories in a series of negotiations. The mutual confidence generated from the settlement process has led to cooperation among the parties in dealing with terrorism, separatism, religious extremism and narcotic smuggling, which are the common problems facing them. In other words, the SCO platform has reduced the conventional threats emanating from the interstate disputes and found ways to effectively deal with non-conventional threats by enhancing cooperation among the member states.[18]

What is of additional significance here is that China is developing cordial relations with neighbours that are rich in natural resources, such as oil and natural gas. China has opted for negotiation and cooperation to acquire them rather than resorting to imperialistic expansion. Apparently, the Chinese leadership considers that it is in the interest of China to extend its own model of conflict management, characterised by mutual economic benefits and deepening interdependency. Thus, interests of relevant countries are coordinated and adjusted in diplomatic negotiations, bringing in a win-win situation for all parties. As a result, China can get these resources with costs much lower than those of using force or pressure, while these resources-rich states can invite the Chinese money for investment and economic and infrastructural development. This would, in turn, enhance the legitimacy of the political leaders of each state, for whom regime survival is the top priority, and thus contribute to internal stability.[19] Also, these Central Asian cases provide evidences that China is conducting itself by following international law, and not acting as a challenger to the international system. China is actually one of the largest beneficiaries of the current international system and has no reason to oppose it.

Mediating the India-Pakistan Rivalry and Peacemaking in anticipation of a Post-U.S. Afghanistan

The India-Pakistan rivalry is one of the world's most lasting and dangerous conflicts, not least due to the fact that both countries are armed with nuclear weapons. Like in the early phases of the conflict on the Korean Peninsula, the bone of contention thereof is the fundamental incompatibility in the organising ideologies of the state. India has adopted secularism as its organising ideology, while Pakistan, Islam. India feels that its secularism

18 Stephen Aris, "The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation: 'Tackling the Three Evils'. A Regional Response to Non-Traditional Security Challenges or An Anti-Western Bloc?", *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol.61, No.3, 2009, p.457-482.

19 Ibid., p.462.

is threatened by Pakistan's Islamic polity. Pakistan thinks that its Islamic identity cannot be fully protected under a constant pressure from secularism across the border. For both of them, Kashmir is the visible symbol of this incompatibility. The leaders of each state believe that their own polity remains incomplete until they acquire Kashmir. While the incompatibility in the conflict on the Korean Peninsula evaporated with the end of the Cold War, the one in the Indo-Pakistani conflict remains intact. Rather, it seems to have exacerbated in the era of the militant Political Islam.[20]

Rather unexpectedly, however, it seems that since the middle of 2010 the Chinese model of conflict management has been applied incrementally to this intractable conflict. This initiative is under way, using the platform of the SCO, which has India and Pakistan as its observer members. China has recently boosted its efforts to help Pakistan economically by extending its own development model to it, while India has since the mid-1980s given priority to economic development with considerable success. Apparently, China in cooperation with Russia is attempting to bring them together by nurturing economic interdependence between them as well as establishing linkages in transportation and communication among Russia, China and South Asia.[21] As the impact of the imminent withdrawal of the U.S. from Afghanistan by 2014 is increasingly felt in South Asia, India and Pakistan are under pressure to re-evaluate their relationship with each other. The time seems ripe for the regional rivals to try out this new formula provided by China, setting aside their ideological and political differences. The Chinese model appears to provide the conflict-worn rivals with a favourable formula for a way out.

Interestingly, related to the Indo-Pakistani conflict, China intends to help Afghanistan as well by investing heavily in the country's rich underground resources for a start. In political terms, China and other member states and observer states of the SCO are poised to jointly enhance their presence within Afghanistan by helping to reconcile between the Karzai regime and the Taliban. Afghanistan's membership of the SCO-Afghanistan Contact Group and its recently promoted status of an SCO observer, which is one step away from achieving the organisation's full-membership, will help in multiple ways.[22] There has been an increasing awareness that peace in Afghanistan is inseparably

20 Bercovitch and Oishi, *International Conflict*, p.124.

21 M. K. Bhadrakumar, "China Breaks the Himalayan Barrier," *Asia Times Online*, 1 May 2010, http://www.atimes.com/atimes/South_Asia/LE01Df03.html (Accessed on 4 May 2011); Matthias Williams, "Pakistan Widens Trade with India as Ties Improve," *Reuters*, 15 November 2011, http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/11/15/us-india-pakistan-trade-idUSTRE7AE19K20111115 (Accessed on 22 November 2011); Stephen Aris, *Eurasian Regionalism: The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation,* Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2011, p.160-62.

22 "Analysts say Pakistan is Beijing's Window on Afghanistan", *Voice of America*, 8 July 2010, http://www.voanews.com/english/news/news-analysis/Analysts-Say-Pakistan-is-Beijings-Window-on-Afghanistan--98045824.html (Accessed on 4 May 2011); "Mohammad Qasim: 'Afghanistan and SCO are Coming Closer'", *Afghanistan.Ru*, 18 November 2011, http://en.afghanistan.ru/doc/284.html (Accessed on 23 November 2011); Guo Ji, "SCO Prepares for Afghanistan Reconstruction," *China Daily*, 8 November 2011, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2011-11/08/content_14053454.htm (Accessed on 23 November 2011).

"Engage China," *Deccan Herald*, 2 November 2011, http://www.deccanherald.com/content/169636/engage-china.html (Accessed on 20 November 2011).

related to reconciliation between India and Pakistan. A settlement of the Indo-Pakistani conflict would bring about stability in Pakistan by reducing the influence of the Political Islam, which would, in turn, contribute to stability in Afghanistan.[23] Apparently, this scenario can be materialised only within the framework of the SCO in which China plays a coordinating and peacemaking role with Russia's cooperation. China is poised to become the most influential state actor in South and Central Asia in the wake of the U.S. departure.[24]

The Clash of Two Peaces?

The U.S. Withdrawal from the Middle East and Central Asia and Return to East Asia

The trend of the U.S. military disengagement from the Middle East and Central Asia including Afghanistan has become clear for the past few years. The U.S. has already lost or is losing its military bases in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan.[25] On top of that, the U.S. military withdrawal from Afghanistan has far-reaching repercussions in Central and South Asia, as was discussed briefly above. The subsequent power vacuum seems to be being filled not necessarily by another dominant military power, but mostly by economic and political influence emanating from China and the SCO-affiliated states. It looks like that the U.S. is willingly conceding this leading role to China. The effort to mediate between India and Pakistan was actually initiated by President Obama, who dispatched a senior official to act as a mediator in this peace process jointly with his Chinese counterpart.[26] It is as if the U.S. were handing over the baton of regional leadership to China before its departure is completed. Perhaps following the dictum of "offshore balancing" in a curious manner,[27] the U.S. seems to tacitly encourage China to play a major role not only in

23 Ibid.

24 A challenge would be how India can be persuaded to accept China, another of its traditional rivals, in such a role. Here again, India seems to be opening up to the new reality. See Ibid.

Ezeli Azarkan, "The Relations between Central Asian States and the United States, China and Russia within the Framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization," *Alternatives, Turkish Journal of International Relations*, Vol.8, No.3, 2009, p.7; John Glaser, "Kyrgyz President-Elect Wants U.S. Base Closed," *Today's Zaman*, 1 November 2011, http://www.todayszaman.com/news-261640-kyrgyz-president-elect-wants-us-base-closed.html (Accessed on 10 Nov 2011).

25 Azarkan, "The Relations between Central Asian States and the United States"; Glaser, "Kyrgyz President-Elect".

26 Bhadrakumar, "China Breaks the Himalayan Barrier"; Pierre Ghanem, "U.S. Moves to Withdraw Troops from Iraq Weeks Ahead of Schedule," *Al Arabiya News*, 18 November 2011, http://www.alarabiya.net/articles/2011/11/18/177830.html (Accessed on 21 November 2011).

27 Stephen M. Walt, "Offshore Balancing: An Idea whose Time has Come," *Foreign Policy*, 2 November 2011, http://walt.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2011/11/02/offshore_balancing_an_idea_whose_time_has_come, (Accessed on 18 November 2011). A U.S. new initiative of the "New Silk Road" in which Afghanistan would be made an integral part of both Central and South Asia with enhanced inland transport and trade connectivity may be considered as U.S. desperate bid to remain influential in those regions. See Joshua Kucera, "Clinton's Dubious Plan to Save Afghanistan with a 'New Silk Road,'" *Atlantic*, 2 November 2011, http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2011/11/clintons-dubious-plan-to-save-afghanistan-with-a-new-silk-road/247760/ (Accessed on 23 November 2011).

the India-Pakistan and the Afghan peace process, but also in solving the nuclear issue involving Iran.[28] This seems to be the case while the U.S. still continues to condemn Iran's "nuclear ambition" and from time to time enhance military pressure on the country.[29] The U.S. opposition to China's increasing investments in hydro-carbonate resources in Iran has been half-hearted and ineffective,[30] and China became the top trade partner of Iran in 2010. The US belligerent posture towards Iran is driving this "rogue state" more and more into the embrace of China,[31] which is establishing the pattern of using the SCO as a conflict management mechanism in this part of the world. Thus, China appears to be repeating the pattern of expanding its influence on its neighbours, many of which are plagued with conflicts or disputes. In the process of encouraging its own style of economic development and exercising its own economic leverage, China aims to bring about peace to the target countries or regions. Apparently, the *Pax Sinica* is gradually replacing the *Pax Americana* in these regions.

The U.S. "Pivot toward Asia" since 2010 and Increasing Regional Tension

Having militarily focused on Middle East and Central Asia including Afghanistan, the U.S. is now making a "Pivot toward Asia", as was declared in President Obama's address to the Australian Parliament in Canberra in November 2011.[32] The U.S. return has coincided with a series of incidents that have raised tension in the region, which had long enjoyed a considerable degree of stability and peace. Year 2010 marked the beginning of the escalation of tension in East Asia. In January 2010, Washington decided to sell 6.4 billion US dollars in weapons to Taiwan, causing strong protests from Beijing. This decision was made immediately after Beijing and Taipei began the negotiation to sign the Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement, which would further advance

28 Ariel Farrar-Wellman and Robert Frasco, "China-Iran Foreign Relations," *AEI Iran Tracker*, 13 July 2010, http://www.irantracker.org/foreign-relations/china-iran-foreign-relations (Accessed on 4 May 2011); J. Ditz, "Obama Seeks China 'Exemption' from Iran Sanctions, Move Outrages Japan, South Korea," *AntiWar.Com*, 5 March 2010, http://news.antiwar.com/2010/03/05/obama-seeks-china-exemption-from-iran-sanctions (Accessed on 23 April 2011).

29 Ronald O'Rourke, "China Naval Modernization: Implications for U.S. Navy Capabilities – Background and Issues for Congress", *Congress Research Service (CRS) Report for Congress*, 14 June 2012, p.37, 40, 66-67, 80, and 88.

30 Michael Singh and Jacqueline Newmyer Deal, "China's Iranian Gambit", *Foreign Policy*, 31 October 2011, http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/10/31/china_iran_nuclear_relationship?page=0,3 (Accessed on 15 January 2012).

31 "US Vows to Stay in Gulf despite Iran Warning", *Al Jazeera*, 4 January 2012, http://www.aljazeera.com/news/americas/2012/01/201213184717894927.html (Accessed on 15 January 2012); "China's Wen to Visit Persian Gulf as U.S. - Iran Tensions Rise", *Bloomberg News*, 10 January 2012, http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2012-01-10/chinese-premier-wen-jiabao-to-visit-saudi-arabia-uae-qatar.html (Accessed on 15 January 2012).

32 Stephen M. Walt, "Explaining Obama's Asia Policy," *Foreign Policy*, 18 November 2011, http://walt.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2011/11/18/explaining_obamas_asia_policy (Accessed on 18 November 2011); Geoff Dyer, "Obama Declares Asia a 'Top Priority'", *Financial Times*, 18 November 2011, http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/f3663938-10d7-11e1-ad22-00144feabdc0.html#axzz1jWIzBh6l (Accessed on 15 January 2012).

the economic integration across the straits.[33] Thus, the U.S. decision was construed by many, especially the Chinese themselves, as another "divide and rule" design by Western "neo-colonialists".

In March 2010, in a well-publicised incident, a South Korean navy Corvette Cheonan sank near the disputed borderline between two Koreas, allegedly by a torpedo. The Corvette was participating in a US-South Korean joint military exercise held in the sea zone. South Korea and the U.S. pointed to North Korea as responsible for the Cheonan incident, showing "evidence" provided by an international investigation team, the "Multilateral Combined Intelligence Task Force",[34] while Russia and China were sceptical about the alleged evidence. Accusations were exchanged between Pyongyang and Seoul. Insisting on its own innocence, the former demanded that its own inspectors should be accepted to the investigation team. However, the latter rejected the proposal and demanded that the North first apologise for the misconduct.[35]

In July 2010, U.S. Secretary of State Hilary Clinton stated during an ASEAN Regional Forum meeting in Vietnam that the United States had an interest in preserving free navigation in the South China Sea (SCS). Clinton's statement was followed up by the U.S. Seventh Fleet ships visiting Vietnam for a US-Vietnam joint exercise in August.[36] Taking into account different perceptions among regional actors towards the role of the U.S., these U.S. acts were apparently intended to drive a wedge among them. Such a US intervention into Southeast Asian affairs not only infuriated China who regards the U.S. as an external power, but may also destabilise the existing conflict management regime in the SCS, which has been carefully nurtured jointly by ASEAN littoral states and China.[37]

In September 2010, the Japanese Coast Guard captured a Chinese fishing boat near the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands in the East China Sea. The islands are claimed by both Japan and China. There had been a long established tacit understanding between Tokyo and Beijing that each country should control its own fishing boats operating in the area. Japan contravened this understanding: it not only detained the captain of the Chinese boat but also proceeded towards prosecuting him in accordance with Japan's domestic law. Having

33 "China Protests US Arms Sales, Warns of 'Serious' Impact", *Bangkok Post*, 30 January 2010, http://www.bangkokpost.com/news/local/166963/ (Accessed on 23 April 2011).

34 John McGlynn, "Politics in Command: The 'International' Investigation into the Sinking of the Cheonan and the Risk of a New Korean War", *The Asia-Pacific Journa*l, Vol.24, No.1, 2010, http://japanfocus.org/-JOHN-MCGLYNN/3372 (Accessed on 24 July 2012).

35 W. Madsen, "Beijing Suspects False Flag Attack on South Korean Corvette," *Global Research. Com*, 31 May 2010, http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=19433 (Accessed on 4 May 2011); "We didn't Sink Korean warship: North Korea", *Gaea Times*, 28 May 2010, http://politics.gaeatimes.com/2010/05/28/we-didnt-sink-south-korean-warship-north-korea-39643/ (Accessed on 4 May 2011).

36 "HK Article Warns Vietnam Playing 'Dangerous Game' in South China Sea", *BBC Monitoring Asia Pacific-Political*, 13 August 2010, http://www.viet-studies.info/kinhte/hk_article_warns_vietnam_playing_dangerous_game.htm (Accessed on 23 April 2011).

37 For an emerging conflict management regime in the South China Sea, see Sam Bateman and Ralf Emmers (eds.), *Security and International Politics in the South China Sea: Towards a Cooperative Management Regime*, London and New York, Routledge, 2009.

exhausted diplomatic channels to amicably settle this incident, Beijing resorted to strong measures against Tokyo, such as the detention of Japanese business persons working in China, the ban on the Chinese tourists visiting Japan and the ban on exporting China's rare metals to Japan. Beijing relented only after Tokyo backed down and released the captain.[38]

It is probable that Japan rejected the long-term status quo, encouraged by the back-up of the U.S., whose navy seems to have played a part in the incident.[39] Seiji Maehara, who issued the arrest order as Minister of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism and obtained a new portfolio of Minister of Foreign Affairs immediately after, is well-known as an "American stooge". Japan may have acted as an American "barking dog" set against China. Political fallouts of this incident were serious in Japan. China's aggressive gestures were construed as a clear sign that China began to show its expansionist design, hereby resuscitating anti-Chinese sentiments among the Japanese public. A sense of alarm was reflected in Japan's National Defense Program Guidelines for FY2010, which expressed concerns about China's increasing military activities in the vicinity of Japan. Awakened to its vulnerability on the country's south-western flank, Tokyo began redeploying Japan's Self-Defence Forces from its northern borders facing Russia to southwestern borders facing China, and an "Island Defence Exercise" was conducted in December jointly with the U.S. forces in the same sea area.[40]

In November 2010, North Korea shelled South Korea's Yeonpyeong Island in response to the South's live fire exercise from the island in a disputed water zone near the site where the Cheonan incident occurred earlier in the year. At the same time, the South Korea-U.S. joint forces were also conducting a large-scale "Hoguk" beach assault exercise in the vicinity, which may have triggered the North's reaction. Not only military installations but also residential zones on the island were hit, resulting in four casualties.[41] For one month after the incidence, the tension was extremely high on the Korean Peninsula. A series of military exercises by the South were followed up with a "largest-ever live-fire drill" in which twenty-one US troops participated as trainers. A catastrophe was averted when Pyongyang, persuaded by Beijing and Governor Richardson of New Mexico, did not respond to the provocations.[42]

38 "The Other China Sea Flashpoint: Japan Risks Unleashing the Genie of Chinese Nationalism", *Wall Street Journal*, September 12, 2010, http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704644045754811724251898 24.html (Accessed on 23 April 2011); Kosuke Takahashi, "China Signals V for Victory," *Asia Times Online*, 5 October 2010, http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Japan/LJ05Dh01.html (Accessed on 23 April 2011).

39 Peter Lee, "High Stakes Gamble as Japan, China and the U.S. Spar in the East and South China Seas", *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, Vol.43, No.1, 2010, http://www.japanfocus.org/-Peter-Lee/3431 (Accessed on 22 November 2011).

40 Todd Crowell, "US Sails with Japan to Flashpoint Channel," *Asia Times Online*, 3 December 2010, http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Japan/LL03Dh01.html (Accessed on 4 May 2011).

41 Tim Beal, "Korean Brinkmanship, American Provocation, and the Road to War: The Manufacturing of a Crisis," *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, Vol.8, No.51, 2010, http://japanfocus.org/-Tim-Beal/3459 (Accessed on 5 November 2011).

42 Tim Beal, "Korean Brinkmanship"; "North Korean Artillery Hits South Korean Island", *BBC News Asia-Pacific*, 23 November 2010, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-11818005 (Accessed on 23 April 2011); Mark Landler, "China's North Korea Shift Helps U.S. Relations," *New York Times*, 23 November 2010, http://www.nytimes.com/2010/12/24/world/asia/24diplo.html (Accessed on 23 April 2011).

It is remarkable that the U.S. was involved to varying degrees in all of these incidents, which may be considered to have China as their own ultimate target. The U.S. arms sales to Taiwan and Clinton's remarks during the ASEAN Regional Forum meeting can be interpreted as direct provocations of China, while the U.S. appeared to set Japan against China in the Senkaku/Diaoyu incident. Also, behind the North-South clashes was the shadow of the U.S., which seems to remind China, North Korea's main patron state that it is back in the region with determination. Unlike in other regions, the *Pax Americana* apparently confronts the emerging *Pax Sinica* in East Asia.[43]

The U.S. is Likely to Eventually withdraw to the "Second Islands Chain"

Given the fact that South Korea and Japan have strengthened their military ties with the U.S. respectively and decided to purchase expensive defence systems from the U.S. in the wake of the incidents involving North Korea and China, the U.S. may have the intention to promote East Asia, particularly Northeast Asia as a lucrative market for its military-industrial complex (MIC). It may be in the interest of the MIC to maintain a certain degree of tension in the region, if not all-out wars among regional countries.

However, despite Obama's declaration in November 2011, the U.S. military will most likely withdraw from East Asia eventually to the so-called "Second Islands Chain", which passes through Guam and Northern Mariana Islands.[44] Since the financial crisis of 2008, the decline of the U.S. economic power has been acknowledged across the world. Due to budgetary woes and numerous domestic problems within the current America, as is described vividly by Zbigniew Brzezinski, its military bases across the world are increasingly perceived as "imperial overstretch".[45] The U.S. Congress is

43 This emerging pattern seems to be the most clearly represented by the US new concept of "Air-Sea Battle", the main objective of which is to counter China's "anti-access and area denial (A2/AD)" capabilities. What is interesting is that the A2/AD is the definition given by the US to what appears to be a natural enhancement of China's military capabilities, accompanying its spectacular economic rise. See O'Rourke, "China Naval Modernization", p.46-48 and 75-89.

44 Robert D. Kaplan, "The Geography of Chinese Power," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol.89, No.3, 2010, p.22-41. The First Island Chain and the Second Island Chain are the lines defined by China for national defence purposes. The former connects the southern tip of Kyushu Island of Japan, the Okinawa (Ryukyu) Islands, the southern tip of Taiwan, the northern tip of Luzon Island of the Philippines and Palawan Island of the Philippines, from where it makes an arc surrounding the South China Sea off the coast of Borneo/Kalimantan Island and Vietnam. The latter line connects the Izu Peninsula of Japan near Tokyo, the North Mariana Islands, Guam, Palau and the western tip of New Guinea Island. For a map delineating these lines, see Office of the Secretary of Defense, "Military and Security Developments Involving the people's Republic of China," *Annual Report to Congress*, 2010, p.23. In November 2011, US President Obama announced a plan to station up to 2,500 U. S. Marines on the northern coast of Australia. These marines will most likely be those relocated from a marine base on the Okinawa Island, Japan. Contrary to the general perception of specialists on international security, such a move can be regarded as part of the U.S. exercise of offshore balancing, i.e., withdrawing U.S. military presence from China's expanding sphere of influence as defined by the First Island Chain. See Jackie Calmes, "A U.S. Marine Base for Australia Irritates China," *New York Times*, 16 November 2011, http://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/17/world/asia/obama-and-gillard-expand-us-australia-military-ties.html?pagewanted=all (Accessed on 19 November 2011).

45 Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Strategic Vision: America and the Crisis of Global Power,* New York, Basic Books, 2012, p. 37-74.

urging the Federal Government to close down many of these bases and to bring back US troops from overseas.[46] This trend can be observed clearly in the Middle East and the Central Asia. On the other hand, despite the U.S. "Pivot toward Asia" with a fanfare, this return may prove temporal, as offshore balancing by the U.S. seems to be in formation in this region. In this scheme, the US appears to be using its regional allies and friends, such as South Korea, Japan, the Philippines, Singapore, Vietnam and Australia to balance China, as recent developments in East Asia suggests. The prospects are that the US will eventually retreat to its bases in Hawaii and Guam, from where the "forward presence" of its military forces may be projected on a rotational or even an ad-hoc basis.[47] Furthermore, as economic power is getting acknowledged as more powerful than military power, the U.S.-initiated military provocation of China may turn increasingly ineffective and fizzle. China can now exert effective deterrence or balancing against the U.S., using, among others, the estimated US$1.5 trillion of the U.S. Treasury bonds it possesses.[48] Such balancing seems to work more effectively than China's own military power, including its nuclear arsenal.

Despite the so-called "China Encirclement" by the US, the two superpowers are coming to terms with each other through numerous interactions—economic, political, military and strategic—whether positive or negative.[49] In the general trend of China rising and the U.S. declining at least comparatively, a direct war between them is unlikely, as China cannot be construed as a challenger or "spoiler" to the world system. China is inarguably the largest beneficiary of the exiting global economic system, and there is no

46 Joseph Nye, "The Future of American Power," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol.89, No.6, 2010, p.2-12; Leslie H. Gelb, "GDP Now Matters More Than Force," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol.89, No.6, 2010, p.35-43. For the prospects that the U. S. may have no choice but to call back its troops from across the world, especially from East Asia, due to an on-going budgetary crisis, see Kevin Baron and Chris Carroll, "Reducing Troops Based Overseas Is 'on the Table' during Budget Talks, Official Says", *Stars and Stripes*, 13 September 2011, http://www.stripes.com/mobile/news/reducing-troops-based-overseas-is-on-the-table-during-budget-talks-official-says-1.154986 (Accessed on 19 September 2011).

47 Among these developments since the early 2012 are: The US-initiated move for Japan and South Korea to forge a military pact, the escalation of the Senkaku/Diaoyu Island dispute between Japan and China, a two-month stand-off near Scarborough Shoal between official ships from the Philippines and China, the Vietnamese Air Force's patrol flights over the Spratly islands, the US move to station its littoral combat ships at Singapore and the rotational deployment of US Marines to Darwin, Australia. See Brendan O'Reilly, "China Walks Tightrope over Troubled Waters", *Asia Times Online*, 06 July 2012, http://www.atimes.com/atimes/China/NG06Ad01.html (Accessed on 14 August 2012); O'Rourke, "China Naval Modernization", p.41 and 43-44. O'Rourke also introduces the discussion on the advantages of American soldiers remaining in bases on the US territories, from where they would be deployed to East Asia as situation requires (p.43-44). This argument apparently points to the eventual withdrawal of the US forces from the region.

48 David Barboza, "China's Treasury Holdings make U.S. Woes Its Own", *New York Times*, 18 July 2011, http://www.nytimes.com/2011/07/19/business/china-largest-holder-of-us-debt-remains-tied-to-treasuries.html?_r=1&pagewanted=all (Accessed on 16 January 2012).

49 In economic and financial terms at least, the US and China are more and more becoming indispensable to each other. This fact is reflected, among others, in the annual "US-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue", which started in 2009. See U.S. Department of the Treasury, "U.S.-China Comprehensive Framework for Promoting Strong, Sustainable and Balanced Growth and Economic Cooperation", 10 May 2011, http://www.treasury.gov/press-center/press-releases/Pages/TG1171.aspx (Accessed on 15 August 2012).

reason for it to challenge the system.[50] As the thesis of the East Asian Peace shows, China has not committed any act of aggression since its invasion into Vietnam in 1979. Its main focus has been on economy, through which China aims to achieve its own internal stability and to expand the sphere of its influence in Eurasia, especially in East Asia. A destabilising factor in the region appears to be the "U.S. Pivot toward Asia", which China accuses of disturbing peace in the region, particularly in South China Sea and East China Sea.[51]

States Caught in Between: South Korea, Japan and Possible Options

In 2010 when China replaced Japan as the world's second largest economy, the international community saw the U.S. setting Japan and South Korea on China. Tokyo and Seoul may still feel assured of Washington's backup, but increasingly, it does not come by easily, as the incidences of Corvette Cheonan, Yeonpyong Island and the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands and their results may suggest. Japan and South Korea have a substantial number of people who would unconditionally follow the U.S. leadership. The higher notches of these people, such as senior bureaucrats and conservative politicians, have traditionally constituted the ruling elite in each country and vested interests involved have been formidable. They are considered to be subject to the strong influence of the U.S.-based military-industrial complex (MIC) albeit indirectly through the US government. As the above-mentioned incidences suggest, the MIC has apparently become more active in Northeast Asia since 2010.[52] Thus, given the current tension in the region, military buildup against North Korea and China is likely to continue for some time, while the U.S. itself may stay away or even move to act as a mediator between regional countries.

However, as the U.S. is poised to eventually leave the region, the reconfiguration of power structure in Japan and South Korea seems inevitable. In view of the prospects that North Korea may take off economically once it fully embraces the Chinese model of economic development and that the unification of the Korean Peninsula may be achieved peacefully under the auspices of China,[53] South Korea may eventually go under the sphere of the *Pax Sinica*.[54]

50 Mingjiang Li, "Rising from Within: China's Search for a Multilateral World and its Implications for Sino-U.S. Relations", *S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) Working Paper No. 225,* 2011.

51 "U.S. Intervention not Conducive to Asia-Pacific Stability", *Xinhua News*, 14 July 2012, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/bilingual/2012-07/14/c_131716009.htm (Accessed on 19July 2012).

52 Rick Rozoff, "U.S. Marshals Military Might to Challenge Asian Century," *Global Research.Ca*, 21 August 2010, http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=20724 (Accessed on 1 May 2011).

53 "N. Korea, China Grow Ever Closer", *Chosunilbo*, 21 October 2010, http://english.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2010/10/21/2010102101079.html (Accessed on 1 May 2011).

54 There are already some signs that South Korea may be switching its allegiance from the US to China or that it has at least begun to keep equidistance from both countries. Seoul's last minute pull out from signing the General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA) between South Korea and Japan in June 2012 may be one of these signs. See "S. Korea must Stick to Role of 'Balancer'", *Global Times*, 03 July 2012, http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/718587.shtml (Accessed on 15 August 2012); "Call of the Military Pact with Japan", *The Hankyoreh*, 29 June 2012, http://english.hani.co.kr/arti/english_edition/e_editorial/540215.html (Accessed on 15 August 2012).

More uncertain is the future of Japan. Since January 2009, there has been a severe power struggle going on among those who would follow the U.S. leadership at all cost, those who wish to forge Japan's foreign policy that is equidistant from both the U.S. and China and those who want to project a more nationalistic and independent Japan to the region. The coalition governments led by the Democratic Party of Japan were usurped by the pro-US camp, and the power struggle still continues under the second Abe administration comprised of the Liberal Democratic Party and the New Komeito Party.[55] Depending on its outcome, at least three scenarios are possible for the future of Japan: an isolated Japan; a Japan Contributing to a *Pax Japonica-Sinica-Koreana;* a Japan as part of the *Pax Sinica.*

An Isolated Japan

In cases in which the pro-US camp continues to hold power or the nationalist camp becomes dominant in the government, Japan may turn introverted in the end. In the wake of the U.S. departure, Japan, strengthening its own Asia-phobic traits, may opt to keep to itself rather than join the East Asian community. According to this scenario, international trade and foreign investment will decline, and society will be closed to new immigrants. Japan's location at the edge of the Eurasian Continent and the seas surrounding the archipelago would make such an option feasible. Although the country may not get benefits from a prosperous East Asia, it may be able to survive with its population stabilised after a gradual decrease and its traditional way of life stressing the virtue of a simple and frugal life style.[56] Its traditional and indigenous technologies, having disappeared from the surface for the past 150 years of the country's modernisation, may revive under new forms and make the self-sufficiency of the Japanese society viable.

A Japan Contributing to a Pax Japonica-Sinica-Koreana: an Integrated Vision of the East Asian Peace

There is a deep-rooted idea in Japan that it was once an integrated part of the Northeast Asian community, with its major nations, i.e., the Chinese, the Koreans and the Japanese sharing the common ancestors and similar cultures. Some theories trace the origin of Japan to some locations on the Korean Peninsula and, further up, the Chinese Continent.[57]

55 Masami Ito, "Ozawa Says Aide's Arrest Was an Abuse," *Japan Times*, 5 March 2009; Karel van Wolferen, "On Political Rebirth, Proportion and Power", http://www.karelvanwolferen.com/documentenmap/pdf/Chuokoron_-_15_feb.pdf (Accessed on 16 January 2012), a Japanese version: "Nihon seiji saisei o megyru kenryoku toso no nazo" ["The Enigma of Power Struggle over the Rebirth of Japanese Politics"], *Chuo Koron*, April 2010; Christopher Johnson, "Another Disposable Leader for Japan", *Asia Times Online*, 31 August 2011, http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Japan/MH31Dh01.html (Accessed on 16 January 2012).

56 The fact that Nakano's book became a bestselling book in Japan in 1992 in the wake of the country's busted "bubble economy" proved that the Japanese psyche had still maintained a strong yearning for a simple and modest life, unspoiled by a long period of material prosperity. See Koji Nakano's *Seihin no Shiso* [*The Philosophy of Honourable Poverty*], Tokyo, Soshi-saha, 1992.

57 There are a number of Japanese books written on this subject. See, for example, Akisato Yamagata, *Himiko no shotai: kyoko no rokaku ni tatsu "Yamatai"-koku [The True Identity of Himiko: The "Yamayai" State on a Myth],* Tokyo, Sango-kan, 2010.

Depending on the reconstruction of the national and regional history and helped by enhanced exchanges among one another, the Japanese, Chinese and Korean people may develop new national identities which would be complementary to one another, replacing the current ones which tend to be mutually exclusive and hostile.[58] The positive impact of such transformation on regional security will be tremendous. This scenario will be made viable if the camp supporting an equidistant Japan prevails in the country. In this case, Japan may enjoy freedom of action on the international stage. While maintaining its friendly ties with the U.S., it may join China and Korea to constitute the core of the prosperous East Asian community and may also choose to form a coalition with the world's middle powers such as Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Nordic countries in peacemaking and peace-building. The sooner Japan will embark on this project, the more viable it will become, as Japan may still be able to work with China and Korea on an equal footage.

A Japan as part of the Pax Sinica

If the current situation of domestic politics in Japan continues and it, therefore, remains as the junior partner of the Japanese-American alliance, Japan's overall power is likely to decline further. By the time it decides to mend fences with China, a much weaker Japan will have to deal with a much more powerful China. A *Pax Sinica* that would cover Japan as a likely result may still be more or less beneficial to the country, especially in economic terms. In this case, China, Japan and Korean may create a hierarchic regional order, not dissimilar to the one that regulated the tripartite relations based on Confucianism until the arrival of the Western powers undermined it in the early 19th century. Under such a scheme, however, some of Japan's potential contributions discussed above may not be realised. Thus, the *Pax Japonica* portion may be missing from such a version of the *Pax Sinica*. Especially, Japan's potential role of bridging between the U.S. and China, between the *Pax Americana* and the *Pax Sinica* may be lost. A Japan as part of the *Pax Sinica* may be brought about as well when the nationalist camp controls and plunges Japan into a war, possibly an all-out war, with China. In the event of Japan's defeat, it will have no choice but to accept a peace imposed by China.

Future Prospects for Co-Existence and A Task for Future Research

The East Asian Peace has a long history, having originated in the Post-WWII Japan and expanded to the rest of the region. Currently, it appears to be spearheaded and consolidated by China, which, being highly sensitive to its own internal stability, has no choice but to stabilise regions on its periphery. Hence come out its peacemaking and peace-building activities in the Korean Peninsula, Central Asia, South Asia, Iran and Afghanistan. In Indochina, which has been free from major conflicts since the late 1970s, China's eco-

58 The ongoing controversy between China and South Korea on an ancient Kingdom of Goguryeo can be seen as part of a process of mutually creating new national identities among the peoples in the region. See Robert Y. Eng, "China-Korea Culture Wars and National Myths: TV Dramas as Battleground," *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, Vol.9, No.13, 2011, http://www.japanfocus.org/-Robert_Y_-Eng/3503 (Accessed on 13 November 2011).

nomic activities, such as investment and economic aid for infrastructural projects, boost the development of target countries. By so doing, China not only contributes to the elimination of poverty, which is a root cause of conflict, but also enhances its influence on these countries.

What we are witnessing as a result is a *Pax Sinica*, emanating from China, expanding to surrounding areas, and poised to spread to a large part of Eurasia. The *Pax Americana* seems to be currently engaged in balancing acts against the *Pax Sinica* in East Asia. However, prospects are rather high that there will eventually be a co-habitation between the two *Peaces* in the Asia Pacific region, while large part of Eurasia will be the realm of the *Pax Sinica*. In that process, some hiccups may take place from time to time between the U.S. and China, mostly arising from the resistance or pressure from the military elements of each country. The U.S.-based Military-Industrial Complex will not easily give up East Asia as its major market, while the civilian leadership of China may need to make extra efforts in reigning in the People's Liberation Army, which represents the threat-reactive instinct of human nature.

One fundamental question arises from a reflection on the results of this study. Deeply concerned with the speed with which the cross-Taiwan Straits integration is progressing, Robert Kaplan observes:

> If the United States simply abandons Taiwan to Beijing, then Japan, South Korea, the Philippines, Australia, and other U.S. allies in the Pacific Ocean, as well as India and even some African states, will begin to doubt the strength of Washington's commitments. Thant could encourage those states to move closer to China and thus allow the emergence of a Greater China of truly hemisphere proportions. This is the reason why Washington and Taipei must consider asymmetric ways to counter China militarily.[59]

What is implied here is that force is needed to counter a peace. What elements of a peace, specifically those of *the Pax Sinica*, need to be resisted by force? What are they, at least for certain aspects of the American psyche? More specifically, the uneasy co-habitation of the two peaces may suggest the encounter between a peace based on an alliance and a peace based on a conflict management regime. These issues appear to provide interesting research agendas for Peace and Conflict Studies in a new era.

59 Kaplan, "The Geography of Chinese Power," p.37.

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