

O Novo Ambiente Estratégico da Ásia-Pacífico e a Política de Segurança de Taiwan

Jorge Tavares da Silva

Doutorado em Relações Internacionais – Política Internacional e Resolução de Conflitos, pela Universidade de Coimbra. Docente e Presidente do Observatório de Comércio e Relações Internacionais (OCRI) do Instituto Superior de Ciências de Informação e Administração (ISCIA). Professor convidado na Universidade do Minho.

Resumo

Este artigo avalia a política de defesa e às questões de segurança de Taiwan e identifica as linhas de orientação deste domínio tendo em conta, por um lado, as necessidades de reestruturação interna das forças armadas; por outro, o conjunto dos desafios tradicionais e emergentes no espaço da Ásia-Pacífico. Salienta-se, desde logo, a mais central das preocupações, a relação inconstante com a China, dividida entre uma crescente cooperação do domínio socioeconómico e a perpetuação do conflito político-militar. Acrescentam-se novos factores conjunturais, desde ameaças como o terrorismo e os desastres ambientais, ao desenhar do puzzle geopolítico regional e à intensa diplomacia económica. Neste contexto, a análise centra-se nas principais preocupações para o quadro da segurança de Taiwan.

Abstract

Asia-Pacific New Strategic Environment and Taiwan Security Policy

This paper reviews Taiwan's defense and security policy. On the one hand, it identifies its guidelines taking into consideration domestic needs for the armed forces reorganization. On the other hand, it considers the traditional and emerging challenges in Asia-Pacific. One of the most central concerns is the inconstant relationship with China, divided between a growing socio-economic cooperation and the maintenance of a political-military conflict. The regional geopolitical puzzle and intense economic diplomacy faces new challenges such as terrorism and environmental disasters. Within this context, the analysis focuses on the most important issues concerning the Taiwanese security framework.

O conceito de segurança não é unívoco, ultrapassa em muito a simples concepção de “ameaça bélica”, podendo aparecer também associado à defesa dos interesses nacionais, à resistência e capacidade de sobrevivência de uma nação, território, povo ou indivíduo, à salvaguarda dos valores fundamentais, à defesa do ambiente, à paz e melhoria do bem-estar, entre outros aspectos. Em causa estão, claramente, interpretações contraditórias sobre esta designação, de acordo com diferentes escolas de pensamento das relações internacionais. Assim, por exemplo, autores realistas como Hans Morgenthau, associam a noção de segurança à defesa do interesse nacional, justificando, igualmente, a política de defesa por este prisma. Segundo ele, “[O] conceito de interesse definido como poder impõe uma disciplina intelectual ao observador e adiciona uma ordem racional no campo da política e, assim, tornando possível o entendimento teórico da política” (Morgenthau, 1993: 5).¹

Noutro ângulo, pela via liberal, autores como Joseph Nye e Robert Keohane (2001) e David Mitrany (1966) ou David Mitrany, alargam a ideia para a denominada *low politics* e para as dimensões não militares como fatores capazes de moldar a política de segurança das nações. Segundo eles, a “interdependência” ou a “socialização”, por exemplo, são elementos importantes no apaziguamento das sociedades e das nações.

Independentemente das perspetivas de enquadramento, a segurança e defesa da República da China (RC), vulgarmente conhecida por Taiwan², abarca um conjunto alargado de questões que acabam por encaixar em ambas as tendências teóricas. O objeto central deste artigo é precisamente apurar as linhas de orientação da política de segurança e defesa de Taiwan tendo em conta a evolução das suas relações com a RPC e o puzzle contraditório de cooperação e confrontação de poderes que marca o contexto da Ásia-Pacífico. Reconhece-se que, desde 2008, com o regresso do Partido Nacionalista do *Kuomintang* (KMT) ao poder³, sob a liderança de Ma Ying-jeou, se tem verificado um clima de melhor entendimento, não deixando de

1 No original: “*The concept of interest defined as power imposes intellectual discipline upon the observer, infuses rational order into the subject matter of politics, and thus makes the theoretical understanding of politics possible*” (Morgenthau, 1993: 5).

2 Neste artigo, a República Popular da China, aparecerá aleatoriamente designada pelas siglas RPC ou por simplesmente por “China”, ao passo que a República da China, ora por RC ou por “Taiwan”.

3 Entre 2000 e 2008, a RC foi governada pelo Partido Democrático Progressista (PDP), liderado por Chen Shui-bian, cuja governação ficou marcada por uma postura mais desafiante à política de “uma só China”.

se salientar o princípio dos “três não’s”: não independência, não unificação, não ao uso da força. Desde então, Pequim e Taipé têm cooperado de forma crescente em muitos domínios da esfera económica, social e cultural, incluindo diálogos de alto nível, tal como o encontro entre o vice-presidente taiwanês, Wu Den-yih e líder do Partido Comunista Chinês (PCC) e futuro Primeiro-Ministro, Li Keqiang, no Fórum Boao (Taipei Times, 2012: 1).

Ainda assim, o conflito político mantém-se intocável ou, pelo menos, estável, enquanto persistem questões sobre a assimetria de forças entre os dois lados. Dando seguimento à análise, questionamos alguns aspectos que nos parecem adjacentes à temática central. Está a RC a abrandar a sua política de defesa face ao novo quadro de cooperação com a República Popular da China (RPC)? Aparece a RC alinhada com a RPC na defesa dos interesses de soberania “chineses” na região? São as confrontações de poder uma oportunidade para a ilha afirmar o seu papel de mediador na região?

O Ministério da Defesa de Taiwan (MDT) publica periodicamente o Relatório de Defesa Nacional (RDN), bianual, desde 1992, e a Revista de Defesa Quadrienal (RDQ), desde 2009. São os mais importantes documentos oficiais emitidos neste domínio e que permitem identificar as principais linhas de orientação, internas e externas, que moldam a sua política de defesa nacional. Desde logo, salienta-se a mais soberana das problemáticas, a relação inconstante com a RPC, não só do ponto de vista direto como indireto, na medida em que a diplomacia da ilha no espaço internacional está condicionada por este fator.

A RPC não abdica da tentativa de recuperação do território para os seus domínios de soberania, admitindo uma solução “não pacífica”, mantendo Taiwan um estatuto de Estado não reconhecido – uma das mais intrincadas temáticas do direito internacional. Além disso, enquanto a região asiática passa por uma fase de intensa cooperação económica, a ilha tem dificuldade em participar de forma mais ativa neste processo. Acrescem ainda outras problemáticas, tais como a competição pela soberania de ilhas na região, um facto que pode arrastar Taiwan para uma confrontação mais hostil com outros actores. A verdade é que tem estado a servir para os responsáveis políticos taiwaneses poderem afirmar o seu papel de mediador. Finalmente destacam-se ainda outras questões não tradicionais como os desastres naturais, a pirataria marítima, ou o terrorismo como elementos preocupantes para a segurança da ilha.

Na prossecução desta análise, em termos de arrumação das ideias, num primeiro momento, centramos o ponto de observação no novo ambiente estratégico da Ásia Oriental, no avivar das reclamações de soberania, nas confrontações de poder, incluindo a “viragem estratégica” dos EUA, as quais englobam o espaço geográfico circundante da ilha de Taiwan. De seguida analisamos a evolução das relações entre a China e Taiwan, delineando os pontos de convergência entre estes dois atores

e as principais linhas de orientação da política de segurança e defesa de Taiwan face aos contextos referenciados nos pontos iniciais.

O Novo Ambiente Estratégico Regional

Os mares da China Oriental e Meridional têm sido palco de uma relação paradoxal, por um lado, entre crescentes dinâmicas de cooperação económica e política; por outro, de fortes confrontações de poder, disputas de soberania e estado generalizado de insegurança. Na verdade, esta é uma das matrizes caracterizadoras das relações entre actores da região da Ásia-Pacífico, um sinal distintivo em correspondência com outros espaços de cooperação/integração económica, tal como a União Europeia.

A ascensão económica da China e a sua vigorosa diplomacia na região têm sido um fator adicional na “agitação das águas”, que se faz sentir não só na afirmação económica como também pelo ascensão militar. Não admira que este gigante asiático tenha despertado sentimentos antagónicos, divididos, simultaneamente, entre a oportunidade e a ameaça. Desde logo, pela via da oferta do gigantesco mercado chinês ao investimento e comércio externo para muitos investidores. A criação de uma área de comércio livre entre a ASEAN e a China (2002) veio intensificar ainda mais as trocas regionais, tendo-se tornado a maior zona de comércio livre do mundo e grande parte dos fluxos do comércio mundial.

Podemos ainda acrescentar outras dinâmicas regionais como a Cooperação Económica da Grande Sub-região do Mekong ou a Cooperação Económica Pan-Golfo de Beidu (Chen, 2012: 52-53). A verdade é que este envolvimento crescente da China no espaço económico regional é também uma fonte de apreensões para os seus vizinhos, temendo-se o enfraquecimento das economias nacionais face à pujança económica deste ator. Taiwan, por exemplo, depois do acordo entre a China e a ASEAN, pelo fato de não ser membro daquela organização, recebeu a perda de competitividade para outras economias da região. Em causa estava o efeito de “desvio de comércio” da produção menos competitiva de outros actores para o espaço integrado, fruto das facilidades aduaneiras, em prejuízo da sua produção industrial taiwanesa. Este fator económico acelerou os contactos entre Pequim e Taipé de forma a formalizarem um acordo preferencial de “criação de comércio” que pudesse minimizar os efeitos desviantes do acordo com a ASEAN. É neste sentido, impulsionando ainda mais os contatos bilaterais entre a China e Taiwan que foi assinado o Acordo de Cooperação Económica (ACE). Este Acordo tem servido o propósito do Presidente Ma Ying-jeou de melhorar a economia da ilha, usufruindo de uma maior abertura no Estreito por onde já passam quase metade das suas exportações.

Do ponto de vista militar, há a considerar as persistentes reclamações de soberania, afirmações de poder, controlo marítimo e jogos geopolíticos nos mares da China. É

o lar de crescentes ameaças transnacionais, entre Estados desenvolvidos e Estados emergentes, regimes autoritários e democráticos. Por exemplo, o recife de Scarborough é reclamado pela China, Filipinas, e Taiwan. A verdade é que neste domínio a posição chinesa não encontra legitimidade perante a Convenção das Nações Unidas sobre o Direito do Mar (CNUDM), a qual nesta matéria tem defendido razões de proximidade territorial. Este fato não impede que a China siga uma estratégia de reivindicação territorial “expansiva”, que inclui o apertado patrulhamento destas ilhas, ilhotas e arquipélagos que frequentemente conduzem a querelas efetivas. Torna-se interessante verificar, tal como refere Steve Tsang do *China Policy Institute*, que apesar de a China defender abertamente o princípio da “ascensão pacífica” tem permitido que individualidades do *establishment* reclamem ofensivamente a soberania de determinados espaços geográficos (Jane’s Defence Weekly, 2012: 37). Em Agosto de 2012, um incidente nas ilhas Diaoyutai/Senkaku, reclamadas pela China, o Japão e Taiwan, levantou novamente a problemática, colocando pressão as relações entre a China e o Japão, envolvendo igualmente movimentações navais e as habituais manifestações populares (Taipei Times, 2012a: 1).

Torna-se imperioso notar que tradicionalmente a China é uma potência continental e preocupada, sobretudo, com as dinâmicas da sua fronteira euro-asiática. A sua propensão marítima foi relativamente reduzida, e quando se mais afirmou neste domínio, teve uma expressão pouco mais que regional. Embora apenas se conheça a operação contra a pirataria somali no Golfo de Áden, em 2009, como a única intervenção naval fora do ambiente regional, há uma clara tendência da China em projetar um maior poder e controlo sobre o espaço marítimo. Neste prisma, a ilha de Taiwan acaba por ser um dos elos de uma cadeia de controlo que a China pretende estabelecer na região. Já em 2006, o presidente Hu Jintao tinha ordenado aos comandantes do Exército Popular de Libertação (EPL) para construírem uma “poderosa Marinha popular” que pudesse defender os interesses marítimos, em particular as Linhas de Comunicação Marítima (LCM) que estabelecem a ligação a países exportadores de energia no Oceano Índico (Taipei Times, 2006: 1).

Neste contexto, destaca-se o início das operações do porta-aviões *Liaoning*, apetrechado com modernos sistemas de radar, caças J-15 e mísseis anti-aéreos FL-3000N (Jane’s Defence Weekly, 2012: 34).

Assim, a RPC mantém uma crescente vigilância nas 200 milhas marítimas da sua zona económica exclusiva, incluindo um apertado controlo ao “mapa das nove linhas”⁴ (*nanghai jiudian xian*) que envolvem as ilhas do Mar do Sul da China. Note-se também que por estes circuitos também passam os fluxos energéticos que abastecem o Japão, a Coreia do Sul e Taiwan. Inclui-se, numa perspetiva mais alargada, a pro-

4 Trata-se, na verdade, de um mapa produzido em 1947 pelo KMT (Richardson, 2010: 184).

teção das suas LCM entre a sua zona marítima exclusiva e o Golfo Pérsico, corredor por onde a China recebe grande parte dos seus recursos energéticos. Ao mesmo tempo, a China pretende criar condições para a protecção e capacidade de evacuação de nacionais de países do Sudeste Asiático, em caso de necessidade e afastar a influência americana na região. A criação da Organização de Cooperação de Xangai (OCX), impulsionada por Pequim, embora focalizada na região da Ásia Central, encobre mas confirma o objetivo de afastar os interesses americanos naquela região. Ao mesmo tempo, parece clara a intenção de este controlo do espaço marítimo funcionar como o seu fortalecimento como potência regional e global (O'Rourke, 2012: 5).

Fruto da afirmação da China na região da Ásia-Pacífico, também os EUA estão a direcionar as suas atenções para este espaço geográfico. Há uma crescente percepção na comunidade de segurança americana que dentro de duas décadas os EUA terão de partilhar a sua supremacia global com outros atores. Segundo o "Global Trends 2030: Alternative Worlds" (2012), é indiscutível o papel dominante da China no plano económico e político internacional, confirmando as anteriores previsões feitas pela Goldman Sachs (2003: 1-24). Num artigo da revista *Foreign Policy*, a Secretária de Estado Hillary Clinton apontou o presente século como sendo "o Século do Pacífico" para a política externa americana e que o futuro da geopolítica será decidido na Ásia, não no Afeganistão ou no Iraque, devendo os EUA estar no centro destes desenvolvimentos (Clinton, 2011; Clinton, 2011a: 56-63)⁵. Para além do Pacífico, podemos ainda acrescentar as movimentações no Índico como muito importantes para este novo século⁶. Em causa está, em grande medida, a ascensão da China e a sua crescente capacidade de influência no espaço asiático, ainda que enquadrada na retórica oficial da "ascensão" ou "desenvolvimento pacífico". A Marinha americana está na linha da frente nos esforços da Administração Obama com a retirada progressiva do Iraque e do Afeganistão (Locklear, 2013).

A consubstanciar a estratégia da Administração, surge a criação de um novo espaço de cooperação regional denominado *Trans-Pacific Partnership*, o qual exclui a participação da RPC. Parece claro que este organismo tem a função de anular a capacidade dominante da China, sobretudo depois de se ter tornado o principal parceiro comercial da ASEAN, em substituição dos EUA. Em parte visa também

5 Segundo Hillary Clinton (2011: 56-63): "It is becoming increasingly clear that in the 21st century, the world's strategic and economic center of gravity will be the Asia Pacific, from the Indian subcontinent to the western shores of the Americas. And one of the most important tasks of American statecraft over the next decades will be to lock in a substantially increased investment – diplomatic, economic, strategic, and otherwise – in this region."

6 Sobre este último aspeto vide, por exemplo Robert Kaplan (2012). *Monsoon: The Indian Ocean and the Future of American Power*. New York: Random House.

contrariar a recessão económica interna desde 2008, aproveitando o impulso comercial daquela região. Em termos estratégicos, no regresso de Washington à arena asiática, os americanos têm estreitado os laços de cooperação com os países aliados de forma a formar um “contrapoder” à ascensão chinesa. Neste quadro incluem-se as ligações com a Austrália, Coreia do Sul, Japão, Malásia, Vietname, Índia e Taiwan. Reconhece-se que o interesse nacional americano em sintonia com os aliados regionais⁷ está agora centrado na Ásia-Pacífico (Locklear, 2013).

A Centralidade do “Fator China”

Para Taiwan, a China em toda a sua dimensão geográfica, socioeconómica, cultural, política e militar, é de tal forma evidente que se torna um “fator” incontornável na sua acção governativa. Tanto por necessidade, como por interesse, quer a sociedade civil como os responsáveis políticos da ilha, não resistem ao poder de atracção e influência do mercado continental. O fenómeno não passa só pela confrontação política e afirmação de poder naval da China mas também pela sua capacidade de absorver capital e pessoas do território insular. Repare-se, por exemplo, no fenómeno da “febre de Xangai” que tem seduzido massivamente muitos jovens taiwaneses a procurar naquela grande cidade chinesa novas oportunidades e condições de vida (Wang, 2009: 322-346). Desde 1987, com a permissão de viajar para a China continental, concedida pelo Presidente taiwanês, Chiang Ching-kuo (1978-1988), filho de Chiang Kai-shek, que se iniciou uma intensa vaga de interações entre insulares e continentais⁸. Nos primeiros quatro anos, residentes de Taiwan fizeram cerca de três milhões de visitas ao continente, enquanto 20 mil continentais visitaram Taiwan (as restrições de Taiwan à visita de continentais mantiveram-se sempre mais apertadas do que o contrário). Seguindo a mesma lógica, também o investimento taiwanês aumentou exponencialmente no continente, cerca de 3 mil milhões para o mesmo período. Ficaram conhecidos os empresários taiwaneses a operar na China continental, uma força ativa em termos económicos e influente nos meios políticos chineses locais. Em sentido contrário, o investimento chinês em Taiwan foi sempre inferior, pois este não detinha tantas facilidades de entrada (Clough, 1993: 1) apesar do dinamismo económico no início do período das reformas

7 Repare-se, por exemplo, na cooperação estabelecida entre a Marinha australiana e americana, especialmente no porto de Darwin.

8 Importa salientar que estas dinâmicas já se verificavam desde o início do processo de abertura chinês (1978), de forma dissimulada, desafiando as autoridades taiwanesas. Aliás, muitos empresários taiwaneses estavam já instalados na antiga colónia britânica. A partir de 1987 verificou-se, sobretudo, um abrandamento na política de fiscalização a estas dinâmicas por parte das autoridades taiwanesas que estavam a ser utilizadas pela “via de Hong Kong”.

económicas e a abertura na China a bens e pessoas que circulavam entre os dois lados, embora através de um circuito indireto que passava por Hong Kong ou Macau, conhecido por *China Circle* (Naughton, 1998: 3). Assim, entre 1978 e 1994, o investimento taiwanês na China continental já representava 10% do total do investimento estrangeiro, sem contar com os investidores taiwaneses anteriormente radicados em Hong Kong (Hsing, 1998: 3). Aproveitando os sinais emitidos por Hu Jintao e a pressão da sociedade civil taiwanesa, as duas partes envolveram-se em processos negociais mais activos desde 2008. Removeram-se barreiras económicas e intensificou-se a cooperação, assistindo-se a acordos em muitas áreas de interesse comum.

Apesar deste contexto, permanece o debate se esta crescente abertura e clima de cooperação torna ou não a ilha ainda mais vulnerável face à China continental. Em causa está a discussão sobre a natureza das relações bilaterais, isto é, se estão assentes em relações de “dependência” ou “interdependência”. Em grande medida, esta discussão divide-se entre aqueles que defendem uma crescente intensidade das dinâmicas no estreito de Taiwan e outros que preconizam um desvio para outros países terceiros. Julgamos, contudo, que o “fator China” tem uma tendência para tornar a relação sino-taiwanesa numa lógica assimétrica que tem obrigado os responsáveis políticos taiwaneses a acelerar os contactos bilaterais.

Por exemplo, o acordo para criação de uma área de comércio livre entre a ASEAN e a China (2002) e as repercussões daí advindas, a que já fizemos referência, impulsionou a criação do Acordo de Cooperação Económica (ACE), assinado em 29 de Junho de 2010. O facto de Taiwan ter dificuldade de desenvolver a sua diplomacia livremente no espaço internacional, prejudicando a economia nacional, é uma enorme vulnerabilidade para o governo insular. A própria postura do Partido Democrático Progressista (PDP) depois da derrota eleitoral de 2012 tem sido no sentido de uma maior abertura com a China. Também se questiona se a democracia em Taiwan e a divisão da sociedade civil em torno dois principais Partidos não é também um fator de enfraquecimento. A exclusividade no poder que o KMT teve durante décadas (1949-1988), até ao levantamento da Lei Marcial, foi um fator de unidade que tornou a ilha mais compacta do ponto de vista político e na própria identidade.

O investimento taiwanês na China tem sido uma fonte importante para o desenvolvimento económico regional, sendo igualmente inegável a sua importância na transferência de tecnologia para o território continental. Trata-se de um questão delicada tendo em conta que esta tecnologia pode facilmente ser aproveitada para a modernização militar do EPL. É preciso não esquecer que a RPC mantém-se condicionada no acesso à compra de tecnologia militar pelo embargo na venda de armas dos EUA e da União Europeia, a vigorar desde 1989. Enquanto isso, permanece um clima de hostilidade em relação a Taiwan,

mostrando resistência a qualquer iniciativa que não se ajuste à política de unidade nacional chinesa, estando bem presente a promulgação da Lei Anti-secessão (2005) em que o Governo chinês admite a utilização de “meios não pacíficos” para evitar movimentos independentistas da ilha. Em consonância, acresce o clima de nacionalismo que, por um lado, serve os interesses partidários na ausência de estrutura ideológica e, por outro, obriga a uma defesa reforçada dos interesses nacionais. Em causa estão objetivos políticos há muito definidos como a criação do espaço da “Grande China”, em que se inclui Hong Kong e Macau. Em boa verdade, Taipé até aceita a existência de “uma China”, consenso que marcou positivamente as relações bilaterais em 1992. As dificuldades residem no entendimento que se faz desta “China única” e na forma como se poderia resolver a questão.

Desde 1995 até 2008, as relações entre a China e Taiwan foram marcadas por uma constante instabilidade, incompreensões e antagonismos sobre a interpretação do destino da ilha. Em grande medida, tal como afirma Richard C. Bush (2011: 274-289) as “duas Chinas” rezearam-se entre si, julgando que “a outra parte” unilateralmente tomasse medidas que pudessem colocar em causa os seus interesses fundamentais. Enquanto Pequim temia que Taipé fechasse a possibilidade de uma “reunificação” (“unificação” para Taiwan), Taipé desconfiava que a China colocasse o processo negocial num estado inevitável para a ilha. Esta “suspeita mútua” foi acompanhada, ora, por um crescente aumento do dispositivo militar chinês dirigido à ilha, enquanto a RC procurava reforçar a sua presença no espaço internacional. As divergências de posições fizeram perigar as relações bilaterais e poderiam ter degenerado em conflito militar entre os dois lados com possibilidades de envolvimento dos EUA, nomeadamente entre 1995-1996.

A modernização militar chinesa, as movimentações navais, as simulações de operações e vigilância e até espionagem no Estreito de Taiwan contribuem para a permanência de um clima de insegurança na região. A China possui o segundo maior orçamento de defesa no mundo, tendo sofrido um aumento de 12.7% em 2011, num total de 91.5 mil milhões de dólares. Este facto enfraqueceu progressivamente a capacidade militar da ilha, cujo orçamento foi de 10,27 mil milhões em 2011 (quadro 1). Para esta balança de poder, cada vez mais assimétrica, do ponto de vista militar, tem contribuído também a redução das despesas por parte da administração de Ma Ying-jeou (Arthur, 2011: 48-49).

Quadro 1 – Comparação entre as forças militares Chinesas e Taiwanesas

Comparison of Chinese & Taiwanese military strength			
EQUIPMENT	CHINA		TAIWAN
	Total	Within range of Taiwan	
Defence budget (USD)	91.5 billion		10.27 billion
Ground forces			
Personnel	1,250,000	400,000	196,000
Tanks	7,000	3,100	1,100
Artillery pieces	8,000	3,400	1,600
Air forces			
Fighters	1,680	330	368
Bombers	620	160	0
Transport	450	40	20
Naval forces			
Destroyers	25	15	4
Frigates	49	40	22
Nuclear attack submarines	6	2	0
Other submarines	54	32	4

Fonte: Arthur (2011: 52)

De acordo com o Relatório do Congresso dos EUA (2011: 2), em dezembro de 2010 estavam direcionados à ilha de Taiwan cerca de 1000 a 1200 mísseis de curto alcance. Este facto é um dos principais fatores para que China e Taiwan não avancem no estabelecimento de um acordo de paz, embora haja outras componentes diplomáticas. Para adensar o clima de incerteza, são igualmente frequentes as simulações militares de ataques a Taiwan por parte das forças armadas chinesas.⁹ Aliás, a Revista de Defesa Quadrienal (RDQ), reconhece que a crescente capacidade militar chinesa é o maior desafio de segurança de Taiwan. As forças armadas chinesas começaram a desenvolver novas missões as quais permitiram jogar um papel mais substancial e construtivo nos assuntos militares internacionais. Em grande medida, tal como adverte a RDQ de 2010, a falta de transparência, a natureza do desenvolvimento militar chinês e do processo de decisão, são fatores que legitimam a desconfiança em relação ao futuro e às intenções da China na Ásia e noutros espaços geográficos (Departamento da Defesa dos Estados Unidos da América, 2010: 60). São particularmente desafiantes, a modernização da Marinha do Exército de Libertação Popular (MELP), a sua preocupação em desenvolver ações em águas profundas as quais constituem um desafio acrescido para a segurança de Taiwan.

9 Por exemplo, um vídeo promocional sobre os sistemas de armamento chinês apresentado *Zhuhai Air Show*, em novembro de 2012, simulava o bombardeamento de bases militares em Taiwan. Entre o diverso armamento apresentado incluíam-se os mísseis de funcionalidades diversas, M20, A100 e A100 (Taipei Times, 2012: 1).

O crescimento em dimensão, capacidade e profissionalismo da MELP nos últimos anos tem sido desafiante, quando o orçamento das forças armadas chinesas aumentou para dois dígitos na última década. Para além do desenvolvimento de tecnologias de *anti-access* e *area denial* na região da Ásia-Pacífico, foram também adquiridos ou fabricados sofisticados sistemas de defesa aérea e de mísseis guiados de longo alcance para operações marítimas – tais como o *Houbei* – aeronaves não tripuladas, submarinos, porta-aviões, fragatas, *destroyers*, entre outros (Crowder, 2012: 19; O'Rourke, 2012: 3-37).

Os Novos Desafios de Segurança e Defesa de Taiwan

A chegada ao poder de Ma Ying-jeou em 2008, do Partido Nacionalista do *Kuomintang* (KMT), depois de oito anos de governação do Partido Democrático Progressista (PDP) liderado por Chen Shui-bian, trouxe um novo rumo político à ilha¹⁰. Ma chegou com a convicção que o antecessor cometeu muitos erros de estratégia militar no que se refere à defesa da ilha e procurou distanciar-se da governação anterior (Chen, 2009: 8). Um dos domínios em que se procurou demarcar uma diferença foi precisamente na defesa nacional, embora uma parte dos conceitos anteriores se mantivesse inalterado. Um ano depois do início do novo mandato, aparecia já expressa no QDR, uma nova estratégia de defesa nacional, muito em resposta às necessidades da sociedade civil e como um desafio à ala militar mais ortodoxa (Chen, 2009: 8). A ideia era cortar com as tendências mais desafiantes da governação de Ma Ying-jeou que colocava em causa o equilíbrio no Estreito de Taiwan. Embora Chen tenha seguido no essencial a política do KMT, no final do seu segundo mandato (2004-2008) tomou uma posição de maior confrontação face à RPC. Em abril de 2007, por exemplo, as agências noticiosas taiwanesas revelaram que as forças armadas da ilha simularam em computador ataques com mísseis a posições chinesas no Estreito de Taiwan (Huang, 2008: 257).

A política presidencial de Ma passou a ser conhecida por "*Hard ROC*"¹¹, que apesar de indiciar uma manifestação de força, na verdade toda a retórica oficial é muito centrada na construção de uma "defesa abrangente" (*comprehensive defense*), ou seja, um ambiente pacífico regional e na construção de paz. Em grande medida,

10 Para a melhoria das relações bilaterais o autor considera igualmente influente o conjunto alargado e estratificado de crescentes interações informais e não-governamentais desenvolvidas entre as duas comunidades. Ver Silva (2011: 199-220).

11 A estratégia "*Hard ROC*" (jogo de palavras fazendo uso da sigla *Republic of China*) criticada por algumas individualidades do meio militar, assenta no desenvolvimento de capacidades e infra-estruturas militares defensivas e de protecção a eventuais ataques inimigos, incluindo operações conjuntas que possam anular forças aéreas e navais, e capacidade de mobilização de reservas (MDNRC, 2009: 65).

tal como afirma York W. Chen (2009: 10), o conceito de “*Hard ROC*” parece indicar toda uma estratégia de “fortificação defensiva”. A expressão foi amplamente apoiada pelo legislador Su Chi, posteriormente Secretário-Geral do Conselho Nacional de Segurança. Su sempre fora crítico do conceito de “Defesa Activa” da Era de Chen e chegou mesmo a bloquear o financiamento do MDT para a produção dos mísseis cruzeiro HF-IIIE. Como alternativa, propôs já naquela altura o conceito de “*Hard ROC*” que viria a ser usado por Ma na campanha eleitoral de 2008 (Chen, 2009: 10). O conceito tornar-se-ia a base do entendimento de segurança de Taiwan por parte de Ma e seria introduzido e explicado nos documentos oficiais emitidos pelo MDT:

“President Ma’s phrase in Chinese would translate: “solid as bedrock,” signifying a rock-solid and impregnable defensive force that, by implication, could not be dislodged, shattered, or breached by a numerically superior enemy force during an attempt to attack or invade ROC territory. The abbreviation for the Republic of China, ROC, happens to rhyme with the word “rock” in English, allowing word play that does not exist in the original Chinese formulation.” (MDNRC, 2009: 10)

É indiscutível que a paz é um fator central nas linhas orientadoras da estratégia de defesa nacional de Taiwan. A Constituição da RC, no seu artigo 137, faz referência, para além da salvaguarda da defesa nacional, à necessidade de “preservação de um mundo de paz” (GPRC, 2012). Assim, a prevenção da guerra e de conflitos, a defesa do território nacional, a preparação de respostas de contingência e a estabilidade regional estão entre as grandes estratégias de defesas nacionais de Taiwan. Há uma clara intenção de reforçar o princípio da “defesa preventiva” (*preventive defense*) e um enfoque em Taiwan como construtor de paz (*peacemaker*), evitando qualquer tipo de confrontação sem abdicar da participação em processos de cooperação regional. A ideia é promover dinâmicas de *Confidence Building Measures* (CBM) e outras medidas preventivas (MDNRC, 2009, 62), tal como comprovam os esforços de mediação na crise Senkaku/Diaoyutai. Ao mesmo tempo, a ilha pretende respeitar os acordos internacionais, em especial, no que se refere ao desenvolvimento de armas nucleares e de armas de destruição maciça.

O maior desafio ao papel de Taiwan como ator de paz é a sua relação agri-doce com a RPC. O facto de a China não ter diminuído o seu arsenal militar em relação a Taiwan obriga a uma maior preocupação dos responsáveis políticos taiwaneses no reforço e modernização dos seu arsenal militar. Mesmo o cenário de entendimento entre Taipé e Pequim, envolvendo dinâmicas económicas, científicas, desportivas e culturais entre os dois lados, não tem acompanhado o mesmo tipo de avanços no domínio político. Desta forma, as preocupações de segurança mantêm-se relativamente inalteradas, embora teoricamente as possibilidades de uma confronta-

ção militar sejam cada vez mais improváveis. Poder-se-ia pensar que o clima de crescente cooperação económica e as interações sociais funcionariam como um elemento atenuante, o que não se tem verificado. Apesar de uma redução substancial do orçamento para a defesa na ilha, este facto é inerente a uma procura de maior profissionalização, eficiência e modernização das Forças Armadas. Também se verifica que desde 2011 passaram a ser produzidos, em grande escala, os novos mísseis IIE, *Hsiung Feng*, com um alcance de 600 a 650 quilómetros. Estes mísseis cruzeiro estão estrategicamente a ser colocados para atingirem território chinês, um facto totalmente novo neste contexto. Assim, enquanto a China tem cerca de 1600 mísseis dirigidos à ilha, Taiwan aparece agora com um arsenal de 100 mísseis dirigidos ao continente (Dudley, 2012).

A par das questões estritamente bélicas, há a considerar o constrangimento exercido pela China à diplomacia de Taiwan. A RC não tem participação em muitos organismos internacionais o que prejudica a sua economia e política de defesa. Neste prisma, o acesso a tecnologia exterior e a venda de armas a Taiwan permanece difícil, embora os EUA tenham a “obrigação” de o fazer de acordo com o *Taiwan Relations Act* (1979). A pressão que exerce a RPC visa manter a sua capacidade coerciva sobre Taiwan, em especial evitando o desenvolvimento das suas capacidades aéreas impedindo a compra de aviões de combate (F-5, FX, Mirage, F-16 ou F-35), bem como mísseis balísticos (US-Taiwan Business Council, 2011: 31).

Apesar das vulnerabilidades apontadas a Taiwan, é interessante analisar como alguns observadores vêm em Taiwan uma enorme capacidade de influência, nomeadamente ao nível do seu *soft power* (Waterman, 2012). Embora a China tenha permitido que Taiwan participe como observador na Organização Mundial de Saúde (Tatlow, 2012), continua a travar a sua entrada noutros organismos internacionais. Ao mesmo tempo, o número de Estados com quem tem relações diplomáticas oficiais vai-se reduzindo, fruto da pressão exercida por Pequim.¹²

Outro elemento importante na política de defesa de Taiwan é a ideia de “transformação”, no sentido em que visa a modernização, eficiência, planificação, cooperação e equilíbrio das forças militares. Desde logo, há uma clara intenção de reestruturar os recursos disponíveis, em termos de organização e capacidades de operação, procurar parcerias, reequilibrar estratégias militares e uma melhor articulação entre os setores estratégicos civis e as tecnologias de defesa (transferência de tecnologia). Outras necessidades prementes são a implementação de um sistema funcional de voluntariado, o desenvolvimento dos recursos humanos, a gestão de gastos e aquisição de equipamentos militares, e uma articulação entre a política

12 Por exemplo, em dezembro de 2012, a Secretaria de Relações Externas das Honduras ratificou a abertura de relações oficiais com a RPC (El Heraldo, 2012) – mais um golpe para a diplomacia de Taiwan.

de defesa e as necessidades da sociedade civil. Há uma clara preocupação com a corrupção nas forças armadas tendo em conta o efeito negativo que acarreta. Os subornos e a corrupção generalizada pesam na moral interna dos efectivos e acaba por trespassar para a sociedade civil.

Além disso, há uma tentativa de aumentar as parcerias e caminhos para o estabelecimento de contactos com atores regionais no sentido de criar plataformas de entendimento e cooperação conjunta ao nível da segurança. Será importante também a criação de uma política de cooperação ao nível da segurança regional, desenvolvendo operações conjuntas no âmbito dos conceitos estratégicos da “defesa resoluto e dissuasão credível”. Através desta estratégia, as forças armadas de Taiwan pretendem melhorar a eficiência de operações conjuntas, “sustentação estratégica e determinação táctica”, anulando as tentativas de avanço rápido por parte do inimigo. São cruciais as operações C4ISR¹³, operações de informação (IO), de guerra eletrónica, operações conjuntas, guerra assimétrica, mobilização de reservas, logística e capacidades de combate intangíveis (MDNRC, 2009: 6-7). Assim tem sucedido nos contatos com o Japão – apesar de alguns desentendimentos – e com os EUA, e que inclui a venda de armamento, apesar das críticas de Pequim. Ou seja, com a “viragem” dos EUA para o espaço da Ásia-Pacífico Taiwan está a recuperar a sua importância.

Em termos de ameaças não-tradicionais, a RC enfrenta o desafio imenso dos desastres naturais, considerados como um risco à segurança nacional (MDNRC, 2011: 13). Por exemplo, em agosto de 2009, o tufão Morakot revelou deficiências ao nível militar e político no auxílio às populações locais. Neste sentido, urge uma maior articulação entre as forças militares e civis na procura de soluções para calamidades deste género. Por outro lado, a abertura de fronteiras entre a China e Taiwan e as relações estreitas com os EUA podem colocar a ilha sobre a mira de eventuais ataques terroristas. Além disso, as doenças infecto-contagiosas, tradicionalmente de fácil propagação na região, são um factor de enorme preocupação. Acrescem ainda outras inquietações tais como a pirataria marítima e os ataques de cibercriminosos, estes muito desenvolvidos na China continental.

Conclusões

Em termos dos desafios de defesa e segurança, podemos dizer que a ilha de Taiwan se debate com questões convencionais e não convencionais, divididas entre o domínio político, diplomático, económico e militar. É um facto que as relações no Estreito de Taiwan têm melhorado substancialmente desde a eleição Ma Ying-Jeou,

13 Na terminologia anglo-saxónica, as siglas C4ISR significam *Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance e Reconnaissance*.

em 2008, e da sua reeleição em 2012, o que é visível no aumento exponencial dos diálogos e contatos diretos. Ao mesmo tempo, os responsáveis políticos de Taiwan têm aproveitado para promover uma imagem de pacificadores nas suas relações com a RP – incluindo o papel de mediadores na região – o que tem agradado substancialmente à diplomacia americana. A competição em redor das ilhas Senkaku / Diaoyutai, por exemplo, tem servido para Taiwan reforçar este papel, mantendo uma posição equidistante em relação aos interesses de soberania da RPC. Na prossecução desta postura, Ma tem imposto um modelo de segurança apelidado de “*Hard ROC*”, assente, sobretudo, em aspectos defensivos, na transformação e na prevenção de conflitos. A ideia é não entrar em confrontação com a China, mantendo-se o equilíbrio da “não unificação e não independência”. Neste projeto, inclui-se também a transformação das forças armadas taiwanesas, no sentido de uma maior transparência, modernização, e reestruturação de forma a responder às necessidades. A redução do investimento taiwanês no domínio da defesa pode indiciar uma vulnerabilidade face à crescente cooperação com a China continental. No entanto, para além da venda crescente de armamento pela Administração Obama, verifica-se uma preocupação centrada na eficiência e modernização, o que implica uma boa utilização de recursos disponíveis.

Embora seja inegável que a relação entre Taiwan e a China esteja na sua melhor fase, persistem muitas dificuldades do ponto de vista político. Pequim continua a pressionar a diplomacia taiwanesa, uma das principais amarras quanto à defesa dos interesses nacionais de Taipé. Embora tenha permitido a entrada de Taiwan como observador na OMS, a RPC impede que a ilha participe em muitos fora e organismos internacionais. Importa salientar que a China não coloca de parte a possibilidade de usar “meios não pacíficos” para resolver a questão de Taiwan, para além de manter um elevado arsenal balístico dirigido ao território insular. Ao mesmo tempo, dirige grande parte da sua estratégia militar para as zonas costeiras e vias marítimas, numa projeção naval para toda a região da Ásia-Pacífico e Índico.

Também a pujança comercial, política, diplomática e cultural da RPC continental são uma grande preocupação para Taipé, na medida em que enfraquece a condição negocial taiwanesa, sem deixar de perceber que o mercado chinês é também uma oportunidade. Acrescem ainda questões de segurança não tradicionais, incluindo os desastres naturais, as doenças infecto-contagiosas, o contrabando, a pirataria e os ataques cibernéticos. Finalmente, um dos maiores desafios à sua segurança é a crescente competição e tensão nos mares da China, incluindo o redirecionamento estratégico dos EUA para a Ásia-Pacífico. Parece-nos que a ilha, face aos mais recentes desenvolvimentos, volta a estar no centro das atenções de Washington e, gradualmente irá assumir uma maior importância nos jogos geopolíticos regionais.

Referências

- Arthur, Gordon (2011). "Taiwan Island Defence". *Asian Military Review* n.º 5, pp. 48-53.
- Bush, Richard C. (2011). "Taiwan and East Asian Security". *Orbis*, Spring, pp. 274-289.
- Chen, Jian (2012). "Win-Win Cooperation: China and ASEAN". *China Pictoral*, November, pp. 52-53.
- Chen, York, W. (2009). "The Evolution of Taiwan's Military Strategy: Convergence and Dissonance". *China Brief*, 19 de novembro, pp. 8-12.
- Clinton, Hillary (2011). "America's Pacific Century" (Entrevista ao *East-West Center*). Departamento de Estado dos EUA. Disponível em <http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2011/11/176999.htm>.
- Clinton, Hillary (2011a). "America's Pacific Century". *Foreign Policy*, November, pp. 56-63.
- Clough, Ralph N. (1993). *Reaching Across the Taiwan Strait: People to People Diplomacy*. Oxford: Westview Press.
- Crowder, Doug (2012). "Storm Warnings?". *Proceedings*, April 2012, pp. 18-41.
- Departamento da Defesa dos Estados Unidos da América (2010). *Quadrennial Defense Review*. Disponível em <http://www.defense.gov/qdr/QDR%20as%20of%2029JAN10%201600.pdf>.
- Dudley, Richard (2012). "Taiwan Deploys Cruise Missiles With Range to Reach Chinese Mainland". *Military Technology & Defense News*. Disponível em <http://defense-update.com/>
- El Heraldo (2012). "Honduras Contempla Relaciones con China Continental". Disponível em <http://www.elheraldo.hn/Secciones-Principales/Pais/Honduras-contempla-relaciones-con-China#panel1-2>.
- GPRC: Gabinete da Presidência da Republica da China (2012). *Constitution*. Disponível em <http://english.president.gov.tw/Default.aspx?tabid=1107>.
- Gabinete do Secretário da Defesa dos Estados Unidos da América (2011). *Annual Report to Congress: Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China*.
- Goldman Sachs (2003). "Dreaming with BRIC: the Path to 2050". *Global Economics paper* n.º 99, pp. 1-24.
- Huang, Alexander Chieh-cheng (2008). *A National Defense Strategy for Taiwan in the New Century*. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Jane's Defence Weekly (2012). "Annual Defence Report 2012", 12 de dezembro, pp. 1-50.
- Locklear, Samuel J. (2013). "The Interview: Admiral Samuel J. Locklear". *The Diplomat*. Disponível em <http://thediplomat.com/2013/01/13/the-interview-admiral-samuel-j-locklear/>.
- Mitrany, David (1966). *A Working Peace System*. Chicago: Quadrangle Books.

- Morgenthau, Hans J. (1993). *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*. New York: McGrawHill.
- Hsing, You-tien (1998). *Making Capitalism in China: The Taiwan Connection*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- MDNRC: Ministério da Defesa Nacional da República da China (2004). *National Defense Report*. Taipé: Defense Review Editing Group.
- MDNRC: Ministério da Defesa Nacional da República da China (2009). *Quadrennial Defense Review*. Taipé: Defense Review Editing Group.
- MDNRC: Ministério da Defesa Nacional da República da China (2011). *National Defense Report*. Taipé: Defense Review Editing Group.
- National Intelligence Council (2012). *Global Trends 2030: Alternative Worlds*.
- Naughton, Barry (1998). "The Emergence of China Circle" em Barry Naughton (ed), *The China Circle: Economics and Electronics in the PRC, Taiwan, and Hong Kong*. Washington: Brookings Institution Press.
- Keohane, Robert e Joseph Nye (2001). *Power and Interdependence*. New York: Longman.
- O'Rourke, R. (2012). "China Naval Modernization: Implications for U.S. Navy Capabilities – Background and Issues for Congress". *CRS Report for Congress*, Congressional Research Service.
- Richardson, Michael (2010). "Energy and Geopolitics in the South China Sea" em Amy Lugg e Mark Hong Energy (eds), *Issues in the Asia-Pacific Region*. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.
- Taipei Times (2006). "Hu Jintao Calls for More Powerful Navy", 29 de dezembro.
- Taipei Times (2012). "Wu Den-yih Meets Li Keqiang at Boao Forum", 2 de abril.
- Taipei Times (2012a). "Activists Ignite Dispute over Diaoyutais", 5 de julho de 2012.
- Taipei Times (2012b). "Weapons Systems Video Simulates Attack on Taiwan", 20 de novembro.
- Didi Kirsten Tatlow (2013). "Redefining the Meaning of 'Chinese'". *The New York Times*, 23 de janeiro.
- Wang, Horn-luen (2009). "How are Taiwanese Shanghaied?". *Positions*, 17(2), pp. 322-346.
- Waterman, Shaun (2012). "Only Taiwan' Holds any Reins on China: Confucianist Leaders use Soft Power". *The Washington Times*, 26 de dezembro. Disponível em http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2012/dec/26/only-taiwan-holds-any-reins-on-china/?utm_source=RSS_Feed&utm_medium=RSS.
- Willner, A.S. (2011). "Implications and Planned Changes in Taiwan's Defense Posture" em Roger Cliff et al (eds), *New Opportunities and Challenges for Taiwan's Security*. Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, pp. 81-97.

Nuclear Strategy and Leadership Change in North Korea: Old Soju in a New Bottle

Nuno Santiago de Magalhães

Ph.D. candidate em Política e Estudos Internacionais na Universidade de Cambridge e investigador não-residente do IPRI-UINL. Anteriormente foi consultor da Missão de Portugal na ONU; investigador associado da Universidade Nacional de Seul; investigador visitante na Universidade Columbia; visiting fellow na Universidade Harvard; KGSP scholar na Universidade Sogang; e colaborador do Ministério dos Negócios Estrangeiros de Portugal. É mestre em Relações Internacionais pela Universidade de Cambridge.

Resumo

Estratégia Nuclear e Mudança de Liderança na Coreia do Norte: Velho Soju numa Garrafa Nova

Sob as lideranças de Kim Il-sung e Kim Jong-il, a Coreia do Norte desenvolveu uma estratégia nuclear que misturava ciclicamente ações de confronto e aproximação junto dos restantes atores do palco político do Nordeste Asiático. Essa estratégia visava evitar o fim do programa nuclear de Pyongyang e, de modo complementar, procurava extrair benefícios internacionais através de negociações. Ao suceder ao seu pai, Kim Jong-un trouxe sinais de transformação ao nível da imagem pública da liderança, da predominância dos militares no regime, e da reforma económica. Contudo, a tendência transformadora da nova liderança não se estendeu à estratégia nuclear. Kim Jong-un manteve basicamente intacta a estratégia herdada de Kim Jong-il, uma opção que é perfeitamente ilustrada pelo teste nuclear de 12 de Fevereiro de 2013. Este artigo oferece uma explicação para o facto de a mudança de líder não ter afetado a estratégia nuclear da Coreia do Norte, argumentando que tal se deve à persistência de um contexto internacional negativo para a sobrevivência do regime norte-coreano e à fragilidade política de Kim Jong-un a nível interno.

Abstract

Under the leaderships of Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il, North Korea developed a nuclear strategy that cyclically mixed acts of confrontation and engagement towards other actors in the political stage of Northeast Asia. That strategy sought to avoid the end of Pyongyang's nuclear program and, in a complementing way, to extract international benefits through negotiations. When he succeeded his father, Kim Jong-un signalled transformation at the levels of leadership's public image, the military predominance in the regime, and economic reform. However, that transformative tendency did not reach nuclear strategy. Kim Jong-un basically kept intact the strategy inherited from Kim Jong-il, an option that is perfectly illustrated by the nuclear test of 12 February 2013. This article offers an explanation for the fact that leadership change did not affect nuclear strategy, arguing that it was due to the persistence of an international context that is negative for the survival of the North Korean regime and to the political fragility of Kim Jong-un at domestic level.

Introduction

North Korea has the estimated ability to produce at least half a dozen plutonium-based nuclear weapons, started a program of uranium enrichment, and has been improving its ballistic deployment systems (Nikitin, 2013). Whether those capabilities are actually operational or constitute mere paper tigers, North Korea's nuclear program became a central security concern in Northeast Asia. Since Pyongyang was confronted about the development of a nuclear program in the 1980s, its international "nuclear strategy" – the set of planned actions whose purpose is to bring North Korea as close as possible to its preferred international outcome at the level of nuclear policy¹ – has consistently followed a broadly predictable pattern, despite the image that North Korea is an unpredictable actor. Developed under Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il, that strategy is a cyclical combination of engagement and confrontation actions that end up preventing the denuclearization outcome sought by other Northeast Asia's political actors, which include the United States (US) due to its military presence in the region. It is evident that "leadership change" – Kim Jong-un succeeding his late father, Kim Jong-il – had a transformative impact at some domestic political levels but Pyongyang's nuclear strategy remained unaffected. In fact, despite showing signs of convergence towards the preferences of other actors in Northeast Asia – less conservative image, willingness to decrease the weight of the military in the regime, and signaling interest in economic reform – Kim Jong-un did not alter the nuclear strategy of his predecessors, as reflected by the recent nuclear test on 12 February 2013. In this sense I suggest that nuclear strategy under Kim Jong-un has been old *soju* in a new bottle: an old strategy used by a new leadership. In this context, my goal is to answer the following question: why was North Korea's nuclear strategy fundamentally unaffected by leadership change?

It is assumed here that North Korean leaders, as any other political leader, are instrumentally rational actors when they make foreign policy choices: they have pre-defined preferences over outcomes and beliefs about which actions lead to each outcome, seeking to maximize their political profits (Bueno de Mesquita, 2006: 308). Hence, this perception of rationality is noncommittal to the moral merit of actors' goals or the quality of the actors' performance in the pursuit of political profits. I consider that the basic goal of leaders is to remain in power by tackling international and domestic challenges to its leadership. At international level

*Este artigo descreve e analisa acontecimentos ocorridos até 20 de fevereiro de 2013.

1 On the general definition of strategy see Frieden (1999: 41).

a political leader must tackle military threats to national integrity and economic outcomes that decrease available capital to fund his or her policies; whereas at domestic level a leader must focus on keeping a support coalition that sustains her or him in power. Given this analytical framework, I argue that Kim Jong-un was internationally and domestically constrained to maintain the nuclear strategy of Kim Jong-il, since the international position of North Korea and his fragility as leader prevented policy choices that led to denuclearization.

The following section outlines North Korea's nuclear strategy under Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il, describing the most relevant focal points that reflect the application of that strategy. Section 3 briefly explains the success of that nuclear strategy, reflected in the regime's ability to keep its nuclear program alive despite the opposition of its powerful foe and ally, the US and China. In Section 4 I review the process of leadership change in Pyongyang, examining the rise to power of Kim Jong-un and its transformative political impact at domestic level. Section 5 describes the fundamental elements defining the nuclear strategy followed by the new leader up to the nuclear test of February 2013, highlighting its similarity to his father's strategy. Section 6 explains how international and domestic constraints shaped the nuclear strategy of Kim Jong-un. Finally, Section 7 sums up the findings.

Nuclear Strategy before Kim Jong-un

Due to its fragility North Korea was constrained to develop nuclear weapons. In principle Pyongyang was aware that other regional actors – US, South Korea, China, Japan, and Russia – would try to terminate its nuclear program. Therefore Pyongyang needed to develop a strategy in order to prevent the end of its program and if possible use it to obtain capital, energy or food aid through international bargaining. Accordingly, a strategy was developed by Pyongyang under Kim Il-sung and consolidated under Kim Jong-il. What was that strategy and how did it shape the international behavior of North Korea?

Threatened by the might of the US and by its own inability to reform the country's economy due to the risks of absorption by a more powerful South, nuclear weapons constituted a very useful solution to North Korea. In principle, those weapons could achieve three goals essential to the regime of Pyongyang: to deter external military attacks; to extract political and economic benefits from other countries; and to increase control over the population by booming the popularity of leaders and dissuading foreign states that wish to promote regime change in North Korea. Additionally, those weapons could bolster the domestic position of North Korean leaders. In this setting, the primary goal of Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il was to keep the nuclear program alive and the secondary one was to obtain material concessions to compensate for the deficient output of their malfunc-

tioning economic structures. The best scenario for Pyongyang would be the one in which the international “community” or at least the most powerful actor in the system – the US – recognized its nuclear status, while the worst scenario would be forced denuclearization in exchange for mere economic benefits. Given that the best scenario was unlikely in the short-term and the worst scenario would be damaging for the sustainability of the regime, North Korea opted for a strategy of cyclical engagement-confrontation that ultimately prevented denuclearization: firstly, engagement by denying any wrongdoing or demonstrating openness to denuclearization by negotiating a deal involving minor and major concessions² in exchange for benefits; secondly, confrontation through nuclear tests, ballistic missile launches, military provocations, or political rhetoric, in order to impose the implementation of acquired benefits, to avoid making major concessions, or to force the return of stalled negotiations; thirdly, engagement at subsequent denuclearization negotiations – thus simultaneously closing and opening the cycle – which eventually collapses again due to a new act of confrontation.

This mixed strategy was challenging for actors interacting with North Korea. Although one could grasp if Pyongyang benefited from engaging or confronting at a given period in time (Magalhães, 2006, 2011), it was highly problematic to determine when engagement and confrontation would actually occur – especially the duration of engagement and the occurrence of acts of confrontation that do not involve logistical processes that are easily detectable by systems of intelligence. To predict the behavior of any state is already hard enough – to say the least – but in the case of Pyongyang that task became virtually impossible due to the secretive informal political structures that lay under the regime’s formal ones (McEachern, 2010; Cha, 2012; Park and Snyder, 2013).

I suggest that North Korea’s nuclear strategy had three nuanced phases before Kim Jong-un’s rise to power. The first phase lasted from the moment North Korea joined the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) up to the death of Kim Il-sung (1985-1994); the second one regards Kim Jong-il’s strategy before Pyongyang acknowledged the possession of nuclear weapons (1994-2004); and the third one concerns the post-acknowledgment period until Kim Jong-il’s death (2004-2011). The strategy’s fundamental engagement-confrontation structure remained unaltered but the nuances came from the ability to exert confrontation, which increased as a function of Pyongyang’s perceived military capabilities. The more powerful North Korean military capabilities were perceived to be, the more confrontational Pyongyang

2 Minor concessions being those that do not destroy the nuclear program – such as moratoriums on testing, visits by IAEA inspectors, or closing of accessory infrastructure – and major ones being those that may destroy it – such as the submission of nuclear materials, the destruction of irreplaceable nuclear weapons and delivery systems, or the closing of essential infrastructures.

was able to become: hence Kim Il-sung's ability to confront its international counterparts was lower than Kim Jong-il's before the acknowledgement of nuclear weapons, and Kim Jong-il's confrontational ability increased after that acknowledgment.

Pyongyang's quest for nuclear weapons goes back to the 1960s but it would only be accomplished in the post-Cold War period. During the Cold War Pyongyang's relations with Moscow were damaged by several episodes – such as Joseph Stalin's weak support in the Korean War – but it was evident that the Soviets would prefer to pay the costs of military and economic assistance rather than the political costs of a pro-Seoul reunification. Such Soviet predisposition was vital for North Korea due to the decline of its economy in relation to South Korea and to their inability to autonomously prevent a potential invasion by Seoul and Washington. Pyongyang's economic shortages and military weakness could be compensated by Moscow but there was a price to pay at the level of defense autonomy: the Soviets rejected the development of North Korean nuclear weapons. In this sense, the Pyongyang's *Juche* ideology of self-sufficiency was sacrificed on the altar of Moscow's economic and military umbrella.

Although Soviet patronage constrained the development of a North Korean nuclear program it was not able to stop it, especially when two trends in the 1980s became obvious to Pyongyang: Soviet decline and Moscow's approximation to Seoul. The sense of vulnerability of Pyongyang increased proportionately to those growing trends and prompted the effective development of a military nuclear program, despite the Soviet and international efforts to prevent it. Such efforts pushed North Korea to join the NPT on 12 December 1985, which I consider to symbolically mark the beginning of the regime's nuclear strategy of engagement-confrontation. After years of international suspicion and tension about North Korea's program, in 1992 Pyongyang signed the Joint Declaration on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula with Seoul and finally signed the safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).³ However, those actions of engagement towards the international community and the agreement with its Southern neighbor were merely smoke and mirrors: the development a nuclear program was a rational aspiration that those agreements could not suppress. When the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 signaled Soviet Union's inability to protect allied regimes, it became demonstrated that Moscow's support would no longer be a sufficient condition for regime survival in North Korea. Therefore,

3 The Joint Declaration of South and North Korea on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula was signed on 20 January 1992 and the safeguards agreement was signed on 30 January 1992. See <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/zxxx/t297463.htm> and <http://www.iaea.org/Publications/Documents/Infcircs/Others/inf403.shtml>.

when the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, North Korea was already effectively developing its nuclear program.

The post-Cold War brought great international and domestic challenges to North Korea's "Great Leader", Kim Il-sung. At international level Pyongyang had lost its most important economic and military ally; the US was the only superpower; South Korea had become the magnet of reunification; and communist regimes had lost credibility. At domestic level, without Moscow's support Pyongyang faced economic degradation and was unable to reform its centralized economic system due to the fear of unleashing a Southern absorption. Hence, if the development of a military nuclear program was desirable during the Cold War, it became absolutely essential in the post-Cold War.

When in the period of 1993-1994 the US confronted North Korea about the nuclear weapons both countries were on the brink of war. However, following a visit by former US President Jimmy Carter, Kim Il-sung agreed to negotiate in June 1994. Unluckily for Pyongyang, Kim Il-sung died in July and thus the regime's position at the negotiation table became obviously weaker. The crisis ended up solved through the Agreed Framework of October 1994 signed by North Korea and the US.⁴ Despite its weak negotiation position, this agreement ended up being positive to North Korea. The inclination of the United States to sign that agreement can be explained by the perception that the regime of Pyongyang would soon collapse (Mazzetti, 2006). In fact, that ended up being an apparently safe bet: Kim Il-sung left North Koreans orphans of their "Great Leader"; economic continue declining; and natural disasters devastated the country, provoking an unprecedented famine which according to an informed estimation led to a number of deaths that ranged from 600,000 to 1 million (Haggard and Nolan, 2007: 1). In this context Washington did not have incentives to fulfill its end of the bargain but, contrarily to the expectations, Pyongyang survived.

Kim Jong-il continued to signal engagement with the US by supposedly complying with the Agreed Framework. However, Washington was being slow on delivering the agreed benefits, required by Kim Jong-il to finance its military programs, to please the political-military elites that sustained him in power, and

4 The Agreed Framework between the United States of America and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea was signed on 21 October 1994. In sum, North Korea agreed to respect the inter-Korean Joint Declaration of 1992, to remain in the NPT, to allow IAEA inspections, not to reprocess nuclear fuel, and to comply with the safeguards agreement; the US agreed to organise the provision of two light water reactors, to deliver 500,000 tons of heavy fuel oil each year, and to formally assure that it would not threat to use or use nuclear weapons against North Korea. Moreover, both countries agreed to move towards the normalization of relations at political and economic levels. See http://www.nti.org/media/pdfs/aptagframe.pdf?_=1316553697&_=1316553697.

mitigate the famine effects in order to avoid a popular revolt against the regime. This prompted Pyongyang to orchestrate a confrontation act, especially because it had achieved the technological ability to test ballistic missiles with a longer range than the medium-range *Rodong-1*. Therefore in August 1998 North Korea presumably tested a *Taepodong-1* missile while claiming to send a satellite into orbit, the *Kwangmyeongseong-1*.⁵ After the political dust settled, a new engagement period started with a bilateral meeting between North Korea and the US in Berlin in September 1999 – Pyongyang agreed with a moratorium on the tests of long-range missiles in exchange for Washington's partial lifting of sanctions (Song, 1999). The implementation of the Agreed Framework proceeded. In the meantime, apparently combining his ideology with the pragmatic recognition of the enduringness of Pyongyang's regime, South Korea's president Kim Dae-jung – in office since early 1998 – had developed a novel engagement policy. Whereas the Kim Young-sam, his predecessor, did not actively engage North Korea and was focusing on collapse scenarios, Kim Dae-jung approached Pyongyang through his "sunshine policy" – which basically rejected the idea of a Southern absorption and promoted cooperation with the North. The Inter-Korean Summit of June 2000 was the corollary of that policy, with Kim Jong-il and Kim Dae-jung meeting in Pyongyang.

However, the severe political incompatibility between Pyongyang and Washington prevented the normalization of relations and the difficult co-existence of Bill Clinton with a Republican majority in Congress made the economical implementation of the Agreed Framework difficult to achieve. It became obvious that the agreement was fatally wounded. The final blow came with the entry of George W. Bush into office in 2001. Ideologically conservative, Bush was less inclined than Clinton to negotiate with a totalitarian regime which supposedly sought to develop nuclear weapons. That inclination of Bush decreased even more after the September 11 terrorist attacks led to a more assertive foreign policy against non-allied countries and put nuclear terrorism on top of the list of Washington's worst nightmares. In the beginning of 2002, the famous "axis-of-evil" categorization of Iraq, Iran and North Korea (Bush, 2002) represented the announced death of the Agreed Framework. Apparently trying to force the revival of the Agreed Framework, in October 2002 North Korea has been reported to have boasted about the existence of a nuclear program to an American official during a bilateral meeting in Pyongyang (Yoo, 2003: 105). The rupture with Washington was evident, so in January 2003 North Korea

5 The launch occurred on 31 August 1998 and despite North Korean claims of success the satellite was never detected by other countries.

announced its retreat from the NPT and in April 2003 Pyongyang told American officials that it possessed nuclear weapons, solely one month after the invasion of Iraq – one of the members of the “axis of evil”. The exit from the NPT and the decay of North Korean-American relations led to creation of the Six Party Talks (SPT), involving North Korea, the US, China, South Korea, Russia and Japan. Despite the efforts of North Korea to extract concessions, the first three rounds of the SPT – between August 2003 and June 2004 – did not produce the expected benefits. The lack of negotiation results – which despite allowing time to develop nuclear weapons did not deliver the much needed economic benefits – remained partially compensated with the engagement with Seoul, since the sunshine policy of Kim Dae-jung continued to be promoted in its essence by the following president, Roh Moo-hyun, who came to power in 2003.

Since the improved relations with the South were far from being a guarantee of regime survival, Pyongyang made a provocation that marks the beginning of the third phase of its strategy. On 28 September 2004, Vice Foreign Minister Choe Sun-ho publicly acknowledged at the UN that North Korea had turned plutonium from spent fuel rods into nuclear weapons as measure of self-defense against the US nuclear threat (BBC, 2004). In February 2005 the public acknowledgment of possession of nuclear weapons was reiterated. As a result of those provocations, the fourth round of the SPT led to the Joint Statement of September 2005.⁶ However, the rocky relationship between Pyongyang and the Bush administration made implementation very difficult. In a move to strengthen its position and test technology, in July 2006 North Korea launched several missiles, including a long-range *Taepodong-2*. The latter launch was unsuccessful so Pyongyang needed to save its face and obtain another trump card for future negotiations. Hence North Korea opted for a new provocation: on 9 October 2006 it supposedly performed its first nuclear test. The international community protested and

6 The Joint Statement of the Fourth Round of the Six-Party Talks was signed on 19 September 2005. Regarding its practical obligations, North Korea agreed to abandon all nuclear weapons and programs, return to the NPT, respect the safeguards agreement, and implement the inter-Korean Joint Declaration of 1992 in exchange for: collective respect for its right to the peaceful use of atomic energy; the future discussion of a provision of a light water reactor; American acknowledgement that it does not deploy nuclear weapons in the Korean peninsula and has no intentions to attack or invade North Korea with nuclear or conventional weapons; South Korean pledge not to receive or deploy nuclear weapons and acknowledgement that these do not exist in its territory; North Korean-American peaceful co-existence, mutual respect for sovereignty, and move towards normalization of relations; North Korean-Japanese move towards normalization of relations; energy assistance by the other five countries; South Korea's provision of 2 million kilowatts of electric power; and collective commitment to negotiate peace regime for the Korean peninsula. See <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/zxxx/t212707.htm>.

the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) approved the condemnatory resolution 1718.⁷

Negotiations returned and an implementation agreement was reached at the SPT in February 2007.⁸ The following months was marked by mutual actions of engagement, with North Korea closing down the Yongbyon in July 2007, the second Inter-Korean Summit occurring in October 2007, the demolition of Yongbyon's cooling tower in June 2008, and the October 2008 removal of North Korea from the American list of states that sponsor terrorism. However, North Korea was not interested in making major concessions and the US – despite Bush being substituted by Barack Obama in January 2009 – was not inclined to reward Pyongyang for minor concessions. Obama's policy of "strategic patience" reflected that logic. Moreover, Washington's coordination with Seoul had improved after a new president came to power in early 2008, Lee Myung-bak, a conservative politician that eschewed the engagement policies of presidents Kim and Roh (Voice of America, 2010). Hence, North Korea was not able to compensate the estrangement with Washington through Southern aid and investment. In this context, time was ripe for another North Korean act of confrontation, hence continuing to implement its cyclical strategy. In April 2009 Pyongyang launched the *Unha-2* rocket – with the reported goal of putting a satellite in orbit, the *Kwangmyeongseong-2* – which was internationally considered a provocative missile test. In protest North Korea abandoned the SPT, increasing the intensity of the crisis. After little more than one month Pyongyang conducted its second nuclear test, on 25 May 2009, which led to the UNSC resolution 1874 in June.⁹ In July 2009 North Korea conducted further missile testing, though not involving long-range devices.

7 Basically, the UNSC Resolution 1718 of 14 October 2006 condemned the nuclear test; prohibited North Korea from performing nuclear and missile tests, suspended its missile and abandon its nuclear and suspend its missile programs; demanded the return to the NPT and respect for the safeguards agreement; authorised the inspection of shipments of cargo leaving and approaching North Korea; banned imports and exports of military material and technology related to the nuclear, ballistic and non-nuclear weapons of mass destruction programs; authorised the freezing of overseas assets of individuals and companies related to the nuclear program and a travel ban regarding involved individuals and their families; prohibited exports of luxury goods to North Korea; established a sanctions committee; and called upon North Korea to return to the STP without preconditions and to work towards the implementation of the Joint Declaration of September 2005. See <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2006/sc8853.doc.htm>.

8 The agreement on Initial Actions for the Implementation of the Joint Statement was reached on 13 February 2007. See <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/zxxx/t297463.htm>.

9 The UNSC Resolution 1874 was signed in 12 June 2009 and in essence it toughens the sanctions established by the UNSC Resolution 1718. See <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2009/sc9679.doc.htm>.

From that point onwards, Kim Jong-il tried to force bilateral negotiations with the US or at least to achieve a strong bargaining position in the SPT. Since little progress was made in that sense, Kim Jong-il went back to confrontation. In March 2010 the South Korean corvette *Cheonan* was allegedly sunk by North Korean forces, resulting in 46 deaths among crew members. Pyongyang denied the accusation and inter-Korean relations deteriorated rapidly, with the South demanding an apology. Those relations became deadlocked because neither country backed down. In order to put an end to the stalemate and perhaps to promote Kim Jong-un's position in the regime, in November 2010 North Korea opted for another act of confrontation by shelling Yeonpyeong-do – provoking the death of two civilians and two military. Also in November, North Korea let the world know about the existence of facilities of uranium-enrichment. The year of 2011 was marked by a virtual stalemate in inter-Korean relations – despite meetings to discuss low-profile issues such as joint research in Baekdu-san (The Chosun Ilbo, 2011a) or invitations for official visits to Kaesong (Agence France-Presse, 2012) – which led to the perpetuation of the SPT blockade. When Kim Jong-il passed away in December 2011 there was still no visible progress.

The Strategy's Success

Altogether, this strategy has generically paid off for Kim Jong-il because the regime survived him and the nuclear program was not shut down. But how can one explain that a small and poor country – with an estimated population of around 24.5 million, GDP of 40 billion dollars, and GDP per capita of 1800 dollars¹⁰ – was able to resist the pressure of the US and China, respectively the major world power and the vital ally of Pyongyang?¹¹ To answer the question one needs to address the fundamental preferences and strategies of these two actors, and explain how North Korea calculated its strategy accordingly.

As mentioned above, the military nuclear program of North Korea was unanimously repudiated by its five interlocutors in the SPT. Supposedly those states considered that the real danger of a nuclear North Korea laid especially in proliferation rather than nuclear holocaust. Namely, nuclear weapons threatened the international regime of non-proliferation at state and sub-state levels: at state level Pyongyang could directly export nuclear technology to other states and could indirectly lead to proliferation by provoking the nuclearization of South Korea, Japan, or even Taiwan;

10 Estimative of 2012 for the population and of 2011 for the GDP (PPP) and GDP per capita (PPP). Central Intelligence Agency, "North Korea", The World Factbook. Available at <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/kn.html>.

11 For reflexions about denuclearization strategies see for example Cha and Kang (2003), Chang (2006), and Lee (2011).

at sub-state level the danger laid in the transfer of nuclear technology to terrorist organizations (Magalhães, 2006: 95-96). The bigger states – US, China and Russia – were focusing almost exclusively such proliferation. On the other hand, South Korean and Japan were also very anxious the possibility of escalation to a military conflict that devastated South Korea and Japan. Proliferation was much more likely than a war, but the latter's potential costs for Seoul and Tokyo were so high that ignoring that scenario was not an option. Washington, Beijing and Moscow would certainly not enjoy the rise of such a conflict, but their costs would be lower in terms of territorial integrity. In this context, the US and China had a similar perspective about the dangers posed by North Korea's nuclear weapons.

Since the perspectives of Washington and Beijing about the mentioned nuclear dangers were similar, what varied essentially was their risk-propensity regarding how hard to push Pyongyang towards denuclearization. The risks of war on the one hand and regime collapse on the other were the most relevant ones. South Korea and Japan were more risk averse when it comes to war and South Korea and China were more risk averse when it comes to regime collapse – due to the short-term socio-economic costs of reunification for Seoul and the social-political-strategic costs for China. Consequently in the case of China the stability of the North Korean regime was valued over regime collapse and resulting denuclearization. Nonetheless, the strengthening of Pyongyang's nuclear capability and its confrontational actions increased the propensity of Beijing moving towards positions closer to risk-seekers – although not the extent of the US. In the case of the US and Russia neither one would profit from a new Korean war. As for regime collapse, Moscow would be displeased to lose an ally and Washington would have to incur in economic costs due to the likely ensuing regional economic crisis. However, these two states were less risk-averse than South Korea, China, and Japan, especially the Americans. In fact, although the existence of a threatening North Korea continued to be part of the narrative to legitimize American presence in South Korea and Japan, the utility of the regime decreased as a result of the development of its nuclear program, whose dangers were proportional to the degree of technological sophistication achieved by Pyongyang. Since the latter had been increasing, the idea of a reunified Korea militarily protected by Washington up to the frontiers with China became more attractive – despite the economic and legitimacy costs. Therefore while the Chinese were risk-averse in relation to heavy international and bilateral sanctions against North Korea, the US became risk-seeking. In that strategic setting, the US and China developed distinct strategies regarding North Korean denuclearization.

Starting with the US, Washington was far from willing to recognize North Korea's nuclear status as it explicitly and implicitly did, respectively, in relation to

India and Israel. Another crack in the non-proliferation regime was only worthy when it involved compensating political gains, which was clearly not the case. The alternative would be to make North Korea feel safe through normalization of the relations between both countries, as established in the SPT Joint Statement of 2005. In the process Pyongyang would demand not only a peace treaty and the start of diplomatic relations, but also a formal non-aggression pact that assured non-interference – in order to avoid the fate of Iraq and Libya, whose leaders would probably be alive if they had nuclear weapons. However, Washington could not opt for such degree of normalization because it would ruin its alliances with Seoul and Tokyo. As a result, the American strategy of containing the rise of China as an offshore balancer would be seriously jeopardized. Hence, despite the fact that the term “normalization” was often thrown around in political meetings and agreements, it was never really on the menu if one presupposes that American leaders behaved in a substantively rational way. Since full normalization was not an option, the US preferred to put intense pressure on Pyongyang through bilateral and multilateral sanctions, while at the same time showing willingness to negotiate – in comparative terms, strong willingness with Clinton, medium with Obama, and weak with Bush.

As for China, it was not willing to support Pyongyang’s nuclear program but still it preferred to sustain the regime with political, military and economic support rather than witnessing regime collapse. Beijing was not willing and capable to protect Pyongyang to the extent of the Soviet Union during the Cold War, but that support seemed crucial for the survival of Kim Jong-il’s regime. Hence, in theory, a full aid cut by China would have thrown North Korea into the brink of collapse. Since Beijing does not wish that outcome to occur, it chooses a strategy that reconciles vital aid support with a mix of rewards and limited punishments contingent on Pyongyang’s nuclear policy.

Aware of this, Pyongyang was able to resist the pressure of the US and managed the disapproval of its ally. North Koreans presumably knew that Washington was not willing to militarily enforce their preferences for denuclearization, so they defiantly endured pressure. Regarding China, Pyongyang was supposedly aware that Beijing would not permit the regime to collapse. As a result, Beijing could not make credible threats. Even if China voted damaging resolutions in the UNSC, scolded North Korea’s ambassador after a provocative act, or privately threatened to cut aid, it was rational for Pyongyang to assume that Beijing was limited in its ability to punish defection because it did not wish to risk a North Korean regime collapse. All in all, the powerful hands of the US and China were too large to open the small lock of Pyongyang’s nuclear safe.

Leadership Change: the Rise of Kim Jong-un

The process of leadership change gained a vital importance to the regime after Kim Jong-il's health declined in 2008. One can visualize two types of dynamics at play at that time: on the one hand Kim Jong-il and his close "entourage" thinking about a successor that guaranteed regime stability; on the other hand a group of potential contenders – belonging or not to Kim's entourage – thinking about the likelihood of successfully leading a *coup d'état*. The collective goal of Kim Jong-il's entourage was to find a leader that allowed a smooth political transition, avoiding elite divisions and popular uprisings that could be fatal to the regime – provoking its collapse and very likely the trial of political leaders and officials controlling the mechanisms of Pyongyang's domestic suppression. The four types of hypothetical leadership options available to the entourage were the following: Kim Jong-il's male offspring¹² – Kim Jong-nam, Kim Jong-chul, or Kim Jong-un; Kim Jong-il's sister or brother-in-law – Kim Kyong-hui or Jang Sung-taek; a leader not belonging to the Kim family, such as O Kuk-ryol; or a collective decision-making body. As for the group of contenders, it could advance with a singular or a collective alternative to leadership, coming from the military, the Workers' Party of Korea (WPK), or even from the Kim family – such as Kim Jong-nam or Kim Pyong-il, Kim Jong-il's half-brother. In the end, the outcome of leadership change was the following: the "Brilliant Comrade" Kim Jong-un was chosen as leader – closely aided by members of his father's entourage such as Kim Kyong-hui, Jang, O, and Ri Yong-ho – whereas the potential contenders did not make a move.

The appointment of Kim Jong-un as successor was obviously advantageous to the regime's stability due to the political weight of his family in relation to the elites and masses. Regarding the former, Kim Jong-il had a solid influence over the Korean People's Army (KPA) – the fundamental group in the regime. Due to his *Songun* policy – military primacy – Kim Jong-il attracted the support of the armed forces by allocating economic resources in their favor, especially to the military elites of Pyongyang and to the nuclear program. The militaristic control of the regime was exerted through the National Defence Commission (NDC). Being the Chairman of the NDC and the Supreme Commander of the KPA, Kim Jong-il controlled the military. Moreover, the "Dear Leader" also had a strong position in the WPK, being its General Secretary. Such weight in the military and political pillars of the regime would lead one to suppose that a family member such as Kim Jong-un would aggregate the support of such groups more easily than a political contender outside

12 Given the patriarchal structure of North Korean society and the existence of three sons, the two daughters of Kim Jong-il – Kim Sul-song and Kim Yo-jong – were virtually condemned to oblivion in the process of succession.

the Kim family. As for the popular allure of Kim Jong-il among the masses, it was based upon the cult of personality that North Korean propaganda successfully constructed around the Kims during decades, benefiting from a Confucian culture that emphasizes leadership and hierarchy. Kim Jong-un would supposedly also benefit from such allure, especially give his physical resemblance with Kim Il-sung.

The costs of choosing Kim Jong-un were basically related to five factors: age, origins of his mother, foreign education, lack of political experience, and the confirmation that in practice the regime became a monarchy. Given the abovementioned cultural Confucian structures in North Korea, age is a highly relevant factor in shaping social relations and in principle older members have prevalence over younger ones. This could pose problems because most high officials of the regime were substantially older than Kim Jong-un. As for his mother – Ko Young-hee – Kim Jong-un could be attacked by the fact she was an ethnical Korean born in Japan, a country that remained on top of the regime's hate list. In regard to his foreign education, Kim Jong-un apparently studied in Switzerland and this could be received with scepticism by a regime that is notorious for its racist-xenophobic narratives (see Myers, 2012). Regarding his inexperience, Kim Jong-un did not have time to gain experience in the KPA or the WPK as his father did. Hence, despite the honors bestowed upon him and the hagiographic propaganda typical of the Kim "dynasty", Kim Jong-un's inexperience would likely make many eyebrows rise in suspicion of his leadership ability. Lastly, the fact that another Kim was put in power would definitely make the regime intrinsically connected with that family. That fact constituted a long-term problem in terms of political narrative and, most importantly, made the regime dependent of suitable Kim heirs.

After weighing the benefits and costs to the regime, the net profit of placing Kim Jong-un in power was not as high as Kim Jong-il would have wished, but it ended up being higher than that of other candidates considered by the entourage of the "Dear Leader". Despite being older, Kim Jong-nam and Kim Jong-chul apparently were not adequate candidates due to the mismanagement of public conduct of the former and to the personal traits of the latter. Kim Kyong-hui seemed psychologically unstable and in a male-dominated society her appointment would likely lead to contestation. As for Jang, despite seeming the most prepared alternative for leadership, he lacked the essential popular charisma and legitimacy of the Kims – so necessary to guarantee social stability and national cohesion. Regarding the appointment of a leader outside the Kim family such as O or a junta led by a Kim or Jang, those solutions would lack the popular legitimacy or lead to a divisive decision-making body, respectively.

In relation to a revisionist leadership solution led by a contender within or outside the entourage, it would have few chances of succeeding. Firstly, contenders would

have difficulties in forming a successful coalition of supporters at the level of the elites because Kim Jong-il and his entourage kept a tight control over the military and political structures, thus prohibitively increasing the risks of contestation. Secondly, a revisionist solution would lack popular support. In these conditions, even if a coup was successful in the short-term, elite dissension or popular rebellion would likely occur in the long-term. Hence, potential contenders either remained silent or criticized the new leadership from a safe distance, as Kim Jong-nam did.

When Kim Jong-il died the process of leadership change was already prepared and went smoothly without relevant reactions against it. On 26 December 2011 Kim Jong-un was declared “Supreme Leader” of the country – following his father – a title that he has accumulated with the positions of Supreme Commander of the KPA, First Secretary of the WPK, Chairman of the Military Committee of the WPK, and most importantly, First Chairman of the NDC. In that setting, the new leader felt comfortable enough to promote transformations or signal them at certain political levels. The most noticeable transformations refer to public image but more subtle and crucial ones also seem to have been promoted by the new leader, namely by decreasing the preponderance of the military and signaling its willingness to perform economic reforms.

Concerning the dimension of public image, Kim Jong-un is evidently different from Kim Jong-il. In particular, the new leader opted for a less conservative posture in comparison to his father. For instance, Kim Jong-un gives New Year speeches (Korean Central News Agency, 2013), appears in public with his wife Ri Sol-ju (Choe Sang-hun, 2012), and watches shows featuring North Korean “girls-bands” and Disney characters (Korean Central News Agency, 2012; The Telegraph, 2012). This type of behavior was highly unusual in Pyongyang when Kim Jong-il was leader and seems to reveal an attempt to attract popular support on behalf of Kim Jong-un.

As for the military, Kim Jong-un seems to be promoting a gradual shift in terms of political and economic control. Although the *Songun* policy is still in place and the military remain the most important group in the regime, the new leader made options that reveal a gradual shift. Besides the usual purges in processes of power transition in North Korea – which seems to have included the protégés of O (The Chosun Ilbo, 2011) – Kim Jong-un has been making the military lose face with highly symbolical gestures. For instance, Kim Jong-un removed Ri – a well known supporter of *Songun* – from power (Yonhap, 2012), promoted a shift in economic control from the military to the cabinet (Yonhap, 2012a), and failed to visit the legendary 105th Tank Division in the beginning of 2013 (Lee, 2013). Thus, although the military are still a force to be reckoned with in Pyongyang, Kim Jong-un seems interested in decreasing their weight.

Regarding economic reforms, despite not having advanced with concrete ones Kim Jong-un’s seems to be more interested than his father in promoting them. Kim

Jong-il promoted some limited reforms¹³, but his low enthusiasm is reflected by the fact that he regarded reforms *à la* Beijing as a “Trojan horse” against socialism that would not have the same beneficial results as in China and Vietnam (Rowen, 2003). Besides having picked up the projects started by his father, there are subtle signals that Kim Jong-un seeks to surgically promote further changes in North Korea’s economical structures, very likely guided by Jang. The signs are discourse references to “radical” economic change¹⁴; the pushing aside of officials that opposed economic reform¹⁵; and the fact that it was reported that North Korea was asking for international advice on foreign investment (Spiegel, 2013). The conservative opposition and the dangers of reform leading to absorption by Seoul are still present, but Kim Jong-un seems slightly less risk-averse than Kim Jong-il when it comes to the promotion of liberal reforms.

In conclusion, the selection of Kim Jong-un as leader ended up being the less risky choice when it comes to the promotion of regime stability in the short-term. Other Northeast Asian actors were surely pleased to see indications that Kim Jong-un was less conservative, militaristic, and averse to economic reforms than his father – signs that perhaps he was more likely to support dialogue, to abstain from developing military programs, and to pursue economic reforms that required international cooperation. However, Kim Jong-un was quite adamant in not promoting denuclearization, keeping North Korea’s nuclear strategy essentially intact.

Nuclear Strategy under Kim Jong-un

From the new leader’s designation as “Supreme Leader” in December 2011 to the nuclear test of 12 February 2013, North Korea pursued the cyclical strategy with an emphasis on confrontation. Although signaling openness to engage in negotiations, Kim Jong-un’s regime performed two ballistic missile tests, relentlessly criticized the South Korean administration of Lee Myung-bak and the US, and performed a nuclear test.

The return of the SPT remained blocked by Pyongyang’s unwillingness to recognize its responsibility in the *Cheonan* and Yeonpyeong-do incidents – thus rejecting the pre-negotiation conditions. The goal of Kim Jong-un seemed to be to win

13 Especially the establishment of special economic zones (Rason, Hwanggumpyong and Wihwa islands), the creation of the Kaesong Industrial Park with South Korea, and the limited market liberalization of 2002.

14 For instance, in the New Year speech Kim Jong-un urged North Koreans to “bring about a radical turn in the building of an economic giant” (Korean Central News Agency, 2013) The word radical is used several times and despite having an ambiguous sense it seems to indicate a slight shift from the *status quo* of economic centralization.

15 A group in which Ri can also be included. See McCurry (2012).

time to improve North Korean military capabilities and foster domestic support, besides trying to achieve a favorable grand bargain at bilateral level with the US. In fact, an agreement with the US was reached in February 2012, with North Korea declaring on the 29th that it would freeze nuclear tests, the enrichment of uranium, and the launching of long-range missile, as well as allowing nuclear inspectors back into the country. In exchange Washington agreed to provide food aid (Reuters, 2012). This agreement was far from being a grand bargain, although it could be explored further by Pyongyang. Instead, North Koreans opted for confrontation and announced a satellite launch that made the agreement collapse (BBC, 2012). In April the satellite *Kwangmyeongseong-3* was launched through the *Unha-3*, thus the perception that this was a disguised missile launch. Since it failed, confrontation was likely to continue because Pyongyang's international position was weakened and only a successful confrontational action would compensate failure, as it happened in 2006 when the failed missile launch of July was compensated by the nuclear test of October.

The following months were marked by an aggressive discourse against the South Korean administration of Lee and the US, in particular against the former – for instance, terms such as “rats” and “traitors” became very frequent. The political rhetoric against Lee and Washington was lashed practically on a daily basis through the media, such as the Korean Central News Agency or the *Rodong Sinmun*.¹⁶ Such attitude prevented the return of negotiations and signaled willingness to proceed with further provocations, especially when the last quarter of 2012 would be marked by processes of leadership selection in the US, China, and South Korea, which Pyongyang sought to influence. To avoid isolation, North Korea opted for engagement with Russia¹⁷ and Japan.¹⁸

The confrontation act came with the launch of the *Unha-3/Unit 2* with the satellite *Kwangmyeongseong-3/Unit 2* on 12 December 2012. Contrarily to the earlier launches, this one was successful and demonstrated North Korea's evolution at the level of ballistic deployment systems. If Pyongyang becomes able to miniaturize a nuclear device into a ballistic missile using the tested technology, it can target not only Northeast Asian countries but also the US. The negative reaction to

16 For instance, see “Divine Punishment Awaits S. Korean Group of Traitors: KCNA Commentary”, 5 June 2012 and “US Accused of Intention to Keep Pro-US Regime”, *Rodong Sinmun*, 29 May 2012, on <http://www.kcna.co.jp/index-e.htm>.

17 Besides maintaining military cooperation, North Korea and Russia are cooperating in the economic field. For instance, regarding North Korea's debt of 11 billion dollars, Russia agreed to write off 90 percent of it and invest the other 10 percent in North Korea (Lulko, 2012).

18 The abduction of Japanese citizens was the focus of the meetings between Japan and North Korea (Daisuke, 2012).

that launch was unanimous, but the UNSC was prudent due to China's position. The latter seemed particularly cautious due to the recent election of Xi Jinping as General Secretary of the Communist Party of China.

In the meantime, Kim Jong-un made his surprise 2013 New Year speech in which a conciliatory tone was used in relation to South Korea, who had recently elected Park Geun-hye as president in detriment of the liberal candidate, Moon Jae-in. A conservative politician and the daughter of former dictator Park Chung-hee, in principle Park Geun-hye was not the preferred candidate of Pyongyang but notwithstanding Kim Jong-un opted for that engaging act. It was a signal of engagement that sought to highlight North Korea's willingness to negotiate from a position of force. However, that tone would change following the UNSC Resolution 2087 of January 2013,¹⁹ which condemned the launch of December 2012. China accepted the resolution and again demonstrated its willingness to impose limited punishments on North Korea. North Korea strongly criticized the resolution, threatened its rivals, and vowed to proceed with a new nuclear test, which in fact would happen shortly afterwards.

On 12 February 2013 North Korea performed its third nuclear test. As expected, it was condemn by the UNSC (Charbonneau, 2013). That nuclear test indicates a technological attempt by Pyongyang to miniaturize its nuclear weapons in order to fit ballistic missiles and raises international concerns about a shift from plutonium-based to uranium-based devices. Regardless of the actual state of technological development, North Korea is signaling that at least it is on the verge of achieving that capability. Additionally, to strengthen its position, Pyongyang seemed to have informed Beijing that it is willing to conduct further nuclear tests and a missile launch during this year, hence signaling that negotiations are required in order to avoid that otherwise inevitable scenario (Lim, 2013).

In conclusion, Kim Jong-un's nuclear strategy remains basically the ones utilized by his father and grandfather. During the leadership of Kim Jong-un, Pyongyang used that strategy with an emphasis on confrontation, culminating in its third nuclear test. The puzzle lies in explaining why Kim Jong-un opted for such strategy when at domestic level he appeared to be a reformist who sought more openness. As I suggest in the following section, the choice for keeping the strategy of engagement-confrontation is explained by the continuing international constraints on North Korea and by the domestic constraints faced by the new leader.

19 The UNSC Resolution 2087 was approved on 22 January 2013: <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2013/sc10891.doc.htm>.

International and Domestic Constraints

Internationally, North Korea's position remained mostly unaltered since Kim Jong-il passed away. The country was still surrounded by powerful foes, since the relative positions of North Korea, South Korea and the US in the structures of military and economic power have remained basically unaltered. Thus, Pyongyang was still incomparably weaker than Washington and Seoul. Moreover, Pyongyang remained dependent of an ally that was not strong enough to guarantee the regime's survival and remained displeased about its nuclear policy, as illustrated by the summoning of the North Korean ambassador in China – Ji Jae-ryong – by the Chinese Foreign Minister – Yang Jiechi – after the last nuclear test (Fox News, 2013). As Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il did before him, Kim Jong-un and his entourage were aware that under such negative international conditions the best tool to promote regime survival was the nuclear program, despite its international costs regarding isolation and scolding by its ally.

As if those structural conditions were not sufficient enough to keep unaltered the nuclear strategy of North Korea, there were three political shifts in 2012 that damaged Pyongyang's interests: South Korea increased the range of its ballistic missiles; North Korea's economic dependence of China increased; and Japan has recently re-elected Shinzo Abe as Prime-Minister. Regarding the first alteration, South Korea was able to negotiate with Washington an increase of the range of its missiles. From the previously allowed range of 300 km Seoul can now deploy missiles that reach 800 km, which allows it to hit any target in North Korean territory. Although Washington prefers to control the military capabilities of its ally, it acknowledged that the recent behavior of North Korea justified the strengthening of Seoul's autonomous military capabilities. As for the second alteration, it was reported that trade volume between China is likely to have increased in 2012, surpassing the already amazing growth of 2011 and perhaps increasing China's share of 70 percent in Pyongyang's foreign trade (Demick, 2012). This indicates that Chinese leverage over Pyongyang will likely increase a bit. Lastly, Shinzo Abe returned to power in Japan. With the previous government led by Yoshihiko Noda, Pyongyang was actually able to improve North Korean-Japanese relations during 2012, as mentioned above. However, with the election of a conservative prime-minister whose government includes members that support revisionist foreign policy shifts – which in practice may eventually lead to a military build-up in Japan – the relations with Tokyo will likely turn sour again. Hence, in theory North Korea's strategic position was damaged by such election, even if a Japanese threat remains more of a narrative than a foreseeable reality.

Despite the harsh international conditions, one could suggest that North Korea could have accepted Washington's agreement and defected later on as soon as it

obtained economic benefits or it became evident that Pyongyang would get none if major concessions were not made. Prematurely rejecting such agreement by launching a missile could be explained in two senses: Pyongyang felt that its negotiation position was not strong enough or Kim Jong-un domestically profited from confrontation. I suggest that even if the negotiation position was in fact improved by a provocation, Kim Jong-un's decision to confront the US was strongly affected by domestic constraints.

Besides the international factors obstacles to regime survival, the new leader also had to deal with domestic factors that damaged his probabilities of remaining in office. As previously noted, the selection of Kim Jong-un as leader encompassed risks of contestation – especially due to his age and lack of political experience. Even if contenders did not show up for the game of Kim Jong-il's succession, it did not mean that a conspiracy was not occurring. The fact that a young and inexperienced leader made decisions that started to shake the political and economic establishment has likely promoted dissatisfaction among members of the elite. Since the increase in the quantity and quality of discontent members of the elite can make the domestic balance of power swing in favor of an alternative leader, Kim Jong-un was required to take protective measures.

At domestic level Kim Jong-un could control dissatisfaction by gathering popular support through a pleasing public image, purging members of the elite that oppose his measures, or conducting surgical economic reforms that not only reduce dependency on foreign aid but also increase the leader's ability to distribute goods among subsets in the population that are fundamental to keep him in power. Alongside those domestic actions, Kim Jong-un could also use international confrontation as a political tool to remain in power, by shaping how elites and masses perceive him.

In relation to the elites, a confrontational posture would boost his credentials among them, especially the military. To boost his credentials means exploring positive and negative reactions: on the positive side it means being admired as a leader, consequently decreasing the perception that his age and inexperience would lead to mistakes that threaten the regime; on the negative side, by challenging giants such as the US and China, Kim Jong-un signals that he is able to tenaciously fight potential contenders – thus leading the latter to review their expected utility of challenging the young Kim.

As for the masses, international confrontation would increase Kim Jong-un's control over the general public. Since an act of international confrontation is generally accompanied by legitimating rhetoric, it can be used to fuel the sense of insecurity of masses in relation to actual or fabricated threats to their security. In the case of Pyongyang that tactic has been widely used in order to continue justifying its anachronistic regime, hence perpetuating the existence of the ideologi-

cal divide that keeps the Korean nation separated. By fomenting fear of and hate against the US and South Korea, Kim Jong-un is likely to have the masses rallying around him, supporting the nation's savior against an imminent external danger. Besides strengthening his allure in times of crisis, through international confrontation Kim Jong-un can also justify his failure to fulfill the regime's promise of turning North Korea into a "strong and prosperous nation" by 2012. As a result, North Korean masses forget or excuse the failures of public policy and become less inclined to protest. Moreover, in times of crisis the domestic security apparatus has legitimacy to increase the suppression of general population in order to prevent potential protests.

Given that domestic setting, Kim Jong-un's emphasis on confrontation is a rational choice. Through missile and nuclear tests, as well as aggressive discourse towards South Korea and the US, Kim Jong-un was able not only to strengthen the international position of North Korea but also to strengthen his leadership. Those domestic incentives seemed so strong that even when engagement could bring some advantages, Kim Jong-un opted for confrontation. This was illustrated by North Korea's eschewing of the agreement with Washington by launching the satellite in April 2012, especially because that month marked the centennial commemoration of the birth of Kim Il-sung. This was the perfect opportunity for the young leader to demonstrate that his similarities with his "great" grandfather went beyond physical appearances.

Conclusion

In sum, leadership change from Kim Jong-il to Kim Jong-un did not alter the foundations of North Korea's nuclear strategy, which is still based upon a cyclical use of actions of engagement and confrontation that ultimately seek to prevent denuclearization. Although leadership change brought some political shifts or signs of them at the level of public image, the *Songun* policy, and economic reform, the nuclear strategy inherited from his father remained basically intact. International and domestic conditions have constrained Kim Jong-un to follow that strategy and to emphasize confrontation through an aggressive discourse against South Korea and the US, missile launches, and a nuclear test. In order to assure regime survival and to remain in power, Kim Jong-un's optimal choice was to thoroughly implement the nuclear strategy initiated by Kim Il-sung and consolidated by Kim Jong-il.

References

- Agence France-Presse (2012). "South Korea lawmakers to make rare cross-border trip", 5 February. Available at <http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5hHXk0a1x8S040H05oHA97q5aG38g?docId=CNG.e2c56beddd089f4cc4172cb5907bc094.2c1>
- BBC (2004). "North Korea warns on nuclear rods", 28 September. Available at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/3696092.stm>
- BBC (2012). "US confirms it has suspended North Korea food aid plan", 29 March. Available at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-17542436>
- Bueno de Mesquita, Bruce (2006). *Principles of International Politics: People's Power, Preferences, and Perceptions*. Washington DC: CQ Press.
- Bush, George W. (2002). "State of the Union Address", 29 January. Available at <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2002/01/print/20020129-11.html>
- Cha, Victor D. (2012). *The Impossible State: North Korea, Past and Future*. London: Bodley Head.
- Cha, Victor D. and David C. Kang (2003). *Nuclear North Korea: A Debate on Engagement Strategies*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Chang, Gordon G. (2005). *Nuclear Showdown: North Korea Takes On the World*. London: Hutchinson.
- Charbonneau, Louis (2013). "U.N. Security Council condemns North Korean nuclear test", Reuters, 12 February. Available at <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/02/12/us-korea-north-un-idUSBRE91B1FE20130212>
- Choe, Sang-hun (2012). "That Mystery Woman in North Korea? Turns Out She's the First Lady". *The New York Times*, 25 July. Available at <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/26/world/asia/north-korean-leader-marries-reports-say.html?pagewanted=all>
- Daisuke, Yamamoto (2012). "North Korea agrees to continue talks on abductees". *The Japan Times*, 18 November. Available at http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2012/11/18/national/north-korea-agrees-to-continue-talks-on-abductees/#.USL9S_JJUzo
- Demick, Barbara (2012). "China's trade with North Korea increases". *Los Angeles Times*, 28 December. Available at <http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-china-north-korea-trade-20121229,0,5846468.story>
- Fox News (2013). "Chinese official scolds North Korea's ambassador in meeting over nuclear test", 12 February. Available at <http://www.foxnews.com/world/2013/02/12/north-korea-defiant-nuclear-test-could-test-ally-china-patience/>
- Frieden, Jeffrey A. (1999). "Actors and Preferences in International Relations", in David A. Lake and Robert Powell (eds), *Strategic Choice in International Relations*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, pp. 38-76.
- Haggard, Stephan and Marcus Noland (2007). *Famine in North Korea: Markets, Aid, and Reform*. New York: Columbia University Press.

- Korean Central News Agency (2012). "Kim Jong Un Enjoys Moranbong Band Performance", 11 October. Available at <http://www.kcna.co.jp/item/2012/201210/news11/20121011-01ee.html>
- Korean Central News Agency (2013). "New Year Address Made by Kim Jong Un", 1 January. Available at <http://www.kcna.co.jp/index-e.htm>
- Lee, Chi-dong (2013). "N. Korean leader skips traditional visit to tank unit". *Yonhap* 14 January. Available at <http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/northkorea/2013/01/15/0401000000AEN20130115000200315.HTML>
- Lee, Su-hoon (ed) (2012). *Nuclear North Korea: Regional Dynamics, Failed Policies, and Ideas for Ending a Global Stalemate*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Lim, Benjamin Kang (2013). "North Korea tells China of preparations for fresh nuclear test". *Reuters*, 15 February. Available at <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/02/15/us-korea-north-nuclear-idUSBRE91E0J820130215>
- Lulko, Lyuba (2012). "Russia resumes cooperation with world's most isolated country". *Pravda*, 20 September. Available at http://english.pravda.ru/world/asia/20-09-2012/122219-russia_north_korea-0/
- Magalhães, Nuno Santiago de (2006). "Coreia do Norte, Anarquia, e Poder Nuclear". *Relações Internacionais* n.º 10, pp. 85-105.
- Magalhães, Nuno Santiago de (2006a). "O Regresso às Negociações" (I, II, and III). *Diário de Notícias*, 15, 16 and 17 October.
- Magalhães, Nuno Santiago de (2011). *Portugal, as Nações Unidas e a Coreia do Norte Nuclear*. Occasional Paper n.º 51. Lisbon: IPRI-UNL.
- Mazzetti, Mark (2006). "In '97, U.S. Panel Said North Korea Could Collapse in 5 Years". *The New York Times*, 27 October. Available at http://www.nytimes.com/2006/10/27/world/asia/27intel.html?_r=0
- McCurry, Justin (2012). "North Korean leader Kim Jong-un wrests economic control from military". *The Guardian*, 20 July. Available at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/jul/20/north-korean-economic-military>.
- McEachern, Patrick (2010). *Inside the Red Box: North Korea's Post-totalitarian Politics*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Myers, B. R. (2012). *The Cleanest Race: How North Koreans See Themselves and Why It Matters*. New York: Melville House.
- Nikitin, Mary Beth (2013). *North Korea's Nuclear Weapons: Technical Issues*. CRS Report for Congress, US, 12 February.
- Park, Kyung-ae and Scott Snyder (eds) (2013). *North Korea in Transition: Politics, Economy, and Society*. Plymouth: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers.
-

- Reuters (2012). "North Korea agrees to nuclear moratorium, IAEA inspections", 29 February. Available at <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/02/29/us-korea-north-usa-talks-idUSTRE81S13R20120229>
- Rowen, Henry S. (2003). "Kim Jong-il Must Go". *Policy Review*, n.º 121.
- Song, Moon-hong (1999). "After the Perry Report: The Korean Peninsula Game Enters Second Round". *East Asian Review* n.º 4. Available at http://www.ieas.or.kr/vol11_4/song-moonhong.htm.
- Spiegel Online (2013). "North Korea Enlists German Help to Prepare Economic Opening", 4 January. Available at www.spiegel.de/international/world/german-paper-reports-north-korea-preparing-economic-opening-a-875844.html
- The Chosun Ilbo (2011). "North Korea 'Purging Protégés of the Old Guard'", 10 January. Available at http://english.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2011/01/10/2011011000554.html
- The Chosun Ilbo (2011a). "North Korea Asks South to Join Mt. Baekdu Research", 18 March. Available at http://english.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2011/03/18/2011031800599.html
- The Telegraph (2012). "North Korea: Kim Jong-un enjoys unauthorised Disney show", 9 July. Available at <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/northkorea/9385901/North-Korea-Kim-Jong-un-enjoys-unauthorised-Disney-show.html>
- Voice of America (2010). "South Korea Formally Declares End to Sunshine Policy", 17 November. Available at <http://www.voanews.com/content/south-korea-formally-declares-end-to-sunshine-policy--108904544/130750.html>.
- Yonhap (2012). "North Korea's army chief Ri Yong-ho relieved of all posts", 16 July. Available at <http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/northkorea/2012/07/16/4/0401000000AEN20120716000800315F.HTML>
- Yonhap (2012a). "North Korea on track to transfer military's economic control to cabinet", 4 September. Available at <http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/northkorea/2012/09/04/83/0401000000AEN20120904009100315F.HTML>
- Yoo, Ho-yeol (2003). "Turning Back the Clock: North Korea's Nuclear Program". *East Asian Review* n.º 2, pp. 105-119.

India's Strategic Traditions and Options in the Indo-Pacific Security System

Constantino Xavier

School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University, Washington DC.

Cherman9@jhu.edu

Resumo

As Tradições e Opções Estratégicas da Índia no Sistema de Segurança do Indo-Pacífico

Perante um complexo de segurança Ásia-Pacífico que se encontra em expansão para a região mais ampla do Indo-Pacífico, a Índia é forçada a adaptar-se e redefinir as suas prioridades estratégicas. Este artigo apresenta os novos desafios que o país enfrenta nesta nova Ásia, bem como o grande debate indiano sobre a futura postura estratégica do país, incluindo a sua ambição em garantir autonomia estratégica. São desenvolvidos quatro cenários possíveis: continuada aproximação aos Estados Unidos de forma a contrabalançar a China; criação de uma aliança ou eixo de segurança de estados asiáticos visando a contenção da China; estabelecimento conjunto com a China de um regime de segurança continental baseado num "G-2 asiático" ou "Panchsheel 2.0" que exclua os Estados Unidos; ou uma postura isolacionista e introvertida focada em desenvolver capacidades domésticas e assim evitar o envolvimento do país em espirais de competição e insegurança internacional.

Abstract

As the Asia-Pacific security complex expands and morphs into a larger Indo-Pacific system, India will need to adapt and redefine its strategy. This article sets out the new challenges India faces in this new Asia, and then proceeds to review the great Indian debate about its strategic culture and perennial quest for autonomy. It evaluates four possible strategic postures for India to choose from: further rapprochement with the United States to balance China; initiating a pan-Asian security framework to contain China; joint establishment with China of an "Asian G-2" or "Panchsheel 2.0" security regime that excludes the United States; and an isolationist, introvert focus on domestic "soft balancing" by avoiding entanglement in security and competitive power politics.

Whether because of China's rise or the American oriental "pivot" or "rebalancing" act, Asia is once again being proclaimed as the new "global geopolitical center". This is all about a "new Asian century." CNN's Fareed Zakaria (2008) speaks about a "post-American world" due to the "rise of the rest" and Singaporean diplomat Kishore Mahbubani (2008) about the "new Asian Hemisphere" as the natural outcome of an "irresistible shift of global power to the East". It's as if the whole world was suddenly tilting.

This "brouhaha" about a new Asia, and the impending collapse of the West dates back to at least the Ancient Greeks and their anxiety about the "oriental" barbarians. In regard to modern times, in his recent book on key Asian leaders in the late 19th and early 20th century, including India's Rabindranath Tagore, Pankaj Mishra (2012) reminds us that the idea of a "new Asia" has been around for at least a century – starting with Imperial Japan's victory over "Western" Russia in, a key event he sees as determinant in inspiring a new generation of Asian nationalist leaders. One of them, Jawaharlal Nehru, thus referred to the rise of Asia as early as 1935. In his presidential address of the National Congress, at Lahore, in that year, he noted that "Asia, and even India, will play a determining part in the future of world policy. The brief day of European domination is already approaching its end. Europe has ceased to be the centre of activity and interest." (Nehru, 1936: 15)

Whether radically new or not, there is little doubt that Asia today is more than just old wine in new bottles. The continent has indeed undergone dramatic economic, social and political transformations in recent decades. One good example is that of South Korea whose developmental standards in the 1950s, still ravaged by the impact of war, were equivalent to those of India and Ghana. Today it is one of the most advanced economies of the world, ranking 15th in terms of the Human Development Index (India 134th, Ghana 135th), and 29th in terms of per capita income based on purchasing power parity (India 126th, Ghana 148th).

The "developmental" state-driven model of economy growth, often with authoritarian undertones, propelled the so-called Asian tigers to the forefront of global growth, productivity and innovation. Southeast Asia witnessed the emergence of ASEAN and an advanced level of new regional institutionalism and economic cooperation based on liberal trade and investment regimes. Most importantly, however, were the economic reforms of China (1978) and India (1991), which opened up immense markets and initiated two of Humanity's largest and fastest socio-economic transformations.

These changes have naturally constrained the foreign policies and strategic postures of China and India. For example, both countries remain acutely dependent

on foreign energy resources, the global free trade regime, and on the economic growth and demand of consumer markets in the United States. Both countries also have several million-strong diasporas, with many overseas citizens spread around the world.

At the same time, in terms of relative power, most analysts agree that America's is now beyond its maximum peak, having begun a slow, steady decline. The United States continues to be the uncontested global hegemon, a preponderant power that President Obama likes to call an "indispensable nation" with immense absolute advantages over the military, economic and technological capabilities of its immediate followers. One must also not forget that it has been able to reinvent itself before.

The relative gap, however, is narrowing. The current debate on what "limited" role the United States should assume in managing the global order, and President Obama's focus on the "nation-building at home" narrative, signal the current mood – Washington wants to figure out how to save on managerial costs without reducing its relative power. This is the new "frugal superpower", in the current words of Michael Mandelbaum (2010), who only in the mid-2000s had called the United States a "reluctant Goliath" without which the global order would collapse (Mandelbaum, 2005). What is less clear, however, is whether or how these changing circumstances in the United States and globally may shape the strategic postures and options for China and India in Asia.

This article argues that based on these innumerable new challenges and circumstances, India faces a menu of four different strategic postures in the new Asia-Pacific security complex, now also referred to as Indo-Pacific. It starts by setting out the new challenges India faces in this new Asia, and then proceeds to review the great Indian debate about its strategic culture and perennial quest for autonomy. A final section lists the four possible postures: further rapprochement with the United States to balance China; initiating a pan-Asian security framework to contain China; joint establishment with China of an "Asian G-2" or "Panchsheel 2.0" security regime that excludes the United States; and an isolationist, introvert focus on domestic "soft balancing" by avoiding entanglement in security and competitive power politics.

The New Asia

Asia has witnessed four main transformations at the strategic level that are of direct concern to India. This is – at least in India's perspective – a new Asia indeed. First, the rise and increasing assertiveness of a self-reliant China. India's rivalry with China is not a new factor per se. The Sino-Indian border has been object of a protracted border dispute, which led to a war in 1962 and repeated military skirmishes since then. India also hosts the Dalai Lama and his separatist Tibetan

government-in-exile. What did change is the relative balance, with a China that has progressed dramatically on the military front and, unlike in the past, is no longer dependent on external security support from the Soviet Union or the United States. This Chinese self-reliance is linked to a new Chinese assertiveness, in unprecedented terms and scale, most recently in the South China Sea.

The big debate is on whether this assertiveness is a new behavior (or just more visible and capable than before) and its underlying causes. Is it domestic nationalism, political party and elite competition, changing civil-military dynamics, or merely the perception of a strategic window of opportunity to gain advantage and consolidate territorial gains? Or, at the external level, is China's assertiveness motivated by a mounting sense of insecurity, perception of encirclement, containment and isolation induced by the "American pivot"?

These are important questions because different explanations will necessarily lead to different policy recommendations. This exercise is thus an elementary task for India, which is paradoxically locked in both in increasing competition and cooperation with China. China is now India's largest trade partner, with a total volume of US\$75 billion – mostly Indian imports that have led to a tremendous deficit. If one adds to this trade asymmetry the logic of historical rivalry and competition (war and border conflict), a variety of domestic factors (nationalism, economic protectionism), as well as the reality of increasing inter-dependence and cooperation, one can see why this will not only be one of the most complex, but also most crucial relations for 21st century geopolitics.

Second, India now also faces an increasingly assertive presence of the United States in Asia. Unlike what is often suggested, the United States has been a resident Asian power since at least the Second World War, if not even earlier, since its Philippine war (1899-1902). However, its post-War strategic "hub-and-spoke" system of Asian alliances with South Korea, Japan, the Philippines, Australia and Thailand, was always one that focused on East and Southeast Asia, or broadly the region known as Asia-Pacific.

Excluded from the American system of regional alliances, India was therefore always the "least Asian" actor in the embryonic pan-Asian security system, and a mere observer in terms of the East and Southeast Asian sub-systems. While its military forces were sent for peacekeeping missions to Africa (since the Congo crisis in the early 1960s), New Delhi abstained from armed intervention in the Korea war, and kept a safe diplomatic distance from the Vietnam crisis. There were certainly important cultural, historical ties to Southeast Asia, from where the Indian National Army had fought on the Japanese side against the British. Jawaharlal Nehru was a regular presence in the region, culminating with his presence at the Bandung conference, in 1955. But in economic and military terms, and unlike China, India was largely absent from East and Southeast Asia.

All this has now changed, as India “asianizes” its economic and security profiles. This integration (or reintegration) of the South Asian regional security sub-system into the larger Asian one underlies the larger transformation of Asia-Pacific system into what is now called “the Indo-Pacific”, as forwarded by some Australian analysts seeking to underline the new geostrategic centrality of their country (Medcalf, 2012). As the United States reconsiders and strengthens its role in Asia, we thus have, for the first time, a truly integrated security system spanning two oceans, from the East African coast to the Western coast of the United States. This naturally poses major challenges to Indian strategic thinking, forcing it to reconsider its traditionally continentally introversion towards Pakistan and the Himalayan border with China, to a much wider and oceanic Southern horizon. In the words of India's ambassador to Washington, Nirupama Rao (2013):

“The earlier concept of the Asia-Pacific had sought to exclude India – today the term Indo-Pacific encompasses the subcontinent as an integral part of this eastern world. We are glad that the mental map of the Asia Pacific has changed and that the center of gravity has moved westward to include India.”

This reorientation is reflected in India's major investments in its naval capabilities, traditionally neglected in previous decades. The shifting of its Western Naval Command from Mumbai southwards to Karwar, just South of Goa, signals this new Southward focus. There are several other initiatives India has taken to reinforce this strategic reorientation in order to pursue immediate economic interests, strengthen its naval footprint, and also respond to the increasing centrality and importance of the Indian Ocean within the larger Indo-Pacific security system.

New Delhi thus initiated a regular Indian Ocean Naval Symposium in 2008 (South Africa hosted the 2012 edition), revived the multilateral Indian Ocean Rim-Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC), and has played a leading role in combating piracy in the Gulf of Aden and the Arabian Sea. At the same time, its Navy has strengthened outreach program to its counterparts in the smaller countries of the region – from joint exercises, to setting up listening posts, donating vessels and equipment etc.

A third factor in this new Asia that affects India relates to the increasing levels of interdependence. As previously highlighted in the case of China, India now has reached unprecedented volumes and shares of intra-regional Asian trade and investments. Its “Look East” policy initiated in 1992 has been pursued steadily, especially towards Southeast Asia. India's profile in the rest of Asia has thus improved dramatically, as smaller countries increasingly look up to India to balance Chinese

power. India has often been unable or incapable to respond to such expectations, which is often rooted in its reluctance to play such a game and possibly becoming entangled in a spiraling competition logic with Beijing.

Paradoxically, the mantra of non-alignment, despite never having really been followed in the past, has now turned into a paradigmatic straightjacket that domestically constrains Indian diplomacy. The fact remains, however, that India has dramatically expanded its presence in the rest of Asia: it has increased the number of joint naval exercises with Japan, Thailand, Indonesia and other Asian navies, it holds an unprecedented number of high-level and strategic partnerships, and – most importantly – has shown great interest in joining a number of multilateral and regional frameworks, both as a participant, dialogue partner or observer (including ASEAN and the East Asia Summit).

Finally, one must also acknowledge the proliferation of democratic regimes in Asia since the end of the Cold War. A few decades ago, India was still an outlier, an exceptional case of democratic success and longevity in a continent marred by a variety of military and civilian authoritarianism, from Zia ul-Haq's Pakistan to Suharto's Indonesia and Park Chung-hee's South Korea. Today, while India remains exceptional in its democratic longevity, it is no longer alone because Asia is at the forefront of what Samuel Huntington would have possibly called the fourth democratic wave.

As Pakistan, Indonesia, the Philippines and South Korea are now all experiencing unprecedented levels of political freedom, and even Myanmar and Singapore are experimenting with democratization, it is China that is seen as the extraordinary outlier. The "Beijing model" and popularity of the so-called "Asian authoritarian capitalism" remain strong, but are suffering unprecedented scrutiny and opposition. In this scenario, the normative agenda of "values" is making a comeback and contesting the assumption that economic growth and social order can be sustained, in the long term, in an authoritarian, closed and military – or party-led political system.

At first sight, this may seem more of an advantage, than a challenge for India. After all, in a world increasingly dominated by democracies, one would naturally assume that India would reap reputational benefits, often also called "soft power". The challenge, however, resides in India overcoming its traditional reluctance to brand and promote itself as a democracy and adopt this as a factor in its external relations. As with the United States in the beginning of the 20th century, India will need to settle on what "normative" identity it wishes to play. The default option, still very popular, is to keep a safe distance from this rhetoric, especially after the "American neo-con" disaster of militarized democracy promotion. This Indian isolationist stance is often associated with a "prudent" realist India, a democratic city on the hill that refuses to impose its democratic regime as an "advantage" and a

“model”. The consequent dilemma is defined thus in the report *Non-Alignment 2.0: A Foreign and Strategic Policy for India in the 21st Century*:

“In many ways the paradox is that precisely at the moment nations become powerful, they are vulnerable to being blindsided by their own ambition. Precisely at the moment they have an ability to shape the world, they shape it according to imperatives of power. India must remain true to its aspiration of creating a new and alternative universality.” (Khilnani *et al.*, 2012: 69)

This leads us to the issue of India's strategic culture, the core tenets of its worldview and its external posture.

Strategy and Culture

Debates about strategic culture are necessarily at the intersection of the material (security) and ideational (culture) – this is obvious in the very nature of each of the two composing words: “strategy” reflecting a rather objective and planned nature, and “culture” a flexible, contingent and mutable one.

The same may be said about Indian strategic culture, in particular: it is impossible to distinguish and segment ideational and material drivers in Indian strategic thought. Scholars have tried to privilege one over the other. Instead, a more productive approach may be to look at them as mutually constitutive, ideas and imperatives both continuously shaping and replacing each other as the main driver. From this perspective, India has always been hospitable to a very cautious, prudent and realist tradition of strategic thinking. Except for pure chance, which is unlikely, how else could have its diplomacy managed to keep India relatively secure in a region plagued by hostile nuclear-armed rivals (Pakistan and China: five wars), a variety of insurgencies and separatist movements (from Kashmir, to the Naxalites and the Northeast), and many other transnational threats (Islamic terrorism, in particular)?

These many challenges and the constant task of “putting off fires” may have not allowed for the emergence of an institutionalized, consensual and integrated strategic framework. That does not mean, however, that there is no Indian strategic tradition. The debate on this question is intense and has important repercussions on how India will operate in the new Asia.

A first approach to the nature of India's strategic culture can be found in a popular report prepared by George Tanham (1992) for the RAND Corporation just after the end of the Cold War, in 1992. His assessment is unambiguous: India lacks a strategic mindset. He identifies four factors of deep continuity (“determinants”) in Indian strategic thinking, all of which either geographic, historical, and cultural: South Asia as an isolated geographic entity and thus regional straightjacket responsible for Indian strategic introversion; a deep historical influence of a weak central state

authority, with a continuous cycle of integration and fragmentation of imperial powers; the lack of rigid and institutionalized strategic thinking as a reflection of Indian society's diversity and constant necessity of peaceful accommodation, assimilation and adaption; and the historical influence of British colonial rule of creating buffer states and achieve sea denial capacity to protect India's regional preponderance. He thus concludes that Indian strategic thinking is "inchoate and ad hoc (reactive) rather than precise and systematic."

His 1996 rejoinder is even more explicit: "Indians continue to be relatively neglectful of security issues and to have no institutionalized method of appraising threats and fashioning strategic responses" (Tanham *et al.*, 1996: 19). This understanding has dominated Indian official, policy and public thinking since then, reflected in the popular idea that India is still in "search for a foreign policy" and lacks the capacity to develop a "grand strategy" (Pant, 2009). It thus remains a "soft state" and easy prey in the supposedly nasty and Hobbesian arena of world politics, particularly vulnerable to the idea of a formidable, authoritarian and rational China. Other approaches are less categorical and argue that what analysts see as a "lack" of strategic thinking is actually the outcome of a variety of historical, cultural, contextual and institutional factors, as well as a conscious decision to minimize the role of force in foreign policy. For example, in *Arming without Aiming*, Cohen and Dasgupta (2012), explore how despite unprecedented access to wealth and resources after embracing economic reforms in the 1990s, the Indian state has been unable to craft a coherent strategy to efficiently use its military assets and thus improve its strategic position vis-à-vis Pakistan and China.

They argue that this is the result of a deeply embedded doctrine of "strategic restraint" based on four historical factors: the perceived benign nature of the international context and success in diffusing threats diplomatically; a budgetary bias privileging developmental concerns over defence and security concerns; an ideological aversion to using the military as an instrument of state policy; and a conscious attempt to reassure rivals by maintain a non-threatening profile and thus avoiding the security dilemma. The doctrine of strategic restraint, a policy they thus describe as "not without wisdom," and India's consequent peculiar civil-military and defense dysfunctions are thus attributed to mix of conscious and strategic choices, and cultural and historical factors. At the same time, however, Cohen and Dasgupta (2012: 146) question the sustainability of the doctrine given new challenges and threats, and note that "Indian policy, like Japan's, is reactive, not strategic."

There is also an important evolutionary approach, which presents post-independence Indian leadership as having been excessively idealistic, naïve and even utopian, taking unwarranted inspiration in the success of its non-violent freedom struggle. This approach presents India, and in particular Nehru, as a naïve post-

colonial actor initially drawn onto a dangerously utopian foreign policy path only to be progressively socialized (and punished, as in 1962) into the hard reality of Westphalian power politics. From this angle, India's foreign policy and strategic limitations of today are ossified remains of that post-1947 past.

This line of inquiry has most notably been developed by Sumit Ganguly (2003) and his quasi-biological narrative of an Indian foreign policy that "finally grows up" after the end of the Cold War. His three-staged evolutionary periodization informs also the scholarship of several others (e.g. Mukherjee and Malone, 2011). While C. Raja Mohan (2003: 261, 268) does recognize that Nehru had crafted a careful balance between idealism and realism, he does reflect the evolutionary approach by describing India's fundamental transformation during the 1990s from a "reactive power" that he metaphorically describes as a "vegetarian, slow-footed and prickly porcupine" to a "normal power" he describes as a "tiger". For Mohan (2003: 266), this is because the "centre of gravity of Indian foreign policy (...) shifted from idealism to realism in the 1990s."

A recent critique of this evolutionary school of thought is presented by Srinath Raghavan (2010: 14), who presents Nehru as a statesman "far more adroit and pragmatic than the naïf and idealist of retrospective detraction, (...) at the juncture of liberal and realist traditions." This is also the reasoning of Pratap B. Mehta (2011: 208), for whom this Nehruvian legacy has ever since offered a line of continuity to Indian foreign policy, whose driving "mindset" he describes as "cautious prudence".

Given these rather gloomy narratives and approaches to studying Indian foreign policy, security policies and strategic posture, it is therefore not surprising that, in recent years, India's academic and policy focus has been to "correct" the supposedly "lack of" or "limitations" in Indian strategic thinking and policy-making. The term "grand strategy" has proliferated into a variety of research projects, think tank reports, scholarly articles and books, and doctoral dissertations – some of which candidly acknowledging that they ambition to "invent" a "grand strategy" for the country's future.

Such exercises are often funded by government agencies and have initiated a large-scale, often also public debate on the country's strategic priorities, from its policy towards climate change, trade negotiation or relations with other major powers (Khilnani *et al.*, 2012; Sikri, 2009; Krishnappa *et al.*, 2012; for a good overview, see Schaffer, 2010). A key debate has been the role of the military and the objectives of series of required defence and security reforms – from procurement and production policies (Mukherjee, 2011) up to force allocation and projection along its borders and even abroad, beyond the region (Ladwig III, 2010).

The Quest for Autonomy

One of the most frequently cited concepts in these debates is the phrase “strategic autonomy,” which also forms the core of the much-debated semi-governmental report *Non-Alignment 2.0* cited above. This revival of non-alignment as a strategy to achieve India’s perennial core interest of “strategic autonomy” in New Delhi is puzzling, given that non-alignment (and associated principles such as non-interference) was, for sure, a core rhetorical concept, but only rarely implemented India during the Cold War. Four examples illustrate such discrepancies between the idea and the practice of non-alignment.

First, India’s nuclear program, which slowly developed in the civil energy realm but eventually, especially after the 1970s and the 1974 test, transformed into an active military program. The 34 long years between the 1964 Chinese tests at Loop Nor and India’s *Pokhran 2* tests in May 1998 reflect the immense dilemma India faced between its stated commitment to disarmament, denuclearization, non-proliferation, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the exigencies of a rising China, an uncertain nuclear program in Pakistan and a tightening international legal framework on non-proliferation, testing and supply guarantees.

A second example is that of the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, in 1979, which Indira Gandhi supported implicitly. While in stark violation of its principle of non-interventionism and a blatant instance of use of force against a non-aligned nation, New Delhi succumbed to the potential benefits of a friendly Afghanistan to gain further strategic depth over Pakistan and thus further consolidate its autonomy. Similar concerns stimulated three other examples of active Indian military interventionism in the region: East Pakistan in 1971; Sri Lanka in 1987-90; and Operation Cactus in the Maldives, in 1988.

The objectives was always to secure India’s regional hegemony and, at the same time, diffuse any opportunity for outside intervention by an extra-regional power, a major concern highlighted by Howard Schaffer in his work on the limits to American influence in Kashmir, and South Asia in general. This is conventionally also referred to as the “Indira doctrine,” in reference to a set of principles she asserted to signal India’s opposition to any outside interference in a region she wished to claim as Delhi’s strategic backyard (Hagerty, 1991).

The terms of this debate changed dramatically after 1991: strategic autonomy remained as a central concern, but now in a different form. Was it possible to remain “negatively” autonomous, *i.e.* isolated from an increasing interdependent global economy? Could the objective (or myth) of self-reliance, in the economic or defense realms, still be sustained by a country that today imports more than 70% of its total energy requirements, and 90% of its oil through sea lanes?

In this new post-Cold War era, autonomy could now be ensured in two ways: by shedding the ideational and moral baggage of the Cold War, which obviously

offered severe limitations to dealing with authoritarian and resource-rich states like Myanmar or Sudan; or by diversifying the basket of economic and security partners, thus reducing the risk of depending on solely one provider, like during the Cold War. The latter is clearly winning; an approach referred to as strategic diversification, or “omni-alignment”.

India's great strategic debate is far from settled, however. Three examples illustrate this. First, as highlighted in David Malone's recent work (2011), India has started to discuss its possible more positive and proactive role in global governance. Thus, instead of only throwing its weight around, can India play the role of what Robert Zoellick referred to as “responsible stakeholder” in international institutions and in the regulation of public, global common goods, such as the free trade regime or freedom of the sea lines of communication, from the straits of Ormuz to Malacca? The areas of global trade (the Doha round), climate change, and liberal interventionism (responsibility to protect) assume particular significance in this regard. While India is still reluctant to play a proactive role in any of these, the very fact that a debate has been initiated about these issues in India is an indicator of how the definition of strategic autonomy is bound to change.

Second, in relation to the security complex of Afghanistan and Pakistan, can India keep its strategic autonomy without first establishing its regional hegemony in practice and, necessarily, normalizing its relations with Pakistan? To what extent can the latent Indo-Pakistani battlefield in Afghanistan be pacified, allowing India to shift important resources to other regional fronts, with China, and beyond South Asia? Most importantly, settling the continental fronts with Pakistan (Afghanistan) and China would allow India to strengthen its Southward, oceanic profile. This has already led to massive investments in the Indian Navy, and a rediscovery of their classical strategists on the Indian Ocean (Pannikar, 1945). This is therefore an example of how economic opening and external material dependence have changed not only the substantive definition of strategic autonomy, but also the procedural mechanisms through which India seeks to achieve it.

A third example of this redefinition resides in India's policy towards China. Here, structural readings of international relations come in handy again: with a rising China across the Himalayas, and the 1990s myth of a strategic tripolar Russia-China-India alliance dismissed, India has unambiguously moved closer to the United States. One indicator can be found in the hardest realm of all in international politics: defense acquisitions – in the last five years alone, India imported as much American armament as it had in the previous 25 years altogether. This is why the nuclear cooperation deal with the United States, negotiated between 2005 and 2008, led to such unprecedented levels of political conflict and fragmentation in the Indian strategic community: to what extent is the quest for strategic autonomy endangered by such a rapprochement? Will Delhi now be an American “ju-

nior partner,” increasingly dependent on Washington? Can the Chinese “threat” be dealt with without such a tilt? These are questions that continue to animate the great Indian strategic debate.

India’s Strategic Autonomy in the New Asia: Four Options

Given India’s strategic traditions, the current debate, and the complexities of the new Asia-Pacific security system, what possible postures can one assume New Delhi to adopt in future? Its strategic menu offers a choice of four different options.

One option is to counter-balance China through even tighter rapprochement with the United States. From a structural point of view, this is already ongoing. Compared to the relative hostility in US-India relations until the late 1980s, the post-Cold War has been one of gradual thawing of the relations, culminating in unprecedented levels of military and intelligence cooperation, including joint exercises, as well as a series of new strategic dialogues and agreements, from agriculture to education, science and technology. The 2005-08 negotiations for a bilateral civil nuclear energy agreement eventually led the United States to recognize India’s nuclear status, *de facto* and *de jure*, outside the non-proliferation regime. Never before have India and the United States been so close. Their shared democratic values, now so often invoked, certainly play a role in facilitating this rapprochement, but the rise of China is certainly the main driver. While this allows India to enjoy some degree of protection under the American security umbrella in Asia, it also exposes it to the risk of further alienating China. India would also never be an equal partner in a possible Indo-American alliance, which would also perpetually expose it to risk of ending up in the worst of all scenarios: abandoned by the United States, and exposed to a belligerent, insecure and rancorous China.

A second option is to go alone and play hardball with China, seeking to contain it by working out an alliance of like-minded Asian powers. This would put India in the leading role, actively seeking out to construct a security axis of regional powers and other smaller states that share its anxiety about China’s uncertain future posture. Japan assumes a strategic importance in this context – Tokyo may not be as reluctant to be a junior partner to the United States, but it shares the same Indian concerns about being abandoned by a declining America. Even if Washington does not oppose such an initiative, it would still face two major obstacles. First: the classic security dilemma. Such an autonomous pan-Asian alliance to contain China, even if thought of as being a last resort defensive mechanism against a possibly aggressive China (territorial expansion, military coercion by missiles, air and sea power, blocking sea lines of communication, increasing cyber attacks) plays the risk of being interpreted by Beijing as an offensive maneuver to isolate it. Second, it also faces a

collective action problem: who will take the leadership in crafting, coordinating and implementing such a security mechanism? All these states may be anxious about China, but they are, at the same time, also increasingly dependent on it in terms of trade and investments for sustained economic growth. Under these circumstances, it is difficult to imagine who, if not India, would take upon such a responsibility and consequent exposure to Beijing's probable wrathful response.

A third, softer alternative, of liberal-institutionalist inspiration, focuses on the possibility of India taking the initiative to craft a pan-Asian multilateral security framework, as Europe crafted with the Helsinki Accords of 1975. Rather than a global Sino-American "G2", this would be an Asian Sino-Indian G2, lead jointly by both China and India. Such a fundamental step would constitute a new cooperative security order and settle the deep mistrust prevailing between several states in the region: if India and China can agree on setting up such an order, one cannot imagine why other Asian states would shy away from it. Northeast and Southeast Asia have experimented with their own mini-lateral security frameworks, but the time may now have come to integrate them into a wider "Asian security regime," maybe based on a revised version of the 1954 Sino-Indian Panchsheel Treaty, based on the five principles of mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty, non-aggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful co-existence.

It is questionable whether China, at least from its current advantageous standpoint, would acquiesce to such a "Panchsheel 2.0" agreement and thus give up what it may perceive as its absolute and relative security advantage over all other Asian states, India included. But it does address growing Chinese concerns to find a way to legitimize its disproportionate role and assuage anxieties among its neighbors. One of China's leading international relations scholars, Yan Xuetong (2012) notes that "for China it is not a question of what type of leadership we might want to provide. (...) What they [leadership] discuss is whether we should take on a leadership role in the first place." His idea of a Chinese leadership based on "humane authority" may well be compatible with an Indo-Chinese concert to revive the Panchsheel principles.

But could such an Asian Helsinki be reached without the participation and leadership of the United States? It must. Participation of the United States would fundamentally alter the balance of power and further increase the disincentives for China, already wary about America's profile in the region. In this sense, Washington's role in an Asian "G2" would have to be limited to mere sponsorship from the sidelines – allowing Asian states to work out their own, specific modalities of Asian security. This may sound utopian at this stage, but is a possibility that may become more probable as the United States declines in relative power and adapts to its lesser role in Asia. It is also a posture the United States

may have to grow more comfortable with as it increasingly seeks to delegate its managerial duties to other states.

A fourth and final alternative on the Indian strategic menu is one that is currently quite popular in New Delhi. It focuses in the sacred quest for “strategic autonomy,” which has seemingly served India so well during the Cold War. This extremely pragmatic stance focuses on introversion and what is traditionally called “internal” balancing – *i.e.* refusing “external” balancing (alliances) in favor of strengthening the domestic sources of economic, military and technological power. This refusal of power politics, often erroneously called the “Nehruvian legacy” in India’s strategic thought, assumes that India will be able to separate the technical, economic dimensions of power from the security realm. For example, it assumes that India will be able to access energy resources, transport them to India, and convert them into power (whether electric, scientific or military) without engaging into security competition with China and other states. This isolationist, introvert and exceptionalist India would certainly face a series of threats and challenges, as described by Ashley Tellis (2012: 55) in his critique of the *Non-Alignment 2.0* report:

“...the notion that Indian exceptionalism can survive by sheer force of example in a world of beasts could turn out to be excessively optimistic if not simply naive. After all, India’s capacity to lead by example will be, in the final analysis, largely a function of its material success, and this accomplishment will not come to pass without strong economic, political, and military ties with key friendly powers, especially the United States.”

One glaring example of how difficult this would be in practice is illustrated by the 2012 case of India’s exploration of oil blocks in offshore Vietnam, which was immediately opposed by China and consequently securitized under the South China Sea dispute. The same applies to the sea lines of communication and enjoying the current freedom of navigation. New Delhi may have grown used to be a free-rider in certain areas, or may not be aware of the hidden costs that go into managing the current liberal order as we know it, but that does not mean it will continue to be able to enjoy such benefits in the future. This explains the American focus on the concept of a “transactional” relationship with New Delhi.

Which of these four options – or maybe a combination of two or more – India will eventually adopt remains uncertain. Once thing is certain, however: New Delhi is now irreversibly enmeshed into the greater security complex of the Asia-Pacific, or Indo-Pacific, and its future posture will have a dramatic, if not determinant impact on the future of the global order, as well as on the prospects of war and peace in Asia.

References

- Cohen, Stephen P. and Dasgupta Sunil (2012). *Arming without Aiming: India's Military Modernization*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press.
- Ganguly, S. (2003). "India's Foreign Policy Grows Up". *World Policy Journal* 20, pp. 41-47.
- Hagerty, D.T. (1991). "India's Regional Security Doctrine". *Asian Survey* 31, pp. 351-363.
- Khilnani, S., R. Kumar, P.B. Mehta et al. (2012). *Non-Alignment 2.0: A Foreign and Strategic Policy for India in the Twenty First Century*. Centre for Policy Research.
- Krishnappa, V., Princy George, et al. (2012). *Grand Strategy for India 2020 and Beyond*. New Delhi: Institute for Deference Studies & Analysis and Pentagon Security International.
- Ladwig III, Walter C. (2010). "India and Military Power Projection: Will the Land of Gandhi Become a Conventional Great Power?". *Asian Survey* 50, pp. 1162-1183.
- Mahbubani, Kishore (2008). *The New Asian Hemisphere : the Irresistible Shift of Global Power to the East*. New York: PublicAffairs.
- Malone, David M. (2011). *Does the Elephant Dance?*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Mandelbaum, Michael (2005). *The Case for Goliath : how America Acts as the World's Government in the Twenty-first Century*. New York: Public Affairs.
- Mandelbaum, Michael (2010). *The Frugal Superpower: America's Global Leadership in a Cash-strapped Era*. New York: Public Affairs.
- Medcalf, Rory (2012). "Indo-Pacific: What's in a Name". Lowy Institute for International Policy. Available at <http://www.lowyinterpreter.org/post/2012/08/16/Indo-Pacific-Whate28099s-in-a-name.aspx>.
- Mehta, P. B. (2011). "Reluctant India". *Journal of Democracy* 22, pp. 97-109.
- Mishra, Pankaj (2012). *From the Ruins of Empire: the Intellectuals who Remade Asia*. London: Penguin.
- Mukherjee, A. (2011). "Facing Future Challenges". *The RUSI Journal* 156, pp. 30-37.
- Mukherjee, Rohan and Malone David M. (2011). "Indian Foreign Policy and Contemporary Security challenges". *International Affairs* 87, pp. 87-104.
- Nehru, Jawaharlal (1936). *India and the World: Essays*. London: Allen and Unwin.
- Pannikar, K.M. (1945). *India and the Indian Ocean*. London: Allen and Unwin.
- Pant, Harsh V. (2009). "A Rising India's Search for a Foreign Policy". *Orbis* 53, pp. 250-264.
- Raghavan, S. (2010). *War and Peace in Modern India*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Raja, Mohan(2003). *Crossing the Rubicon: the Shaping of India's New Foreign Policy*. New Delhi: Viking.
- Rao, Nirupama (2013). "America's 'Asian Pivot': the View from India". Available at <http://www.indianembassy.org/prdetail2097>.

- Schaffer, T.C. (2010). "New Delhi's New Outlook". *Survival* 52, pp. 161-167.
- Sikri, R. (2009). *Challenge and Strategy: Rethinking India's Foreign Policy*. New Delhi: Sage Publications India.
- Tanham, George (1992). "Indian Strategic Culture". *The Washington Quarterly* 15, pp. 129-129.
- Tanham, George K., Bajpai Kanti P. and Mattoo Amitabh (1996). *Securing India: Strategic Thought and Practice*. New Delhi: Manohar Publishers & Distributors.
- Tellis, Ashley J. (2012). *Nonalignment Redux: the Perils of Old Wine in New Skins*. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Available at http://www.carnegieendowment.org/files/nonalignment_redux.pdf.
- Yan, Xuetong (2012). *Yan Xuetong on Chinese Realism: the Tsinghua School of International Relations, and the Impossibility of Harmony*. Theory Talks. Available at <http://www.theory-talks.org/2012/11/theory-talk-51.html>.
- Zakaria, Fareed (2008). *The Post-American World*. New York: W.W. Norton.