



China and the Asia-Pacific Region: Geostrategic Relations and a Return to a Naval Dimension

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Abstract

The thesis examines China's geostrategic relations with Asia-Pacific countries with special reference to its naval ambitions toward the region. The study initially explores the role of a naval force as a nation's tool for protecting commercial shipping and fisheries, safeguarding sovereignty of offshore islands and resources, and as a complement to diplomatic activities and force projection in the outside world. The thesis concentrates especially on the People's Republic of China (PRC)'s apparent intention to expand its maritime influence into the Western Pacific and the Indian Ocean by putting pressure on the security of sea lines of communication (SLOCs) from the Gulf to the nations of East Asia via the Arabian Sea, the Bay of Bengal, the Straits of Malacca and Singapore, the South China Sea, and the Taiwan Strait. The thesis argues that, although China was a world-class maritime power by the mid-fifteenth century, it was intruded upon, and subsequently politically humiliated, by the Western and Japanese invaders, who, ironically used the sea to achieve this in the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. After its foundation in 1949, the PRC attempted to overcome these humiliations by employing Mao Zedong's 'people's war' strategy, and this was developed as a fundamental military doctrine until the emergence of Deng Xiaoping as supreme leader in 1979. In geopolitical terms, the PRC's strategic environment has begun to transform after the demise of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War. Since then, the PRC's fear of major land border wars has been significantly diminished, replaced by sea challenges, notably with respect to such examples as overlapping claims over the South China Sea and Diaoyutai (Senkaku) Islands. Moreover, considerations of security on regional SLOCs have become more urgent for China, as it became a major exporter of manufactured goods and a net oil importer after 1993, requiring that its southwestern approaches are kept open and safe. The thesis contemplates the proposition that in this process, China could become a regional great sea power of sufficient scope to cause problems for the United States' position in the region, and that this could have considerable implications for the economy of regional countries as well as to the US for its trade and force projection in the event of crisis in the Gulf or elsewhere. The study further evaluates how China's naval challenge to regional waterways develops, and, finally, suggests which policy options are open to regional powers (including the United States) in furthering their own interests, but at the same time maintaining a critical level of peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region in the new century.

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I had been in the Korean Army for approximately 27 years, and retired from it as a Colonel in July 1997. After my retirement, I made my mind to begin with my second life. There is a saying that “The ship is the safest when it moors, but the real value of the ship is not to stay in the harbour forever, but to voyage fighting the wind and waves”. This is why I came to Adelaide to study. Upon arrival in Adelaide University in February 1998, one of the most important tasks for me was to choose the topic of my thesis. As a career army officer, my primary concern has always been the national security of my country. Since the division of Korea into two parts in August 1945, the Communist North Korea with its one million-man army has long been an immediate threat to the Republic of Korea (ROK). Therefore, the ROK military has continuously emphasised the importance of the ground force rather than other services, including that of the Navy.

However, the security environment of the Asia-Pacific region has been dramatically transformed after the end of the Cold War confrontation and the diastrophism of the PRC since the emergence of Deng Xiaoping. As a result, the threat of land war in the region has, to a considerable extent, been diminished. Instead, sea challenges with regard to disputed islands and critical sea-lanes have emerged. It means that the role of the navy has gradually been increasing in the international community. Even though the land-border threat from North Korea still remains significant, the ROK navy will play an important role for the national interest, including the securing of the overlapping claims of sovereignty on some islands and of sea-lanes of commercial shipping. During my one-year study at Indian National Defence College in New Delhi in 1988, I was interested in the role of regional navies in the Southeast Asian waters and the Indian Ocean. This is why I chose as the topic of my thesis the potential challenge of regional sea regimes and its implications to the security of Western Pacific and the Indian Ocean.

This thesis would not have been completed without help from many people. First of all, I have to convey my sincere appreciation to my supervisors, Dr Bob Catley (currently Professor and the Head of Politics Department, Otago University, New Zealand) and Dr Felix Patrikeeff. For the first 18 months of my research work, Professor Catley guided me to design time frame of the research as well as helped me to collect materials and to write the thesis. I am really proud of his sincere assistance on my early research, and thankful for his intellectual advice and friendship. Since he left for Otago University early in my candidature, Dr Felix Patrikeeff has provided me with enthusiastic help for me to complete my thesis, and encouraged me to embellish every chapter in the present work. He also assisted me to develop research work, and provided me with help in structuring my field research activities. I owe much to him for the research travel to China, the Republic of Korea, and some Southeast Asian countries, including Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia. At the final stage of my writing he showed great enthusiasm for me to re-examine the basic argument of contentious issues raised in the present study. Without his sincere support, I would not have finished my thesis. Dr Chung-in Moon (Dean & Professor, Graduate School of International Studies, Yonsei University) and Dr You-II Lee (Senior Lecturer, School of Management, Edith Cowan University) also provided valuable comments on my work, and I would like to thank them for these.

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Thesis Submission Statement

This thesis contains no material that has been accepted for the reward of any other degree or diploma in any university or tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text.

I give consent to this copy of my thesis, when deposited in the University Library, to be made available for loan and photocopying.

Lee Jae-hyung

March 2002

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ADB	Asia Development Bank
ADF	Australian Defence Force
AFTA	ASEAN Free Trade Association
AMF	Asian Monetary Fund
ANU	Australian National University
ANZUS	Australia-New Zealand-US
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
ARATS	Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Straits
ARF	ASEAN Regional Forum
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASEM	Asia Europe Meeting
ASW	Anti-Submarine Weapons
AWACS	Airborne Warning and Control System
BCP	Burmese Communist Party
BIOT	British Indian Ocean Territory
Bpd	Barrels of Oil per day
C ³ I	Command, Control, Communication of Intelligence
CASS	Chinese Academy of Social Science
CBMs	Confidence Building Measures
CGB	Carrier Battle Group
CICIR	China Institute of Contemporary Int'l Relations
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CMC	Central Military Commission
CNOOC	China National Off-shore Oil Company
CNPC	China National Petroleum Corporation
CNPC	China National Petroleum Corporation
CONUS	Continental US
COSCO	China Ocean Shipping Company
CSCAP	Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific
CSIS	Centre for Strategic and International studies
CWC	Chemical Weapons Convention
DOD	Department of Defense (US)
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
EAEC	East Asia Economic Caucus
EEC	European Economic Community
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zones
EU	European Union
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment

FEER	Far Eastern Economic Review
FPDA	Five Power Defence Arrangement
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organisation
ICBM	Inter-continental Ballistic Missile
IDSA	Institute for Defence Studies and Analysis (India)
IGCC	Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation
IIS	Indonesian Institute of Sciences
IISS	International Institute for Strategic Studies
ILS	Integrated Logistics Support
IMB	International Maritime Bureau
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMO	International Maritime Organisation
INSS	Institute for National Strategic Studies (US NDU)
INTERFET	International Force in East Timor
IORI	Indian Ocean Rim Initiative
IRBM	Inter-mediate Range Ballistic Missile
ISEAS	Institute of Southeast Asian Studies
KEDO	Korea Peninsula Energy Development Organisation
KIDA	Korean Institute of Development Agency
LDP	Liberal Democratic Party
LNG	Liquefied Natural Gas
LOC	Line of Control
MCP	Malayan Communist Party
MEFs	Marine Expeditionary Forces
MFN (NTR)	Most-favoured Nation (This has been referred from 1998, "Normal Trade Relations")
MIMA	Maritime Institute of Malaysia
MIRV	Multiple Independently Targeted Re-entry Vehicle
MMT	Million Metric Tons
MNPKO	Multinational Naval Peacekeeping Force
MRC	Major Regional Conflict
MSA	Maritime Safety Agency
MSDF	Maritime Self-defence Force
MTCR	Missile Technology Control Regime
NAPSNet	Northeast Asia Peace and Security Network
NCNA	New China News Agency
NDC	National Defense University (US)
NMD	National Missile Defence
NPC	National People's Congress
NPT	Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty

OPEC	Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries
PACFLT	Pacific Fleet (US)
PBEC	Pacific Basin Economic Council
PECC	Pacific Economic Cooperation Council
PKI	Parti Kommuni Indonesia
PKO	Peace Keeping Operation
PLA	People's Liberation Army
PLAAF	People's Liberation Army Air Force
PLAN	People's Liberation Army Navy
PMC	Post-Ministerial Conference
PNG	Papua New Guinea
PPP	Purchasing Power Parity
PRC	People's Republic of China
PSA	Port of Singapore Authority
QDR	Quadrennial Defense Review
R & D	Research and Development
RAAF	Royal Australian Air Force
RAN	Royal Australian Navy
RMA	Revolution in Military Affairs
ROC	Republic of China
ROK	Republic of Korea
SAARC	South Asian Association Cooperation
SANF	Standing ASEAN Naval Force
SAPRA	Strategic Analysis and Political Risk Analysis
SCM	Security Consultative Meeting
SDF	Self Defence Force
SEANWFZ	Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapons Free Zone
SEF	Strait Exchange Foundation
SIPRI	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
SLBM	Submarine Launched Ballistic Missile
SLOCs	Sea Lines of Communication
SLORC	State Law and Order Restoration Council (Myanmar) (The SLORC was superseded by the SPDC in November 1997)
SOFA	Status of Force Agreement
SPC	South Pacific Commission
SPDC	State Peace and Development Council (Myanmar)
SPF	South Pacific Forum
SRBM	Short Range Ballistic Missile
SSBN	Nuclear-powered Ballistic Missile Submarine
TAC	Transitional Authority in Cambodia
TMD	Theatre Missile Defence
TRA	Taiwan Relations Act
TSEA	Taiwan Security Enhancement Act

TSS	Traffic Separation Scheme
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UKC	Under Keel Clearance
ULCC	Ultra Large Crude Carrier
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea
UNPKO	United Nations Peace Keeping Operation
USFK	United States Forces in Korea
VLCC	Very Large Crude Carrier
VSTOL	Vertical Short Take Off and Landing
VTIS	Vessel Traffic Information System
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction
WTO	World Trade Organisation
ZOPFAN	Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality

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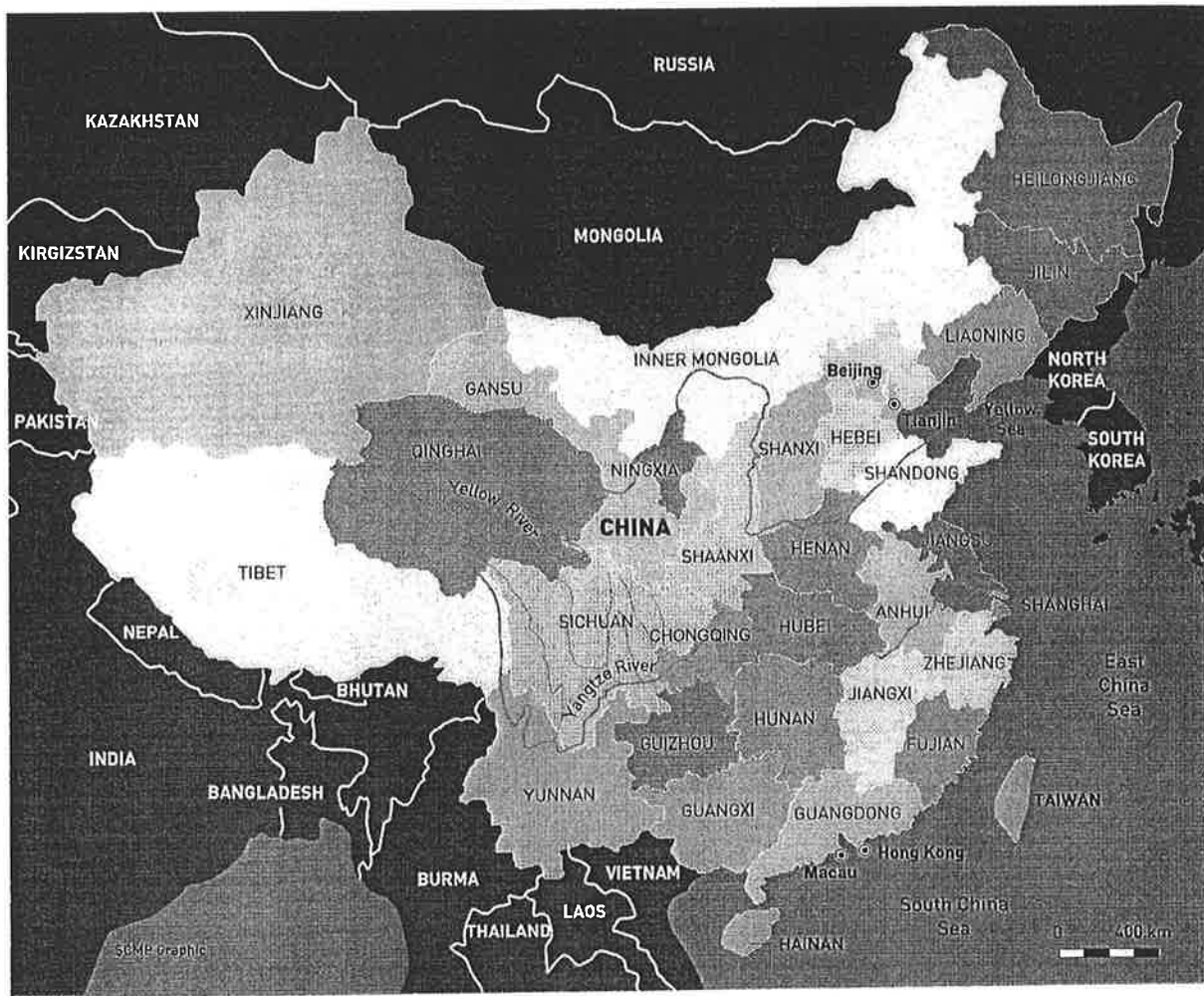
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Map 0-1 Map of the People's Republic of China



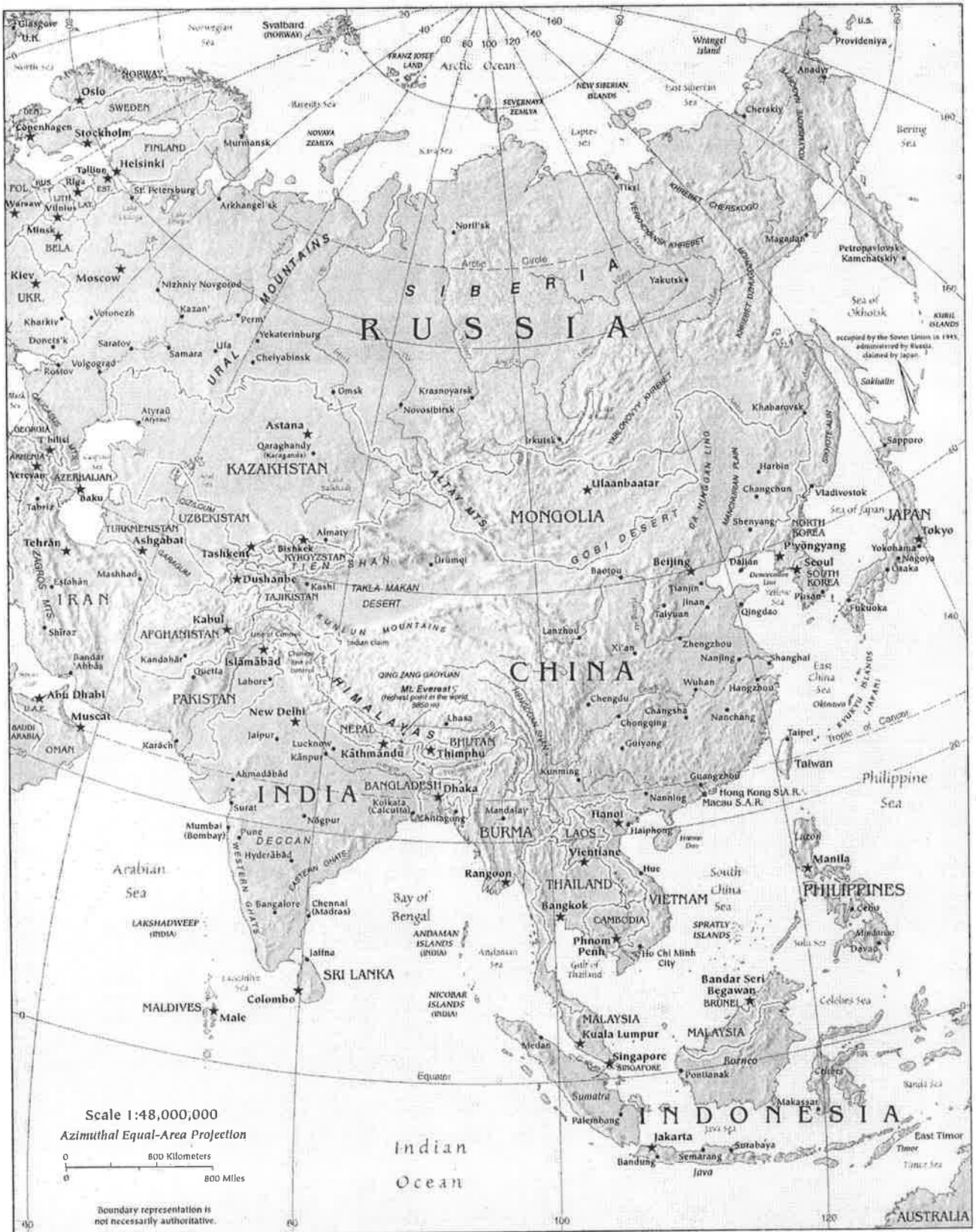
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Map of Taiwan



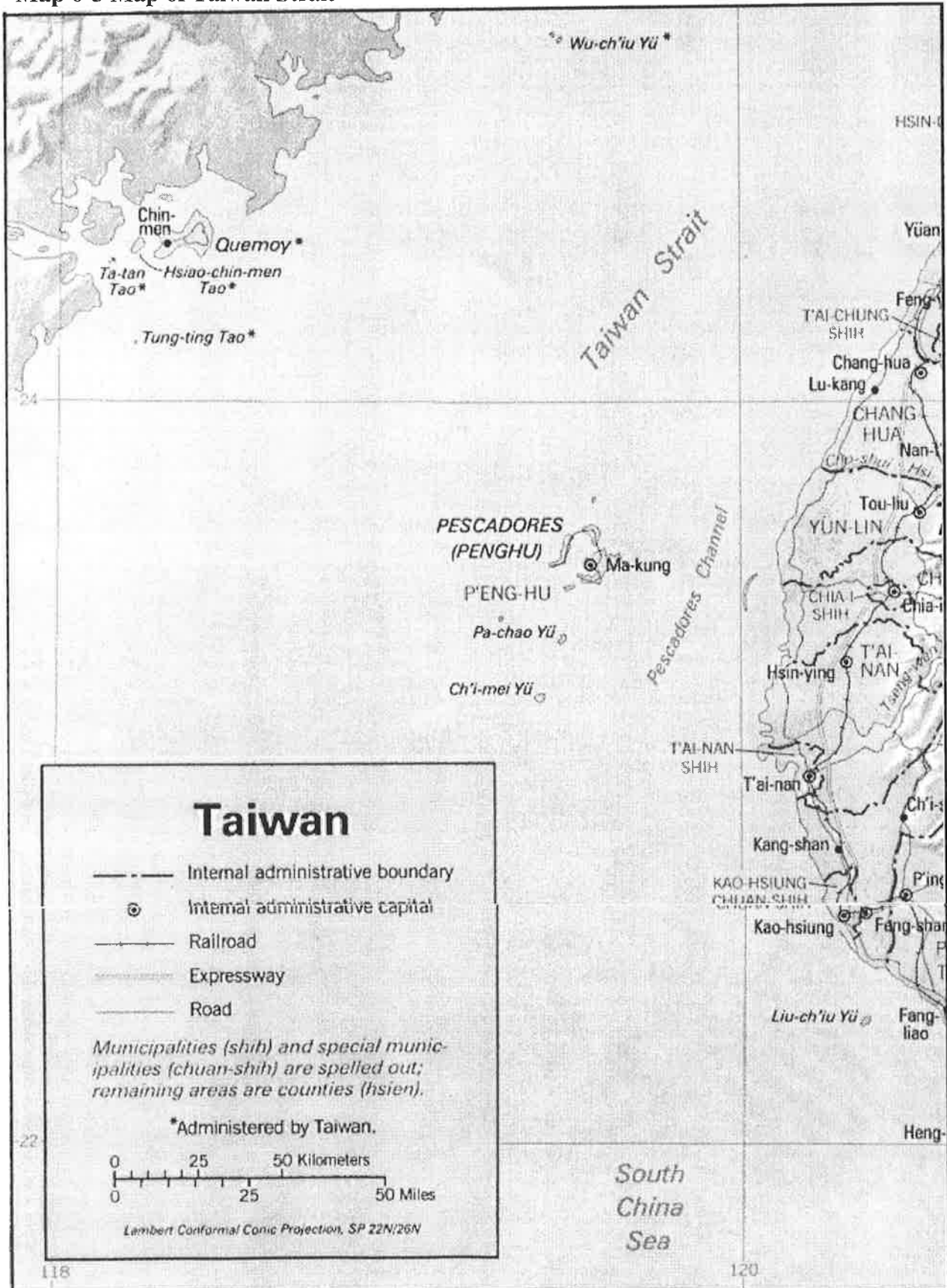
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Map 0-2 Map of Asia



Source: <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/asia.htm>

Map 0-3 Map of Taiwan Strait



Source: <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/taiwan.gif>



Introduction

'What is clear is that as the Cold War fades away, we face not a "new world order" but a troubled and fractured planet, whose problems deserve the serious attention of politicians and public alike.' – Paul Kennedy.¹

An Overview of the Study

Historically, China had, in terms of cultural heritage, and economic and military power, been a mighty regional empire in Asia until the mid-nineteenth century. By that time, China was a nation with a continental focus, exerting influence largely across its land borders; thus the country naturally concentrated on territorial concerns, rather than maritime questions. When Qin Shihuangdi (the first Emperor of China) unified his dynasty, his nation was as big as today's China. Most Chinese leaders were mainly focused on defending such a large country in continental terms rather than on a sea-faring strategy, and imperial expansion through the latter. They thought that a continental strategy was enough to secure the nation as a Middle Kingdom, at least in an Asian context.

Even though China had long emphasised a continental doctrine for its national security, some of its dynasties strove to develop a strong navy. China's remarkable maritime expansion came with the Song dynasty (960-1279) and the early part of the Ming dynasty (1368-1644).²

It was not until the early 1440s, however, that China emerged as a great maritime power. When China launched its ambitious maritime expeditions throughout the Southeast

¹ Paul Kennedy, *Preparing for the 21st Century*, London: Fontana Press, 1993, p. 349.

² Wolfram Eberhard, *A History of China*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971, pp. 251-56. See also Louise Levathes, *When China Ruled the Seas*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994, pp.41-42; Jane Kate Leonard, *Wei Yuan and China's Rediscovery of the Maritime World*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984, pp. 44-45; Hans van Tilburg, "Chinese Maritime History and Nautical Archaeology", *The Western Australian Maritime Museum Bulletin* 18-2, 23 November 2000.
http://www.mm.wa.gov.au/Museum/aima/bulletins/bulletin18_2/China.html (Internet Accessed: 14 April 2001).

Asian and the Indian Ocean regions in the early fifteenth century, most European nations were politically weak, having become engaged in political and military struggle with one another.³ However, after China abandoned its maritime activities in the late fifteenth century, European sea powers (such as Portugal, Spain, Holland, France and England) began to compete in finding new sea routes around the world. Because of the Qing dynasty's inability to develop a strong navy, the Chinese were invaded and politically affronted by the sea-borne imperialist powers. This process eventually brought about the fall of the dynasty.⁴ Although Chinese leaders in the Republican period (1911-1949) appreciated the imbalance of maritime power between China and foreign powers, they had no opportunity to build up China's naval force because of a protracted and highly costly civil war between the Communists and the Nationalists.

Even after the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949, the importance of the navy as a national security force was not fully recognised. During most of Mao's 17-year rule from 1949 until his death of 1976, the PRC focused on the protection of land borders to safeguard its territorial integrity and sovereignty, and to construct a secure Chinese Communist state. As a result, the Chinese leadership concentrated on Mao Zedong's doctrine of 'people's war'; a doctrine based on the perception that threats to the PRC came mainly from its land borders. Indeed, from the late 1950s to the late 1970s, the PRC was involved in a number of border conflicts with the Soviet Union, India and Vietnam, and experienced two disastrous internal movements, the Great Leap Forward and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. This entire security environment compelled China to

³ Paul A. Sawada, "Raphael Hythlodæus, the Remarkable Sixteenth Century Portuguese", in Peter Milward, ed., *Portuguese Voyages to Asia and Japan in the Renaissance Period*, Tokyo: The Renaissance Institute, 1994, p. 15.

⁴ Louise Levathes, *When China Ruled the Seas*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994, pp. 280-285. See also J. A. G. Robert, *Modern China An Illustrated History*, London: Sutton Publishing, 1998, pp. 18-20; Timothy Brook, *The Confusion of Pleasure*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998, p. 122-25; East Asia Analytical Unit, *Asia's Global Powers China-Japan Relations in the 21st Century*, Canberra: The Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 1996, pp. 117-18; Denny Roy, *China's Foreign Relations*, London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1998, pp. 8-11; Immanuel C.Y. Hsu, *The Rise of Modern China*, 5th Ed., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995, pp. 220-24.

maintain a land-bound politico-military doctrine. The people's war strategy was in some respects effective, therefore, in dealing with external and internal threats. The maritime dimension remained neglected in this period.

How has China's national strategy shifted from that of a continental focus to one of increasing maritime assertion? Since initiating its outward-looking policies with the introduction of the 'Four Modernisations' plan in the late 1970s, China has faced a number of strategic requirements, including a greater reliance on its foreign trade and oil imports along the regional sea-lanes, the need for preserving sovereignty over disputed islands and offshore resources, and, more importantly, the national goal of incorporating Taiwan, which has, virtually from the creation of this 'rogue' Chinese state, long been disrupted by the US Seventh Fleet.⁵ In the meantime, after the demise of the Soviet Union, the US has become a sole superpower, playing a key role on the oceans and in international power politics. Unfortunately, China's areas of naval interest exhibit evidence of overlapping those of the US's allies in the Western Pacific, including Japan, the ROK and Taiwan. These strategic considerations have encouraged China to pursue its naval ambitions in neighbouring seas and oceans.

While it expresses its naval ambitions with regard to the South China Sea, Southeast Asian archipelagic straits, and the Indian Ocean, these activities by China directly affect other regional countries' interests because these sea lines of communication (SLOCs) are regarded as critically important passageways for the countries in the Asia-Pacific. Japan and the ROK, for example, have been importing more than 70 percent of their oil through the regional SLOCs. Most Southeast Asian nations also regard these waterways as their crucial shipping

⁵ Kim Duk-ki, *China's Navy in the 21st Century (in Korean)*, Seoul: Korea Institute for Maritime Strategy, 2000, pp. 63-65. See also David G. Muller, Jr., *China as a Maritime Power*, Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1983, pp. 97-99; Chien Chung, "Confidence-Building Measures in the South China Sea", in Hung-mao Tien and Tun-jen Cheng, eds., *The Security Environment in the Asia-Pacific*, London: M. E. Sharpe, 2000, pp. 281-83; Karl W. Eikenberry, "China's Challenge to Asia-Pacific Regional Security", in Richard J. Ellings and Sheldon W. Simon, eds., *Southeast Asian Security in the New Millennium*, New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1996, pp. 99-101; You Ji, *The Armed Forces of China*, *op. cit.*, pp. 184-86. Bernard D. Cole, *The Great Wall at Sea*, *op. cit.*, pp. 118-120; Bill Gertz, *The China Threat*, Washington D.C.: Regnery Publishing Inc., 2000, pp. 15-17.

lanes, and, more significantly, the US is heavily dependent on these sea-lanes for its commercial shipping and force projection in case of a global crisis. Thus, China's naval ambitions in the regional waterways would naturally invite substantial responses from the US as well as regional countries, including the Southeast Asian nations, East Asian states, and even India and Russia.

This study, therefore, is one that examines China's relations with the countries of the Asia-Pacific region, with special reference to its naval ambitions towards the Western Pacific and the Indian Ocean. The study initially deals with China's geostrategic relations with neighbouring countries, exploring historical dynamics of the rise and fall of the Chinese maritime power, recent trends in its naval ambitions, and patterns of maritime interaction with countries in the Asia-Pacific region. To examine this theme, much of the attention has been devoted to the evaluation of the strategic significance of the regional sea lines of communication (SLOCs), and the assessment of China's potential maritime challenge towards the Asia-Pacific nations, as well as their reaction to Beijing's naval ambitions in the region.

Previous research on China's military challenge (such as that by Kent E. Calder, Ezra F. Vogel, Richard Bernstein and Ross H. Munro, Bill Gertz and Steven W. Mosher), and on Chinese naval resurgence (including the work of David G. Muller Jr., You Ji, Greg Austin, Duk-ki Kim, and Bernard D. Cole) has brought important nuance to the understanding of China's intention to become a countervailing power against the US hegemony in the Asia-Pacific region, and has raised China's maritime ambition as the core of the understanding of China's growing aspiration towards the sea.⁶ While their views significantly contributed to

⁶ With regard to the China's political and military challenge to the US, see following literature. Kent E. Calder, *Asia's Deadly Triangle*, London: Nicholas Brealey Publishing, 1997, pp. 104-25; Ezra F. Vogel, ed, *Living with China*, London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1997, pp. 97-119; Richard Bernstein and Ross H. Munro, *The Coming Conflict with China*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997, pp. 160-75; Bill Gertz, *The China Threat*, Washington D. C.: Regnery Publishing, Inc., 2000, pp. 199-203; Steven W. Mosher, *China's Plan to Dominate Asia and the World*, San Francisco: Encounter Books, 2000, pp. 97-116. Regarding China's maritime ambition, see following literature. David G. Muller Jr., *China as a Maritime Power*, Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1983, pp. 171-80; You Ji, *The Armed Forces of China*, St Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1999, pp. 170-92; Greg Austin, *China's Ocean Frontier*, St Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1998, pp.253-96; Duk-ki Kim, *China's Navy in the 21st Century* (in Korean), Seoul: Korea Institute for Maritime Strategy, 2000, pp. 357-412; Bernard D. Cole, *The Great Wall at Sea*, Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2001, p. 159-89.

the study of Chinese growing military and maritime expansion, such literature tended to leave lacunae in the field of indirect naval rivalries between China and the US, as well as those between China and other nations of the Asia-Pacific. Three major arguments arise in this regard. First, why has China shifted its national security doctrine from a 'people's war' mentality to a 'high-tech defence strategy'? Second, what has made modern China an assertive maritime nation? Third, does China have a potential to compete against the US hegemonic sea power in the regional seas? The three questions are closely related to the post-Cold War security environment which China must deal with, including the effects of the Gulf War, the settlement of border issues with neighbouring countries (through agreements with Russia, Central Asian Republics, India and Vietnam) and the need to safeguard its disputed islands and seas, SLOCs and offshore resources. In addition to these, of course, is China's desire to replace the former Soviet Union as a great sea power in Asiatic waters. The inability of existing scholarship to answer these questions is a key concern for the present study.

In some respects, China's naval expansion is also derived from its legacy of the Middle Kingdom mentality; a further fillip to its becoming a dominant maritime power in the Asiatic seas. Therefore, the thesis also argues that it is China's intention to expand its maritime influence not only to the Southeast Asian seas but also to the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea. China's intention to increase its naval influence extends from its immediate neighbour, Myanmar to remoter countries such as Pakistan and Iran.⁷ The thesis explores how China expands its sphere of naval influence toward the Western Pacific and the Indian

⁷ Steven W. Mosher, *China's Plan to Dominate Asia and the World*, San Francisco: Encounter Books, 2000, pp. 110-12. See also Bertil Lintner, 'Burma Road', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 6 November 1997; Barbara J. Taber, "China and Southeast Asia", *International Relations Journal* (Summer 1996), pp. 4-5; Leszek Buszynski "China and the ASEAN Region", in Stuart Harris and Gary Klintonworth, eds., *China as a Great Power*, Melbourne: Longman, 1995, pp. 180-82; Marvin C. Ott, "From Isolation to Relevance", in Robert I. Rotberg, ed., *Burma*, Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1998, pp. 70-73; J. Mohan Malik, "India Goes Nuclear", *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, vol. 20, no. 2 (August 1998), p. 191; Edward Timperlake and William C. Triplett II, *Red Dragon Rising*, Washington D.C.: An Eagle Publishing Company, 1999, pp. 190-91; Douglas H. Paal, "China and the East Asian Security Environment", in Ezra F. Vogel, ed., *Living with China*, *op. cit.*, pp. 113-15; Edward Timperlake and William C. Triplett II, *Red Dragon Rising*, *op. cit.*, pp. 103-05.

Ocean, and how China perceives the role of naval power in the promotion of its economic interests, diplomatic ascension, and national prestige.

An underlying theme of the thesis is the question of the growth of interplay between China and US interests in the region, with a special emphasis on naval rivalry between the two countries, by paying particular attention to the China's naval modernisation through the development of maritime strategy, the acquisition of sophisticated weapons and equipment, the enhancement of training and exercises, and diplomatic initiatives through military-to-military contact and port calls to other nations around the globe. Further, the study evaluates China's naval challenge towards other players, including Russia, India, Japan, the ROK, and Southeast Asian nations, as they all regard China's naval resurgence as a direct challenge to their economic interests as well as territorial sea claims.⁸ Finally, the study suggests, through the investigation of bilateral relations and naval rivalry interaction between China and other Asia-Pacific nations, more reasonable policy choices the nations in the region have to develop in dealing with the changing conditions.

Methodology

In developing the thesis, a number of factors have been explored at some depth, including the historical legacy of Ming dynasty's ambitious maritime expeditions in the fifteenth century, the Western and Japanese naval domination over the Qing dynasty, Deng Xiaoping's 'Four Modernisations' plan, the issue of disputed islands and offshore resources in East and South China seas, and post Cold War security environment in the Asia-Pacific

⁸ Jusuf Wanandi, "Indonesian Perspective Regional Conflict Prevention", in Kao Kim Hourn and Din Merican, eds., *Peace and Cooperation in ASEAN*, London: ASEAN Academic Press, 1997, p. 492. See also Donald K. Emmerson, "Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore" in Richard J. Ellings and Sheldon W. Simon, eds., *Southeast Asian Security in the New Millennium*, London: M. E. Sharpe, 1996, pp. 80-82; David Wurfel, "The New Order in Southeast Asia," in David Wurfel and Bruce Burton, eds., *Southeast Asia and the New World Order*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996, pp. 290-93; Leszek Buszynski, "Gorbachev and Southeast Asia: Prospects for the 1990s" in Ross Babbage, ed., *The Soviet in the Pacific in the 1990s*, New York: Pergamon Press, 1989, pp. 98-99; J. Mohan Malik, "India Copes with the Kremlin's Fall", *Orbis*, (Winter 1993), p. 87; Donald W. Klein, "Japan and Europe in Chinese Foreign Relations", in Samuel S. Kim, ed., *China and the World*, Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1998, pp. 146-48; Tae-ho Kim, "Korean Perspective on PLA Modernisation and the Future East Asian Security Environment", in Jonathan Pollack and Richard H. Yang, eds., *In China's Shadow*, Santa Monica: RAND, 1998, p. 53-54.

region (incorporating in this context the demise of former Soviet Union, America's sole hegemonic sea power status, and China's rise as a countervailing power against the US in the international community). All these factors derive from a notion that China sees its role in a deeply historical context, and that many of its policies and attitudes are shaped by this perception.

The study has been carried out through library resources as well as field research in relevant countries, including China, the Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia. During the fieldwork in these countries (Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia in November - December 1999, and the Republic of Korea and China in September - October 2000), interviews with maritime experts from the countries visited were conducted, and these have been incorporated into some of the major arguments of the thesis (including the importance of regional waterways, China's potential challenge towards regional countries and SLOCs, and possible responses of the US and relevant countries against China's naval resurgence).

The Structure of the Thesis

This thesis consists of eight chapters. The first four chapters deal with the background of China's maritime history and the foundations of its naval ambitions. The last four chapters explore China's relations with regional countries and maritime interactions between China and relevant countries, and describe the regional countries' responses to China's growing naval pressure.

The first chapter traces the relationship between the ocean and humankind, and the role of sea power in world history. In this chapter, the rise of the European sea powers is traced, integrating a discussion of how this contributed to their growing hegemony over the greater part of the non-Western world. This is then extended into a consideration of the role of modern navies in the context of military forces and diplomacy in the perpetuation of this

dominance. The second chapter analyses the origins of China's maritime power, and the century of humiliation. In this chapter, the Ming Dynasty's ambitious maritime expeditions, the eventual stark defeat of China's navy by the European and Japanese naval forces are explored, as are the subsequent collapse of the Qing dynasty and the decline of naval force in the period of Republican China (1911-1949).

Chapter three outlines the evolution of the Chinese navy from the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC) to the present. This chapter evaluates the capabilities and limitations of the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN), and China's possible courses of naval action with regard to regional waterways. The chapter also focuses on how the PLAN would contribute to the security of neighbouring seas and the incorporation of Taiwan. The fourth chapter examines China's expanding maritime sphere of influence towards the Western Pacific and the Indian Ocean. In this chapter, the new face of China's navy, its threat perception, and the strategic importance of the Southeast Asian sea-lanes are evaluated. As well, China's intention to expand its maritime influence into the Indian Ocean region through the close cooperation with Myanmar, Pakistan and Iran is examined.

Chapter five deals with the relationship between China and Southeast Asian nations. This chapter looks at the history of conflict and cooperation between the two parties and their future relationship regarding the interests of regional sea-lanes. Chapter six addresses the consequences of China's naval initiatives on other large regional players, such as Russia and India, and explores their interaction with respect to strategic partnerships and naval rivalries. Chapter seven examines the interests of the Republic of Korea (ROK) and Japan with regard to their 'oil lifelines' along maritime passageways from the Gulf, and potential naval rivalries between China and Japan, and China and the ROK. Chapter eight discusses the US's policy choices regarding the security of the seaways in the Southeast Asian seas and the Indian Ocean. The main purpose of this chapter is to examine US commitment to the Asia-Pacific countries and to analyse the naval rivalry between China and the US.

The study goes on to examine the security and stability of the regional sea-lanes and stresses that the interactions between China and other regional countries are an important – if somewhat neglected – part of international relations in the Asia-Pacific in the new century. To prevent China from becoming an overly assertive sea power, the US needs to accommodate the PRC as a strategic partner, monitor the strategic alliance between China and Russia, and, finally, strengthen military and security cooperation with its regional allies and friends (including Japan, the ROK, Australia, Southeast Asian nations and India).

The thesis concludes by arguing that a constructive engagement toward China by the US becomes one of the latter's most effective options for the security of the regional waterways as well as for the stability of the Asia-Pacific region as a whole. In addition to America's response, the role of other regional countries is also important in encouraging China to join as a fully active member of the global community. In this context, it is imperative for all Asia-Pacific nations to cooperate with one another for the safety of international navigation along the Western Pacific and the Indian Ocean. This, in turn, enables all parties to pursue mutually beneficial interests for their well-being and prosperity.

Chapter One

Sea Power and the World

1.1 The Ocean and Humankind

Rivers were humankind's first highways to escape hidden enemies and natural obstacles.¹ As technology advanced and inter-societal trade flourished, the seas and oceans also began to be used as a major means of transportation. The world's oceans cover approximately 71 percent of the earth's surface, or 350 million square kilometres.² They have been of great benefit to humankind for transport, as a source of food, recreation and tourism, providing materials for building and art, as an energy source, for mining, and for production of fresh water by desalination.³ Given that the population of the earth is likely to reach 11 billion by the year 2100, the world's landmasses alone will not provide enough resources (such as foodstuffs, energy and minerals) to meet future demand.⁴ The oceans will therefore become even more significant than they are today due to their roles in providing transportation and resources for humankind.

The ocean continues to provide humankind with high quality protein from fish, an essential source of nutrition in our daily life. It has been estimated that fish provide 25 percent of the world's supply of animal protein.⁵ By 1997 China caught by far the highest volume of fish in the world, while Japan purchased around 28 percent of the total world fisheries import (See Table 1.1). The ocean is also an invaluable energy resource. Energy from the ocean can be utilised in various forms, through the use of waves, the tides,

¹ Thor Heyerdahl, *Early Man and the Ocean*, London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1978, p. 40.

² S. G. Gorshkov, *The Sea Power of the State*, New York: Pergamon Press Inc., 1979, pp. 59-60.

³ Brain J. Skinner and Karl K. Turekian, *Man and the Ocean*, Eaglewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1973, p. 24.

⁴ Michael H. Sedge, *Commercialisation of the Ocean*, New York: Franklin Watts, 1987, p. 13.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

ocean currents, thermal differences, salinity differences, and marine biomass.⁶ Offshore oil and gas will remain as one of the most significant global energy sources. Scientists have estimated that the carbon bound up in oceanic gas hydrates (a measure of their energy potential) is twice that of all oil, gas, and coal deposits found on land.⁷ By 1980, offshore oil production accounted for 20 percent of the total world energy output.⁸ In 1997, America's offshore crude oil and gas output accounted for 22 and 28 percent respectively of its total oil and gas production.⁹ Another important and expanding use of the ocean will be for the extraction of minerals and elements. Uranium, for example, is believed to be one of the more plentiful elements in seawater, with estimates suggesting that some four billion tonnes could be extracted from the oceans.¹⁰ As such, the ocean will continue to be a significant resource for human living.

Table 1.1 World Fisheries (in million tons, in 1997)

World Fish Catches		World Fisheries Export		World Fisheries Import	
Country	Volume	Country	Volume	Country	Volume
China	35.0 (28.7)	Norway	3.4 (6.6)	Japan	15.5 (27.6)
Peru	7.9 (6.5)	China	2.9 (5.6)	U S	8.1 (14.4)
Japan	6.7 (5.5)	U S	2.8 (5.4)	Spain	3.1 (5.5)
Chile	6.1 (5.0)	Denmark	2.6 (5.0)	France	3.1 (5.5)
U S	5.4 (4.4)	Thailand	2.3 (4.4)	Italy	2.6 (4.6)
World Total	122.1 (100)	World Total	51.6 (100)	World Total	56.2 (100)

Source: National Marine Fisheries, International Science & Technology

<http://www.st.nmfs.gov/st3/index.html> (Internet Accessed, on 14 September 1999)

When it comes to the historical study of sea power, nations that chose to use the sea to advance their interests became stronger than others, both politically and economically. The history of modern European sea power states, including those of

⁶ David A. Ross, *Opportunities and Uses of the Ocean*, New York: Springer-Verlag, 1980, p. 275.

⁷ UN International Year of the Ocean, Non-living Resources
<http://ioc.unesco.org/iyo/html> (Internet Accessed, 16 January 2000).

Hydrates are frozen and compressed slabs due to the high pressure of the water and/or sediment above them.

⁸ Eric Grove, *The Future of Sea Power*, London: Routledge, 1990, p. 44.

⁹ Neal Davis, Energy Information Administration, "World Petroleum and Natural Gas" (June 1998).
http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/finance/usi&to/up_98.html (Internet Accessed, 16 January 2000)

¹⁰ Richard Gwynn, *Way of the Sea*, Bideford, Devon: Green Books, 1987, pp. 122-23.

Portugal, Spain, Britain, France and the Netherlands, clearly demonstrates that the projection of sea power allowed them to acquire huge colonial territories and national wealth as well as to create new homes for their respective populations around the world. From European nations alone, more than 60 million people migrated to the 'New World' (the Americas, Asiatic Russia, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa) from 1840 to 1940.¹¹

As a result of the ambitious exploration of, and emigration to, the New World throughout history, the sea-lanes have long been an arena of competition among seafaring nations. As civilisation developed, and the desire for resources increased, waterways became a key factor of national strategic interest, requiring nations to exert a measure of control over important sea-lanes.¹² Shipping of goods and services is now more than ever before, indispensable, as the flow of trade by ship remains 40 times less expensive than air transport.¹³ Thus, sea-borne trade accounts for over 80 percent of international trade by volume.¹⁴ More importantly, the seaways are critical avenues for great powers to project their naval forces into other regions, to areas where they believe their national interests lie. The history of the seas and oceans is therefore largely a record of rivalries resulting from conflicting commercial and expanding national interests.¹⁵

1.2 Ancient Sea Power States

In their waters, the Greeks and Phoenicians learnt early the art of navigation, through the voyages along the Mediterranean Sea, employing the latter as a major artery for trade.¹⁶ According to historical records, Crete (2500 BC –1200 BC) was one of the earliest and most powerful of the Mediterranean Sea powers, with robust ships featuring

¹¹ David Thomson, *Europe Since Napoleon*, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1966, p. 493.

Actually what they termed the 'New World' had already been occupied by the local indigenous people long before the European explorers arrived there.

¹² Eric Grove, *op. cit.*, p.46.

¹³ David A. Ross, *op. cit.*, p. 73

¹⁴ Eric Grove, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

¹⁵ E.B. Potter, ed., *Sea Power: A Naval History*, 2nd Ed., Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1982, p. 1.

keels and ribs.¹⁷ By 1900 BC, Egypt had begun to maintain war fleets in both the Mediterranean and the Black Seas to deter pirates who preyed on its merchant ships.¹⁸

According to Richard Gwynn, Egypt built the biggest and oldest ships in world history:

It is from Egypt that we have the world's only intact, surviving, pre-Christian ship. This vessel, too large to be called a boat, was found buried in a funeral pit near the Great Pyramid of Giza. The pit was the tomb of Cheops, a fourth dynasty (2613-2494) king who ordered the building of the Great Pyramid. Cheops' ship was built of 600 pieces of cedar wood that had to be imported, presumably by sea, from Phoenicia, in modern-day Lebanon. This ship is 133 feet long and twenty-six feet in the beam.¹⁹

However, the Greeks had, by the fifth century BC, excluded the Phoenicians and the Carthaginians from the Black and Aegean Seas and virtually controlled shipping in the eastern Mediterranean.²⁰ After the Greco-Persian War in 480 BC, the Athenians gained maritime and commercial dominance and laid the foundations of western civilisation. In the first Punic War (264 BC), the Romans crushed Carthage's Hannibal despite being primarily a continental power rather than a seafaring nation.²¹ The overwhelming victory of Rome was a direct result of its command of the sea. Due to his lack of naval force, Hannibal was forced to undertake a long and difficult passage overland through Spain and Gaul, where he lost over half his well-trained army and most of his important equipment.²²

Rome fought against Carthage on three occasions, and won each of those battles due to its naval dominance. Rome's first victory over Carthage made Sicily its province, the second gave it Spain, and the third allowed it to take North Africa.²³ However, Rome's conquests outside its borders brought about civil war at home. The fight for control of the expanding empire invited a decisive battle in 31 BC between Mark

¹⁶ S. J. B. Whybrow and H. E. Edwards, *Europe Overseas*, London: Dent, 1939, p. 1.

¹⁷ Helmut Pense, *Atlas of Naval Warfare*, London: Arms and Armour Press, 1977, p. 10.

¹⁸ Richard Gwynn, *Way of the Sea*, Bideford, Devon: Green Books, 1987, p. 24.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 21-22.

²⁰ E.B. Potter, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

²¹ Arthur MacCartney Shepard, *Seapower in Ancient History*, London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1925, p. 136.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 170.

²³ E.B. Potter, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

Anthony, who allied himself with Cleopatra, the Queen of Egypt, and Octavius.²⁴ Octavius won the battle, and thus commanded the whole Mediterranean, conquering Egypt in the process. For five centuries after the Actium Campaign, Roman sea power and Pax Romana dominated the region.²⁵ However, the Roman Empire gradually collapsed for several reasons, including the Roman people's laziness and moral degradation due to extensive slave workers, their addiction to horrible and inhuman amusement and games, and widespread epidemic diseases, such as plague and malaria.²⁶ The Roman Empire was broken down by a number of barbarian kingdoms in former Roman provinces, namely the Visigoths (West Goths) who marched on Constantinople, slaying the Emperor Valens in 378, and the Ostrogoths (East Goths) from Asia Minor, who eventually became imperial allies and maintained an army for the use of Rome.²⁷ Following the fall of the Roman Empire by the year 700, Muslims controlled the Mediterranean Sea, and overran Cyprus, Italy, Sicily, North Africa, the Strait of Gibraltar, Spain and Gaul.²⁸ Pope Urban II and his Crusade challenged the Muslim dominance in 1095. The 250-year long Crusade boosted the growth of the Italian commercial city-state, Venice, which had been a centre for trade, and by 1400 the latter had 3,000 ships.²⁹ In 1453, the Turks seized Constantinople, the Eastern Empire, in which Greek and Hellenistic culture prevailed.³⁰ The Christian fleets of Spain and Italy set out from Messina to the Gulf of Lepanto in September 1571 destroying the Ottoman

²⁴ C. J. Moe, *An Outline of Ancient History: Rome*, London: Angus and Robertson, 1959, P.106.

²⁵ E. B. Potter, *op. cit.*, p. 6. See also Paul Petit, *Pax Romana*, translated by James Willis, London: B. T. Batsford Ltd., 1976, p. 9.

At its peak, the Roman Empire stretched its influence over most part of Europe and North Africa, including almost all the Mediterranean basin, Spain, Gaul, Britain, Greece, Macedonia, Asia Minor, and North Africa. The Pax Romana begins at the end of the civil wars, after the battle of Actium in 31 BC, and ends with coming to power of the Severans in AD 193.

²⁶ J. C. Reville, *World History*, London: Longmans, 1959, pp. 107-08.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 109-111.

²⁸ E.B. Potter, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ W. Gordon East, "The Historical Background", in George W. Hoffman, ed., *A Geography of Europe*, Strand, England: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1961, p. 90.

fleet on 7 October of the same year.³¹ The series of power transitions in Europe and Asia Minor demonstrate that the Mediterranean Sea had a strategic significance in the process of power politics in the region, and sea power contributed strongly toward the birth of strong states, such as Greece, Rome and the Ottoman Empire.

1.3 Evolution of Modern Sea Power

1.3.1 European Sea Powers and the Division of the Globe

The European states of the Middle Ages were under the influence of the Roman Empire and the Church.³² At that time, most city-states in the region were too small to expand their influence in waters outside the Mediterranean.³³ However, as the papal domination continued to decline in the fifteenth century, Portugal and Spain expanded their territory through maritime expeditions. As a result, the late fifteenth century proved to be the Age of Discovery, which marked the beginning of European territorial-state expansion, and the search for new routes outside the known world.³⁴

The first great voyage of discovery originated in China in 1405, when Zheng He, by order of the Ming dynasty's Emperor, Yongle. Zheng launched his first ambitious maritime expedition towards Southeast Asia, India, the Middle East and West Africa. At that time other European nations were unable to make large-scale explorations: England and France were politically weak; Holland was a province of Spain; Germany was divided into small states; and Sweden and other Scandinavian countries were remote and impoverished.³⁵ The political and military strength of the Portuguese coupled with their comparatively well-developed ships and navigational aids, including nautical maps and

³¹ E. B. Potter, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

³² George Lichtheim, *Imperialism*, London: Allen Lane The Penguin Press, 1971, p. 45.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ Paul A. Sawada, "Raphael Hythlodæus, the Remarkable Sixteenth Century Portuguese", in Peter Milward, ed., *Portuguese Voyages to Asia and Japan in the Renaissance Period*, Tokyo: The Renaissance Institute, 1994, p. 15.

³⁵ *Ibid.* See also E.B. Potter, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

At that time England was torn by struggles between the King and the Parliament, and France was confronted by the dispute between the King and the nobility.

compass cards, allowed them to become the first Europeans able to venture abroad via the seas.³⁶ More than 80 years after Zheng He's trans-Asian voyage, a number of European explorers began to sail outside the European continent (See Table 1.2). In 1488, the Portuguese explorer Bartholomew Diaz sailed around the southern tip of Africa, which he called 'Cape of Storm', later renamed the 'Cape of Good Hope' by King John II of Portugal.³⁷ In 1492, Christopher Columbus crossed the Atlantic and discovered the New World. Six years later, Vasco da Gama completed his voyage from Portugal to India via Africa.³⁸ Da Gama's voyage had been one of the most elaborate. When he launched his expedition to Calicut in 1497, his ships were manned by the best seamen, who had been trained in methods and skills developed over the previous 80 years of exploration, and accompanied by 17 language specialists to interpret a variety of African and Arabic languages.³⁹ In another expedition in 1500, Pedro Alvares Cabral discovered Brazil, and the brothers Corto Real discovered Newfoundland in 1501.⁴⁰

Table 1.2 World's Great Voyages in 1400-1600

Explorer	Nationality	Number of Voyages	Date of Voyages	Number of Ships	Number of Crews	Claim to Fame
Zheng He	Chinese	7	1405-1433	41-317	27,500-30,000	World's earliest naval expedition
Bartholomew Diaz	Portuguese	3	1481-1500	4-12	NA	Rounding "Cape of Good Hope"
Christopher Columbus	Italian sailed for Spain	4	1492-1504	3-17	104-1,200	Visiting America
Vasco da Gama	Portuguese	3	1497-1524	4-14	NA	Visiting India
Ferdinand Magellan	Portuguese sailed for Spain	1	1519-1522	5	270	1 st Circumnavigation of the globe
Francis Drake	English	9	1567-1596	2-30	166	2 nd Circumnavigation of the globe

Source: Tim McGirk, "Out to Sea with Great Ships", *Time*, Special Double Issue, August 20-August 27, 2001, p. 45.

³⁶ Marc Ferro, *Colonisation*, London: Routledge, 1997, p. 24.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 15-16.

Diaz later participated in Gama's voyage and Cabral's Brazil expedition.

³⁸ E.B. Potter, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

³⁹ Ursula Lamb, ed., *The Globe Encircled and the World Revealed*, Brookfield, Vermont: Variorum, 1995, p. 41.

⁴⁰ Charles David Ley, ed., *Portuguese Voyages (1498-1663)*, London: J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1947, p. v.

Portugal and Spain were forerunners in search for new land and oceans. Under the auspices of Pope Alexander VI, both powers signed the Treaty of Tordesillas in 1494, which drew an imaginary line of 370 leagues (about 1,000 miles) from the Cape Verde Islands; Spain was given exclusive rights to the region west of the line, while Portuguese expeditions were to keep to the east, dividing the undiscovered world into two powers' sphere of exploration.⁴¹ This treaty, in effect, became the first international law of the sea.⁴² As a result of the agreement, the Portuguese empire stretched from Mozambique on the Southeast coast of Africa, across the Indian Ocean to Malacca in 1511, into the Indonesian archipelago and, by 1570, up through the South China Sea to Macao. By the same year their reach extended to Japan, where they established a trading post in Nagasaki.⁴³ Portugal then dominated the seas by prohibiting other countries' ships from sailing in those parts of the ocean they controlled, and by confiscating any cargo, which did not have their authorisation.⁴⁴ Portugal's ambitious expeditions resulted in three historic achievements: the opening of the ocean routes, the colonisation of Brazil, and the spread of Christianity over a large part of the globe.⁴⁵ The Portuguese were the early European winners in the struggle for the control of the trade routes, reaching India first by going around the African continent.⁴⁶

The era of world colonisation began with the great voyages of the Portuguese and the Spaniards in the late fifteenth century; from then until the middle of the sixteenth century, Spain occupied much of Central and South America, while the Portuguese colonised Brazil and traded with India and the Spice Islands.⁴⁷ Overseas possessions

⁴¹ Treaty of Tordesillas, Britannica CD 97.

The treaty was finally sanctioned by Pope Julius II in 1506, but Portugal obtained Brazil with this treaty.

⁴² Richard Middleton, *Colonial America: A History, 1607-1760*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1992, p. 8. (Note: One league is about three miles in length).

⁴³ John Villeras, "The Portuguese and the Trading World of Asia in the Sixteenth Century", in Peter Milwood, ed., *Portuguese Voyages to Asia and Japan in the Renaissance Period*, *op. cit.*, pp. 4-10.

⁴⁴ Marc Ferro, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

⁴⁵ Charles David Ley, *op. cit.*, p. v.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

⁴⁷ S. J. B. Whybrow and H. E. Edwards, *op. cit.*, p. 162.

were classified into colonies of settlement and colonies of capital; the former were regarded, as suitable places to settle down, while the latter were considered unsuitable for residing in.

Spain's advance toward America began with the occupation of the island of San Domingo, Hispaniola.⁴⁸ The pace of Spanish penetration increased with the subjugation of the islands of Puerto Rico, Jamaica and Cuba from 1509 to 1511.⁴⁹ Spanish expeditions made possible further expansion twelve years later, when Francisco de Pizarro overthrew the Inca Empire in Peru and thus transformed Spain into a world power.⁵⁰ The indigenous inhabitants of Spain's new possessions died in great numbers from genocide and diseases brought by the Europeans (populations reduced in some areas by almost 90 percent). As a result, an alternative supply of labour was found in 1510 when the Portuguese organised the first shipment of African slaves to Hispaniola.⁵¹ Between 1520 and 1540, less than 10,000 Spaniards overcame native communities of many millions of people in central and southern Mexico, Central America and the region of South America, including Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia and Chile.⁵² By 1521 Spain had conquered and colonised most of North, Central, and South America as well as the Philippines.

It was only at the end of the sixteenth century that Holland appeared as a great sea power state. As early as 1595 Van Houtman sailed round the coast of India and the Far East.⁵³ In 1619, the foundation of Batavia (present day Jakarta) marked the beginnings of settlement by the Dutch in the Indonesian archipelago. 200 Dutch seized

⁴⁸ Marc Ferro, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

⁴⁹ Richard Middleton, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² Peter Bakewell, "Conquest after the Conquest: The Rise of Spanish Domination in America", in Richard L. Kagan and Geoffrey Parker, eds., *Spain, Europe and the Atlantic World*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995, p. 296.

⁵³ Marc Ferro, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

the Cape of Good Hope and settled in Southern Africa from 1652.⁵⁴ The Dutch ousted the Portuguese in the East Indies, and England and France struggled with each other in North America.⁵⁵

In the mid-seventeenth century, the French leadership began to acknowledge the importance of colonial adventure. In 1800, the French annexed Senegal and Sahara; in the following year they also incorporated Tunis. At that time, French Catholic missions were spread all over the world, including Africa. By 1875, French missionaries went to the region around Algeria, Senegal, French Sahara, French Equatorial Africa and Tunisia, and set up religious protectorates before the political sway.⁵⁶ As a result, by 1884 France was actively engaged in securing a good deal of African territory, while at the same time consolidating its control over Tonking and Laos in Asia.⁵⁷

The end of the Franco-German War in 1871 marked the beginning of a new colonial policy for France and Germany.⁵⁸ It was natural that the newly founded German Empire, surrounded by powerful neighbours, would pursue the idea of colonialism. Though Germany intervened in Samoa in 1880, its full-scale imperialism began in 1884, with a policy of creating African protectorates and annexations of oceanic islands.⁵⁹ During the next 15 years it brought under its colonial sway about one million square miles with an estimated population of 15 million. The crucial rivalry in naval power between Germany and other colonial powers was intensified with the possession of colonies in such areas as South Africa, the Balkans and Morocco.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

⁵⁵ S.J.B. Whybrow and H.E. Edwards, *Europe Overseas*, *op. cit.*, p. 162.

⁵⁶ David Thomson, *Europe Since Napoleon*, *op. cit.*, p. 497.

⁵⁷ J.A. Hobson, *Imperialism*, Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 1965, p. 20.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

Franco-German War of 1870-71 marked the end of French hegemony in continental Europe and the foundation of the Prussian dominated German Empire.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 19-20.

Samoa granted trading privileges to the Dutch (1722), Germans (1879), British (1899), and Germany finally annexed the country from 1899 to 1945.

Though England had initiated its own colonial expeditions a little later than Portugal and Spain, it was ultimately the most successful of any of the other European powers. In 1570 the Pope encouraged Philip of Spain to launch a crusade against Protestant England under Queen Elizabeth I. Recognising the threat from Spain, Queen Elizabeth began rebuilding the British navy, and instructed Francis Drake to harass Spanish ships. In 1578, Drake raided and looted Spanish seaside villages, and returned to England with gold, silver and jewels valued at half a million pounds sterling.⁶⁰ In July 1588, the Spanish Armada was dispatched to the Dover Strait to destroy the English navy.⁶¹ Overall, the vessels and seamen of both countries were of almost equal number. The English navy finally won the Anglo-Spanish conflict because the English navy was equipped with light and long-range guns, while the Spanish navy only had heavy and medium-range guns. After its defeat in the campaign, Spain lost many of its colonial possessions, while England expanded its colonial territories as far as North America.

After the Anglo-Spanish War, Holland gained independence from Spain in 1609. After independence, Holland expanded its influence on trade in the Baltic region, the Middle East, and on the American continent. Dutch expansionism was eventually followed by England's challenge. From 1652 to 1674, three Anglo-Dutch wars broke out. In the first (1652-54) and second (1665-67), the English navy secured victory. But in 1667, a Dutch fleet entered the Thames estuary, seized British naval stores, and captured the flagship of the Royal Navy.⁶² This incident resulted in negotiations between the governments of England and Holland, in which England gave up all claims to the East Indies, while Holland recognised West Indies as an English sphere of influence. Holland ceded Hudson Valley and the Colony of New Amsterdam (later renamed New York by the British).⁶³ The third war (1672-74) broke out due to a conspiracy by Louis

⁶⁰ E. B. Potter, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² J. C. Revill, *World History*, London: Longmans, 1959, p. 463.

⁶³ E. B. Potter, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

XIV of France, who desired the annexation of Holland. He bribed King Charles of England to wage a war against the Dutch with him. In 1678 King Louis XIV admitted defeat, and made peace with the Dutch without achieving his objective.⁶⁴ England gained much after its victory in the war, and it expanded its trade links to the American continent.

British colonisation and global trade were expanded enormously from the early seventeenth century due to five key factors: the formal signing of a peace treaty with Spain; the growth of the home population and unemployment, a religious conflict between Puritans and Roman Catholics, the Crown's attempts to modernise the English state, and the English colonisation of Ireland.⁶⁵ Through its vast colonisation program, English foreign trade almost doubled between 1700 and 1780, and then trebled during the next twenty years.⁶⁶ However, it was the Battle of Trafalgar, which allowed Britain to emerge as the greatest sea power in the world. Through Nelson's victory on 21 October 1805, when his numerically inferior fleet smashed the combined battle fleet of France and Spain, Britain became the dominant world sea power.⁶⁷

Despite the triumph of his army and diplomacy on the continent, Napoleon could not overcome the British navy. Consequently, French commerce declined, and most of the French colonies were handed over to British control.⁶⁸ During this period of dominance, almost all the Portuguese colonies in the East Indies were handed over to the British.⁶⁹ The European power struggle was mainly the result of the maritime rivalries among the dominant nations. For sixty years, from 1840 to 1900, a number of European

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 17-18.

Charles II conferred upon England's naval force the title Royal Navy and appointed Lord High, Admiral his brother James, Duke of York as Commander of the Royal Navy (p. 17).

⁶⁵ Richard Middleton, *op. cit.*, pp. 12-13.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ Eric Grove, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

⁶⁸ G.J. Marcus, *A Naval History of England: 2. The Age of Nelson*, London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1971, p. 212.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

nations annexed or otherwise asserted political sway over vast portions of Africa and Asia, and over numerous islands in the Pacific and elsewhere (See Table 1.3).⁷⁰

Table 1.3 Colonisation of Imperial Powers (as of 1900)

Country	Number of Colonies	Area (1,000 Square Miles)		Population (million)	
		Mother Country	Colonies	Mother Country	Colonies
Britain	50	121	11,605	40.6	345.0
France	33	204	3,741	38.5	56.4
Germany	13	209	1,027	52.3	14.7
Netherlands	3	13	782	5.1	35.1
Portugal	9	36	801	5.0	9.1
Spain	3	198	244	17.6	0.1
Italy	2	111	188	31.9	0.8
Austria-Hungary	2	241	24	41.2	1.6
Denmark	3	15	87	2.2	0.1
Russia	3	8,660	255	129.0	15.7
Turkey	4	1,112	465	23.8	15.0
China	5	1,337	2,882	386.0	16.7
USA	6	3,557	172	77.0	10.5
Total	136	15,813	22,274	850.1	521.1

Source: J. A. Hobson, *Imperialism*, The University of Michigan Press, 1965, p. 23.

During the late nineteenth century the decline of Great Britain and the emergence of the US as a world-class power stemmed from the economic conditions of both countries. In 1880 the UK produced 22.9 percent of world manufacturing output, but by 1900 its share was only 18.5 percent; it had been overtaken by the economic achievement of the US, which had grown from 14.7 percent to 23.6 percent during the same period.⁷¹ Politically, the US then became a competing power against the UK in the Asia-Pacific, through Washington's active involvement in the region in the early twentieth century. However, the predominance of US sea power over Great Britain originated as a result of the former's victory in the Pacific War in the mid-1940s.

⁷⁰ J.A. Hobson, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

⁷¹ P. Bairoch, "International Industrialisation Levels from 1750 to 1980", *Journal of European Economic History*, vol. XI (1982), pp. 269-333, quoted by Anne Orde, *The Eclipse of Great Britain*, London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1996, p.1.

1.3.2 The Emergence of the US Navy

The US Continental Navy was established on 13 October 1775 to support the defence of the nation at sea. After the American Revolution, the US confronted severe budget constraints. By 1785 all US warships had been sold or disposed of, and until 1798 US merchant ships sailed unprotected.⁷² In the meantime, many officers and seamen were transferred to merchant shipping. In 1785 the Algerians, one of the Barbary States, captured two American commercial ships, and enslaved the crews.⁷³ After the incident the US government developed a plan to construct warships. The Congress subsequently passed the Navy Act of 1794, which provided for the purchase or building of six frigates, and in that year established the US Navy.⁷⁴ In 1796, to repatriate its crews, the US signed a treaty with Algeria, agreeing to provide the latter with ransom of US\$525,000, a 36-gun frigate, and a US\$21,000 annual tribute in the form of naval stores.⁷⁵ To counter the harassment of French and Barbary pirates, the US Congress established the Department of the Navy on 30 April 1798.⁷⁶ After the foundation of the department, the US constructed three 44-gun frigates, and began hunting armed French vessels in the West Indies, the quasi-war with France (1798-1801). After its victory in this conflict, the US navy engaged a war with Tripoli between 1801 and 1805 in the Mediterranean, and crushed the Algerian fleet.⁷⁷ When Napoleon declared war with Britain, the US Navy once again became involved in a war with France in 1812. After a series of victories the US emerged as a major sea power with its Constitution-class frigates and a corps of skilled officers.⁷⁸

⁷² 1996 Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc., (CD resource).

⁷³ E. B. Potter, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

The Barbary States include Morocco, Algeria, Tunis and Tripoli, which had been controlled by the Ottoman Turkey between sixteenth century and nineteenth century.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 86.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ 1996 Encyclopaedia Britannica Inc., (CD Resource).

⁷⁷ E. B. Potter, *op. cit.*, p. 94.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the British Navy, which had dominated the seas since the 1805 Trafalgar campaign, was confronted by three emerging naval powers: the US, which defeated the Spanish fleet in the Philippines and Cuba; Germany, which launched an ambitious shipbuilding program to contest Britain's command of the North Sea; and Japan, which defeated the fleets of China and Russia.⁷⁹ The 1898 Spanish-American War was the turning point for the US Navy to become a major world maritime power. On 13 August 1898, under the combined operations of its army and naval forces, the US occupied Manila after light resistance from the Spanish fleet.⁸⁰ In 1900, the US Navy was the first to commission a submarine, the *Holland*, and it established its naval aviation unit in 1912 with three planes purchased from Curtis and the Wright Brothers.⁸¹ With these newly developed weapon systems, the US Navy became a most formidable sea power in the world.

During the First World War, the US Navy did not engage in a sea battle. However, the number of its ships increased eightfold during the war period, and it transported about 2,000,000 US troops to France. It also patrolled the North Atlantic sea-lanes to protect Allied commerce shipping from German U-boats, and to lay anti-submarine mines in the North Sea.⁸² In the 1930s, the US naval budget exceeded that of the British navy for the first time since America had established its naval force (See Table 1.4).

Table 1.4 Naval Budget of Selected Countries (in £ million)

Year	Britain	France	US	Germany	Japan	Russia
1886	13.5	7.5	3.3	2.5	-	4.0
1900	27.5	12.5	10.0	7.5	-	9.0
1912	44.0	17.0	26.0	22.0	9.5	17.5
1934	55.5	22.0	57.5	-	41.5	-

Source: Admiral Sir Herbert Richmond, *Sea Power in the Modern World*, London: G. Bell & Sons Ltd., 1934, p. 3.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 196.

⁸⁰ Dudley W. Knox, *A History of United States Navy*, New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1936, P. 364.

⁸¹ E. B. Potter, *op. cit.*, p. 197

⁸² 1996 Encyclopaedia Britannica Inc., (CD Resource).

After World War II, the US Navy emerged as the leading world sea power. Although the Pearl Harbor attack was a serious blow for the US Navy, the American response helped their military leaders restore their self-esteem and fighting spirit. The US response to the Japanese developed not only through military means but also political measures. In February 1942, the Roosevelt administration conducted the forced evacuation and internment of 120,000 Japanese-Americans in California, Oregon, and Washington for their alleged suspicious intelligence support towards their home country, Japan.⁸³ In the Midway naval campaign of June 1942, the US navy achieved a tremendous victory over the Japanese navy. By the end of campaign, the Americans had destroyed four Japanese carriers, one heavy cruiser, one oil tanker, and damaged another heavy cruiser and three destroyers, inflicting losses of 330 aircraft and 3,500 lives. In contrast, the US lost one carrier, one destroyer, 100 planes and 300 men.⁸⁴ The battle of Midway gave the US Navy its first decisive victory over the Japanese Navy since the attack on Pearl Harbor.

After the Midway campaign, the US counteroffensive operation against Japan was launched in two directions: an island-hopping campaign by aircraft carriers across the central Pacific; and a drive by the American army under General Douglas MacArthur from the northern coast of New Guinea and other islands toward the Philippines.⁸⁵ By the summer of 1944 American naval forces reached Saipan, from which land-based bombers could strike Japanese cities, and in October of the same year MacArthur's forces landed on Leyte Island in the Philippines. In April 1945 Americans landed on

⁸³ William R. Keylor, *The Twentieth-Century World*, 3rd Ed., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996, p. 242.

⁸⁴ Frank Pearce, *Sea War*, London: Robert Hale, 1990, p. 193.

Midway lies about halfway between Japan and the western coast of America and about a thousand miles west of Pearl Harbor (p. 177).

⁸⁵ William R. Keylor, *op. cit.*, p. 244.

Okinawa, where they destroyed the remnants of the Japanese navy, cutting the supply lines for Japan's military forces abroad.⁸⁶

When his military advisers asserted that the amphibious invasion of the Japanese islands would cost almost fifty thousand American lives and prolong the war for another six months, President Truman ordered the dropping of atomic bombs over Hiroshima and Nagasaki on 6 and 9 August 1945 respectively.⁸⁷ Although the atomic bombs were the final tools with which Washington forced Tokyo to capitulate, the role of the US naval forces in World War II should not be underestimated. America's total naval blockade and bombardment would most likely have starved the Japanese into submission within a few months by depriving their people of the food and fuel they needed to survive.⁸⁸ The overwhelming victory in the Pacific War by the US forces gave the American navy a Pacific supremacy as well as culminating the US as a global sea power from that time onwards.

1.3.3 Asian Sea Powers

By the end of first century AD, Chinese fleets had established trade routes not only along regional seas but also throughout the Indian Ocean and by way of the Red Sea into the Roman Empire.⁸⁹ This Chinese seafaring adventurism was the root of China's maritime tradition. China's sea power tradition will be discussed in "Chapter Two".

Korea's Sea Power Tradition

Korea is a peninsular country and has more than 3,000 islands within its territory. However, Korea's major security concern has long been the defence of its land border because, historically China and northern nomadic tribes were its primary foes. Korea has also preserved the tradition of maritime interests as well as coastal defence. The Paikjae

⁸⁶ Charles Messenger, *The Century of Warfare*, London: Harper Collins Publishers, 1995, pp. 254-57.

⁸⁷ William R. Keylor, *op. cit.*, p. 245.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 246.

⁸⁹ Michael H. Sedge, *Commercialisation of the Ocean*, New York: Franklin Watts, 1987, p. 20.

dynasty, one of the Korean Peninsula's Three Kingdoms, invaded China's Shantung Peninsula and successfully established a large colony there in the fourth century AD.⁹⁰ Admiral Uno of Shilla, one of the Three Kingdoms, established its naval fleet in 223 AD, and repelled the Japanese intruders near Yongdok on the East Sea, sinking many Japanese vessels.⁹¹ The Korean people have traditionally been inclined to a land-oriented spirit rather than toward sea-faring adventures. Koreans' reluctance to go to sea may have come from their Central Asian background and the influence of China, which also preferred using calmer inland waters to conduct its trade and diplomatic contacts.⁹² Throughout its history, Korea's major security concern was the defence of its northern land border with Manchuria, with the exception of two Japanese invasions from the southern sea; the first in the late sixteenth century, and the second in the early twentieth century. As Roger Tennant indicates, "In Korea, coastal defences were on a provincial basis with no separate naval ranks for officers – they were appointed indifferently to land or sea".⁹³ However, there were some notable maritime forerunners in Korean history. These include Chang Bogo (the King of the Yellow Sea) in the ninth century, Wang Kun (the Lord of One Hundred Ships) in the tenth century, and Yi Sun-sin (the world's first inventor of 'Iron-clad Turtle Ships') at the time of the Japanese invasion in the sixteenth-century.⁹⁴

The Japanese invaded Korea in May 1592 through the southern port city of Busan, and they reached Seoul some 18 days later. However, in July of the same year Korea was able to crush and defeat Japanese naval forces through the superiority of the Korean navy led by Admiral Yi Sun-sin, who destroyed and cut off the logistic lines of

⁹⁰ Hakkun Chang, *The Korean History in View of National Defence*, Seoul: Yonkyong Publishing Company, 1989, pp. 228-34, Quoted by Young-O Kang, "The Influence of Sea Power Upon National Development" in The Sejong Institute, ed., *Korea's Seapower and National Development in the Era of Globalisation*, Seoul: The Sejong Institute, 1995, p. 77.

⁹¹ Young-O Kang, *op. cit.*, pp. 80-81.

⁹² Roger Tennant, *A History of Korea*, London: Kegan Paul International, 1996, p. 7.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

the enemy.⁹⁵ Yi Sun-sin, ‘the Eastern Nelson’, effectively rammed the Japanese fleet with galleys of his own design, which were fitted with iron-plated turtleback gunboats.⁹⁶ The Japanese navy was no match for Admiral Yi Sun-sin’s tactics and the fighting spirit of Korean seamen, thus the Koreans were able to prevent the Japanese reinforcements from the sea. The Japanese were forced to agree to a truce because of the Korean’s control of sea-lanes and the Chinese intervention in the war. In November 1598, at the battle of Namhae Bay (the so-called Asian ‘Trafalgar’), Admiral Yi Sun-sin again crushed some 200 Japanese ships, nearly half of the enemy ships, and he was killed in the final battle with the fleeing Japanese navy.⁹⁷ Following their humiliating defeat by Admiral Yi in the Korean waters, the Japanese did not wage a naval challenge against Korea for nearly three centuries.

Japan’s Naval Expansion

As an insular nation, Japan had eagerly sought a seafaring strategy for its survival and expansionism. Although Japanese pirate attacks on the coastal villages of Korea, China, and Southeast Asian countries were rampant, the Japanese could not dominate the seas around East Asia until the late nineteenth century due to outbreaks of civil war and other internal strife within the Japanese state. The rise of Japanese naval power came with the American naval officer Commodore Perry’s active gunboat diplomacy in the 1850s. His efforts persuaded his Japanese counterpart to sign the 1854 Treaty of Kanagawa between the US and Japan. According to the treaty agreement the Japanese reluctantly opened the ports of Shimoda and Hokodate to American shipping and guaranteed the protection of American activity on their soil.⁹⁸ However, the biggest

⁹⁵ Choon Kun Lee, ‘Korea’s Maritime Strategy and National Development’ in The Sejong Institute, ed., *Korea’s Seapower and National Development in the Era of Globalisation*, Seoul: The Sejong Institute, 1995, p. 124.

⁹⁶ E. B. Potter, *op. cit.*, p. 164.

Admiral Yi defeated the Japanese navy over 200 years before the Battle of Trafalgar, thus Nelson could be called ‘the Western Yi Sun-sin.’

⁹⁷ Anthony Bruce and William Cogar, *An Encyclopaedia of Naval History*, Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers, 1998, p. 199.

⁹⁸ E.B. Potter, *op. cit.*, p. 165.

impact of the treaty was that it introduced Japan to the idea of becoming a westernised country in terms of naval warships and social systems.

During the period of the Meiji Restoration (which began in 1864), Japan became a modern sea power state. Subsequently, it established large dockyards in the Yokosuka naval base in 1865, and sent its naval officers to the US and Britain to learn shipbuilding techniques and advanced naval doctrine. Japan negotiated a frontier agreement with Russia in 1875, surrendering its claims of Sakhalin to Russia in exchange for the Kurile Islands. In 1879, Japan was able to incorporate the Ryukyu (Okinawa) Islands, which had been part of the Chinese tributary, and to take initiative on Korea in 1894, sending troops to renounce the presence of the Chinese in Korea.⁹⁹ The aggressive Japanese policy toward Korea incited China's involvement in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95. Russia, which had built the Trans-Siberian Railway in the 1890s, and secured dominance in Manchuria, involved itself deeply in developing a sphere of influence on the Korean peninsula and intervened in Japanese interests in Port Arthur. This development triggered the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05. The Japanese navy achieved its reputation through overwhelming victories in both the Sino-Japanese War and the Russo-Japanese War. As a result of the wars, the Japanese navy became a great sea power in East Asia.

In 1937, Japan waged a historic war against China. In November 1939, the Japanese government declared "The New Order in East Asia", under the pretext of securing international justice, perfecting the joint defence against communism, and realising close economic cohesion throughout East Asia.¹⁰⁰ These machinations met with harsh resistance from the Chinese. In September 1940, Japan signed the Tripartite Treaty with Germany and Italy, and Hitler pushed his Oriental partner into a decisive war with the US.¹⁰¹ The Japanese concealed their intention to wage a war with the US, and

⁹⁹ R. H. P. Mason and J. G. Caiger, *A History of Japan*, Melbourne: Cassell Australia, 1972, pp. 221-23.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 292.

¹⁰¹ S. E. Smith, ed., *The United States Navy in World War II*, 1967, p. 1.

instead concluded six agreements with Washington in the fall of 1941. The six agreements were: no further assistance by Washington to Chiang Kai-shek; no arms build-up by the US and Britain in the Far East; no interference with Japanese-French relations in Indochina; American assistance in obtaining raw materials by the restoration of free trade between the two countries; no utilisation of Indochina as a base of operations against any country except China; and Japan to guarantee the neutrality of the Philippines.¹⁰²

Japan's diplomatic calculations also extended toward the Soviet Union. In February of the same year, Japan concluded a non-aggression pact with the Soviet Union, which had to prepare measures against a German attack on its western front, while Japan wanted to protect the Manchurian border from the Soviets incursion.¹⁰³ Both parties regarded the pact as necessary, allowing each to concentrate their war efforts on regions of more immediate dangers.

The US remained a thorny opponent for Japan's supply of war materials from the Southeast Asian region. In late 1941, the newly formed Tojo cabinet proposed to Washington that if the US normalised trade relations with Japan, and supported the Japanese acquisition of the Dutch East Indies, Japan would withdraw from Indochina and China.¹⁰⁴ Washington immediately rejected the proposal. Therefore Tokyo decided to attack the US and made a blueprint for the future war. This included; an amphibious operation against Luzon, Guam, the Malay Peninsula, Hong Kong, and British Borneo; a carrier-borne air attack on the US Pacific Fleet in Pearl Harbor; the seizure of Manila, Mindanao, Wake Island, Bangkok, and Singapore; the occupation of the Dutch East Indies; and the continuation of war with China.¹⁰⁵ Japan's Pearl Harbor attack was one of the most brilliant surprise attacks in modern war history. The Japanese destroyed most

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, pp. 1-2.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹⁰⁴ Charles Messenger, *op. cit.*, p. 230.

¹⁰⁵ S. E. Smith, ed., *The United States Navy in World War II*, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

of the 84 warships that were stationed at the naval base with their air strike launched from six aircraft carriers on Sunday morning of 7 December 1941. However, US aircraft carriers, *Lexington* and *Enterprise*, and seven cruisers under a patrolling mission to the southern and southwestern Pacific Ocean survived, and with these the US Navy was able to rebuild its forces.

The early 1940s were clearly seen as an era of a rising Japan. Having seized the coastal region of China, the Japanese in 1942 quickly destroyed European colonial powers from the Philippines to Burma, Singapore and the East Indies, and harassed the northern coast of Australia. However, by mid-1945, Japan lost most of its occupied territories. Furthermore, its islands were exposed to the massive American naval and air assault. After the dropping of two atomic bombs on their soil, the Japanese had to accept unconditional surrender. The Japanese goal of a 'Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere' and the declaration of war with the US were proved from the beginning to be reckless attempts. Although the Japanese navy was totally crushed by the US Navy by mid-1945, the former had played a significant role in subjugating Southeast Asian countries and the islands of the Pacific during the early 1940s. Moreover, the Japanese navy greatly contributed to its national identity as a sea power in the Asia-Pacific region.

1.4 The Nature of the Naval Power Today

As many European countries competitively launched their expeditions, naval power was a crucial factor in order to expand their colonies and to protect resources from the colonies. Even though Napoleon, Hitler and Stalin had been successful in occupying neighbouring countries through their formidable ground forces, France, Germany and the Soviet Union could not attain the status of such maritime powers as Portugal, Netherlands, Britain and the US.¹⁰⁶ Sea power was the primary means by

¹⁰⁶ Choon Kun Lee, "Korea's Maritime Strategy and National Development", *op. cit.*, p. 123.

which such nations were able to occupy territories and impose colonial rule over vast lands in the African, Asian and American continents.

The role of naval force today has transformed from a primarily aggressive means of gaining power to a more flexible economic, political and diplomatic tool. Naval power continues to be used as a tool to protect a nation's commercial shipping, fishing industries and offshore resources. It is also used to defend a nation's claims to disputed islands or parts of seabed, and it can promote national prestige through a show of force on the high seas, port calls and joint exercises with other countries. Possession of a strong navy with aircraft carriers, sophisticated submarines and submarine launched ballistic missiles, guarantees the ability of a country to expand its territory. In the case of a nuclear-power state, it is essential for such a nation to have ability to carry and launch nuclear weapons in submarines. It is a much safer and more flexible option than to store such weapons on land territory. In fact, the role of the navy is becoming more diverse and strategically important, hence many countries try to enhance their naval capability. As the US Navy emphasises, "Some observers have characterised the twentieth century as 'the American Century', and others are now predicting the twentieth-first century will be 'the Naval Century'; an era in which naval and maritime power will be even more critical elements of national power and prestige".¹⁰⁷

In the development of modern naval strategy, especially prominent had been the ideas of Liddell Hart, Alfred Thayer Mahan and Sir Julian Corbett. They emphasised the future role of the naval force in unison. Liddell Hart elaborates, "Tactically, a navy is inherently more offensive than an army, since the sea offers it no ground for standing on the defensive, while strategically a navy is inherently more limited in offensive power than an army, because it is confined to the sea".¹⁰⁸ Furthermore, he argues that a navy

¹⁰⁷ The US Navy, "Vision...Presence...Power: A Program Guide to the US Navy", 1999 Edition.
<http://chinfo.navy.mil/navpalib/vision/vis99/v99-ch1a.html> (Internet Accessed, on 14 January 2000)

¹⁰⁸ Liddell Hart, *Thoughts on War*, London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1943, p. 167.

can be used to sweep the opponent's commerce off the seas, to isolate its colonies, and to close its ports so that food and other supplies cannot reach its people.¹⁰⁹ As one of the most influential thinkers of naval doctrine in the twentieth century, Alfred Thayer Mahan greatly influenced the development of the US naval doctrine.¹¹⁰ In his famous book, '*The Influence of Sea Power upon History 1660-1873*', he argued that naval power was the key to success in international politics.¹¹¹ Sir Julian Corbett also pointed out that "The objective of naval warfare must always be directly or indirectly either to secure the command of the sea or to prevent the enemy from securing it".¹¹² He also indicated that the command of the sea meant nothing but the control of maritime communication, whether for commercial or military purposes.¹¹³ Throughout the twentieth century, the maritime strategy of Mahan and Corbett has greatly influenced the development of the navies of the US and Britain as well as other sea power states.

The role of a nation's navy is important both economically and militarily. However, it is also true that a navy alone cannot do everything in the pursuit of a nation's interests without the help of other services such as an army and an air force. When it comes to the history of the British dominance on the world stage from the nineteenth century to the early twentieth century, the combination of land and sea powers was a driving force. In this context, naval strategy has to be seen not as a separate entity but as part of a country's total force. Leo Amery, advocating that a great power must possess land power as well as sea power, indicates that "sea power alone, if it is not based on great industry and has a great population behind it, is too weak to really maintain itself in the world struggle".¹¹⁴ The Allied consolidated operation in the

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ Mahan (1840-1914) was born in West Point, New York, and his works had a major influence on the growth of world naval power.

¹¹¹ Electric Library, Encyclopaedia. Com.

<http://encyclopedia.com/printable/07883.html> (Internet Accessed, on 11 December 1999)

¹¹² Julian S. Corbett, *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy*, London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1988, p. 91.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 94.

¹¹⁴ Eric Grove, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

final stage of World War II is a good example of the above concept. The victory of the Allied Air Forces on the Western Front during WWII, with the dropping of 14,500 tons of bombs and 150,000 troops on D-Day, successfully neutralised much of the German's land power and allowed the Allies to use the sea to put ashore a huge army and its supplies.¹¹⁵ Between June 6 and June 15, 1944, the Allies' half a million men and 77,000 vehicles successfully landed and crushed German forces.¹¹⁶ The Allied operation demonstrates that the combined campaign of land, sea and air forces could maximise combat effectiveness. In the Second World War, the role of the navy was an important part of the Allied effort to defeat the naval forces of the Axis. After the war, the US Navy built *Nautilus* (1954), the world's first nuclear-powered submarine, the *Enterprise* (1961), the first nuclear-powered aircraft carrier, and adopted cruisers and submarines for the firing of guided missiles.¹¹⁷ The navy has since emerged as a backbone of the US military. As such, many nations have realised the important role of the navy in their national security.

How can the navy operate more successfully? The maritime combat capability can be enhanced through the combined efforts of the Navy and Marine Corps. As the US Navy asserts, "The value of Navy-Marine Corps Team's unique presence, crisis response, and combat capabilities has been continually underscored as the naval services redefine their future of vision, of presence and of power."¹¹⁸ Another important factor for effective naval operation would be forward naval presence, which ensures that a naval force conducts immediate responses to the operational range of many of the world's capital cities, nearly all the major market places of international trade, and all the important routes of sea transport.¹¹⁹ Since the post-Cold War period and the Gulf War,

¹¹⁵ Charles Messenger, *op. cit.*, pp. 207-08.

¹¹⁶ Eric Grove, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

¹¹⁷ 1996 Encyclopaedia Britannica Inc., (CD Resource).

¹¹⁸ The US Navy, Vision...Presence...Power, *op. cit.*

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

maritime strategy has been defined as preventing war through naval presence and the ability to respond immediately with naval power and the Marine's operational manoeuvres from the sea to win a war.¹²⁰ US global presence, for example, ensures freedom of navigation on international trade routes and supports US efforts to bring excessive maritime claims into compliance with the international law of the sea.¹²¹

Even after the end of the Cold War, international systems have been dominated by the concept of power politics. As Hans J. Morgenthau indicates, nation-state behaviour is based on national interest (defined in terms of power) as the normal objective pursued by governments.¹²² Although most contemporary thinkers in international relations regard power not as an undisciplined destructive entity, but as a combination of persuasive influence and coercive force,¹²³ power is still the most important factor in the implementation of national strategy. China, as an emerging sea power, is enhancing its war fighting capability through military modernisation. Given its national policy of unification with Taiwan, the exclusive sovereignty over the South China Sea, and the securing of sea-lanes along the Western Pacific and the Indian Ocean, China clearly pursues the goal of becoming a great sea power. China's naval ambition and US naval predominance in the Asia-Pacific will become a source of concern for the security of the region. In this context, a sea challenge between great sea powers is more likely than any ground battle.

In today's world, nations are globally connected. Military and political crisis in one region can bring economic uncertainty and panic in other places, as the global economy becomes more and more interdependent.¹²⁴ The more frequently the global

¹²⁰ George Baer, "Alfred Thayer Mahan and the Utility of US Naval Forces Today", in Andrew Dorman, Mike Lawrence Smith and Matthew R. H. Utley, eds., *The Changing Face of Maritime Power*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999, p. 15.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

¹²² James E. Dougherty and Robert L. Pfaltzgraff, Jr., *Contending Theories of International Relations*, 4th Ed., New York: Longman, 1996, p. 14.

¹²³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ The US Navy, "Vision...Presence...Power", *op. cit.*

strategic environment changes, the more significantly the role of naval forces increases. The uncertainty and instability of the world will require an increasing presence of the navy, and combined efforts with other services in the future. China has long adhered to a continental power policy, but in today's strategic environment, it clearly intends to boost its maritime ambitions towards the regional waters and world oceans. Although China's naval power is not yet strong, nonetheless it pursues a dream of blue-water naval capability. This policy comes from a desire to have a formidable naval force as well as to compete against the US naval domination in the Asia-Pacific region.

Chapter Two

Chinese Sea Power and the Century of Humiliation

2.1 Origins of China's Sea Power

China's maritime tradition dates to the Shang dynasty, the first Chinese historic kingdom established in 1500 BC.¹ It is said that the Chinese are composed of two peoples: the inland people speaking Tibeto-Burman language; and the eastern and southern Yi people, linked linguistically to the Khmers and Austronesians.² The Yi people cultivated wet-rice agriculture and used longboats. When the Qin dynasty was founded on the Liaodong Peninsula in 221 BC, the emperor ordered the building of a great wall, or a line of fortifications in the northern frontier to block invasion by the steppe tribes.³ By 214 BC, Qin Shihuangdi became a ruler of a vast nation, extending to the south coast of Chenkiang, Fujian, Guangdong and Tongking, and as far as to the South China Sea.⁴ A hundred years later, the Han domain stretched from the Gulf of Tongking to the Persian Empire. During the Han dynasty, as many as twenty to thirty thousand men with several thousand boats conducted river battles, and these boats voyaged regularly to Indonesia.⁵

During the Sui and Tang dynasties, embassies from various countries came to the Chinese imperial court, and students and monks also arrived there to study the Chinese culture and religion.⁶ The Chinese court regarded foreign emissaries as tribute missions;

¹ Louise Levathes, *When China Ruled the Seas*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994, p. 27.

² *Ibid.*, p. 23.

³ J. A. G. Roberts, *A History of China, Volume I*, London: Alan Sutton Publishing Ltd., 1996, p. 39.

⁴ Wang Gungwu, *The Nanhai Trade*, Singapore: Times Academic Press, 1958, p. 3.

The South China Sea extends from the port of Fuzhou to the Palembang in the west, and from Formosa to Borneo in the east, and it is roughly equivalent to the Nanhai or Southern Sea mentioned in ancient Chinese records.

⁵ Louise Levathes, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

⁶ J.A.G. Roberts, *A History of China, Volume I, op. cit.*, p. 120.

thus the Chinese Emperor received gifts, and in return he rewarded them with Chinese artefacts and trading rights. Therefore, trade and tribute were closely connected in the initial stages of relations between China and its neighbouring countries. As a whole, trade and tribute became central to the process of developing diplomatic relations between China and other countries. This tribute-trade link provided neighbouring countries with China's protection of their national security, in return for economic cooperation with China. Silk was China's major export item along the overland trade routes in the first century of the Christian era, but in the sea routes Chinese fine porcelain became the impetus for the Indian Ocean trade in the seventh century.⁷ The Chinese exchanged their silk for other luxury goods such as ivory, pearls, tortoise shells, kingfisher and peacock feathers, rhinoceros horns, cinnamon and scented woods.⁸ These exotic artefacts attracted the court as well as noblemen, thus accelerating China's trade and maritime expeditions to southern states. Such trade relations also allowed China to expand its sphere of influence over the surrounding nations, and to make those peoples admit China's suzerainty over them.

The Emperor Yang of the Sui dynasty (AD 589-618) pursued a policy of active foreign trade and maritime expansionism toward the Nanyang (south ocean in Chinese), by invading Champa in 605 and Okinawa in 607.⁹ Since its foundation in 618, the Tang dynasty greatly flourished, with international trade with India, Persia, Southeast Asia and as far as the distant shores of Africa.¹⁰ This dynasty also stimulated and expanded the role of the Malays in trade and shipping, and ultimately led to the rise of Srivijaya Kingdom (from the seventh to the fourteenth century), which dominated the Nanyang

⁷ Louise Levathes, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

⁸ Wang Gungwu, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

⁹ Jane Kate Leonard, *Wei Yuan and China's Rediscovery of the Maritime World*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984, p. 36.

Nan-yang means southern ocean in Chinese, in broad terms, maritime Asia.

¹⁰ Louise Levathes, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

trade until the eleventh century.¹¹ In the eighth century, the Tang dynasty set up “the Bureau of Merchant Shipping” to monitor the flow of goods to and from China, and at that time some two hundred thousand Persians, Arabs, Indians and Malays lived in Guangzhou as traders, artisans and metalworkers.¹²

China’s sustained maritime expansion came with the Northern Song dynasty (960-1127) and the early part of the Ming dynasty (1368-1644).¹³ During the Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), seafaring activities were so common that Emperor Gaozong (1127-1162) transferred the Song capital from Kaifeng to the port city of Hangzhou due to the threat from the northern tribes, and he established China’s first permanent navy to protect its new capital.¹⁴ In 1132, the Song navy was established as an independent branch of the military.¹⁵ The Song navy grew rapidly from a force of merchant vessels and coastal patrol boats to a fighting fleet, and by the early thirteenth century it controlled the East China Sea from Fujian province to Japan and Korea.¹⁶ In 1237, the Song navy was composed of 52,000 sailors and six hundred ships, which were equipped with battering rams, catapults and various incendiary weapons.¹⁷ Since the early thirteenth century, however, the navy was commanded not by naval officers but by the imperial court, thus the navy was weakened and defeated by eight hundred Mongol warships near Guangzhou in 1279.¹⁸ While its navy was strong, the Song dynasty flourished. With the decline of the navy, the Song dynasty could not survive before the invasion of the formidable Mongol army and navy.

¹¹ Jane Kate Leonard, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

¹² Louise Levathes, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

¹³ Hans van Tilburg, “Chinese Maritime History and Nautical Archaeology”, *The Western Australian Maritime Museum Bulletin* 18-2, 23 November 2000.

http://www.mm.wa.gov.au/Museum/aima/bulletins/bulletin18_2/China.html (Internet Accessed: 14 April 2001)

¹⁴ Louise Levathes, *op. cit.*, pp. 41-42.

¹⁵ Jane Kate Leonard, *op. cit.*, pp. 44-45.

¹⁶ Louise Levathes, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

Historically, the Chinese civilisation originated from the inner land, the Huang He Plain far from the mouth of the Yangtze River.¹⁹ China was first and foremost a continental power, whose greatest threats came from the Mongols and Manchus, living along its northern land borders. Throughout its history China had only experienced two periods of non-Chinese rule: for less than a hundred years under Mongol rule (in the fifteenth century); and from the mid-seventeenth century until the early twentieth century under the Manchu rule. During the Mongol rule, Khubilai Khan attempted to occupy Japan twice, in 1274 and in 1281. In their first attack, the Mongols landed on Kyushu (one of the main islands of Japan) with 900 ships and 40,000 men. But they had to retreat due to the strong resistance of the 120,000 strongmen Japanese army, and, to make matters worse; when they arrived on their ships a heavy storm smashed the Mongol fleet. For their next attack, the Mongols used more than 4,500 ships and 150,000 troops in the second Kyushu Island operation. The Japanese set fire to many of the Mongol ships, and when, eventually, Mongol forces retreated, a strong storm struck the Mongol fleet. The Japanese were successful in protecting their country from the Mongol invasion, fortuitously using the timely storms. Thus, the Japanese believed their islands were protected by divine winds, which they call *Kamikaze*.²⁰ The Mongol's attempts to invade Japan ended in failure, and from that time no Sino-Japanese naval rivalry existed until the late nineteenth century.

However, the ambitious Mongol navy invaded Annam and Java, and brought these under their suzerainty. At the same time, the Khan's envoys had been dispatched as far as Madagascar. Despite its earlier success in internal and external expansionism, the Chinese resentment of the Mongol occupation and inadequate support for its military establishments gradually weakened the Mongol dynasty. Eventually, powerful rebel

¹⁹ Wang Gungwu, *op. cit.*, p. 1.

²⁰ Louise Levathes, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

leader Zhu Yuanzhang, who in 1368 became the first emperor of the Ming dynasty, crushed the Mongol dynasty.²¹

2.2 The Ming Dynasty's Ambitious Sea Adventure

In the early years of the Ming dynasty the Chinese had actively engaged in sea-borne trade throughout the Asian region, thereby becoming a great sea power, and waging their maritime influence over significant sections of the Asian and African continents. However, China never attempted to occupy other nations with its naval forces. China's benign foreign policy initiative was closely related to the Chinese perception of their neighbours. In fact, the Chinese thought that there were no significant outside 'barbarians' to pose a substantial threat to China, except the Mongols from the north, and Japanese pirates on the eastern and southern coastlines of China. To counter these challenges, China established fortifications along its northern border and seaside towns; accordingly naval escorts were required to protect merchant ships along its adjacent waters.²²

Since the Shang dynasty (1765-1122 BC), palace eunuchs called *huanguan* had become influential through their positions as chamberlains and court guards for the emperor.²³ When Emperor Hongwu founded the Ming dynasty in 1368, he reduced the number of eunuchs. More importantly, he banned the eunuchs' interference in the governmental affairs because the eunuchs were deeply involved in the politics of the Yuan court. However, Emperor Yongle (1402-1424), who was enthroned through a coup made possible with the assistance of the eunuchs, rewarded them with various positions, including those of generals, admirals, diplomats, explorers, architects, engineers, and administrators, largely at the expense of Confucian officials and

²¹ J.A.G. Roberts, *A History of China, Volume I, op. cit.*, p. 178.

²² Wolfram Eberhard, *A History of China*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971, p. 251.

²³ Shih-shan Henry Tsai, *The Eunuchs in the Ming Dynasty*, Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1996, p.11.

professional soldiers.²⁴ In the usurpation, Zheng He, as a eunuch, had played a significant role for Emperor Yongle, and thus became one of the most trusted governmental officials under the new emperor.²⁵ At that time the eunuchs urged that China's power should be projected to the outside world, and thus naval forces were enhanced rapidly. However, the eunuchs' policy was at odds with Confucian scholars and officials, who had historically favoured the more traditional conservative values of self-sufficiency, agrarian virtue and imperial isolation. At the time of Yongle's reign, there were approximately 10,000 eunuchs in the Ming Dynasty.²⁶ They were deeply involved in military affairs, and played a decisive role in the development of the navy.

Encouraged by ascendant eunuchs, in 1403 Emperor Yongle ordered the Fujian, Suzhou, Hunan and Guangdong provinces to produce 337 ocean-going ships. As a result, from 1404 to 1407, as many as 1,681 ships were constructed and refitted by the order of the emperor. For this shipbuilding project, more than four hundred households of carpenters, sail-makers, and shipwrights from almost all the coastal provinces were transferred to Longjiang shipyard.²⁷ During the reign of Yongle, the Longjiang shipyard nearly doubled in size, surpassing the Suzhou shipyard as the country's largest shipbuilding centre in its history, comprising seven 1,500-foot-long dry docks.²⁸

Between 1405 and 1433, seven maritime expeditions were conducted. The court eunuch Zheng He, who, as a former Muslim, was well chosen to negotiate with the Muslim leaders of Arab and African nations, headed each expedition.²⁹ The purpose of these maritime expeditions was to inform the countries visited that China, as a strong

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 64.

²⁵ Kuei-Sheng Chang, "The Ming Maritime Enterprise and China's Knowledge of Africa prior to the Age of Great Discoveries", in Felipe Fernandez-Armesto, ed., *An Expanding World: The Global Opportunity*, Brookfield, Vermont: Variorum, 1995, P. 124.

²⁶ Shih-shan Henry Tsai, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 76.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 75-6.

²⁹ Gwendda Milston, *A Short History of China*, Melbourne: Cassell Australia, 1978, p. 204.

empire, had an advanced culture and political system, and had an intention to promote international trade.

The vessels of Zheng He's fleet were the largest in the world at the time. The largest ship was 444 feet in length by 180 feet in the beam, weighed 1,250 tons, and had a crew of more than 1,000 men (See Table 2.1).³⁰

Table 2.1 Ships Commanded by Zheng He

Name of ships	Number of anchors	Length	Width	Total numbers
Treasury ship	9	444 ft.	180 ft.	36
Horse ship	8	370 ft.	150 ft.	700
Grain ship	7	280 ft.	120 ft.	240
Billet ship	6	240 ft.	94 ft.	300
Combat ship	5	180 ft.	68 ft.	180

Source: Shin-shan Henry Tsai, *The Eunuchs in the Ming Dynasty*, p. 161.

His first three voyages were to India, with visits to many ports en route; the fourth went beyond India to Hormuz; and the last three covered ports on the east coast of Africa, as far south as Malindi, where Song porcelains and copper coins have been found.³¹ Zheng He's expeditions were carried out in the reigns of Yongle (1403-24) and Hsuante (1425-35). The dates and routes of his seven maritime expeditions are as follow (See Figure 2.1):³²

1.1405-07: Champa (Southeast coast of Vietnam), Java, Sumatra, Malacca, Ceylon, Calicut (West coast of southern India).

2. 1407-09: Calicut, Cochin and Ceylon. Zheng He put up a stele there proclaiming that the three kingdoms were vassals of the Ming Emperor.

3. 1409-11: Siam, Malacca, Malabar Coast, and Ceylon.

4.1413-15: Calicut and Hormuz, at the entrance of the Persian Gulf. After leaving Sumatra, part of the fleet arrived in Aden and the eastern coast of Africa.

³⁰ Gwendda Milston, *op. cit.*, pp. 204, 208.

³¹ John King Fairbank, *China : A New History*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992, p. 138

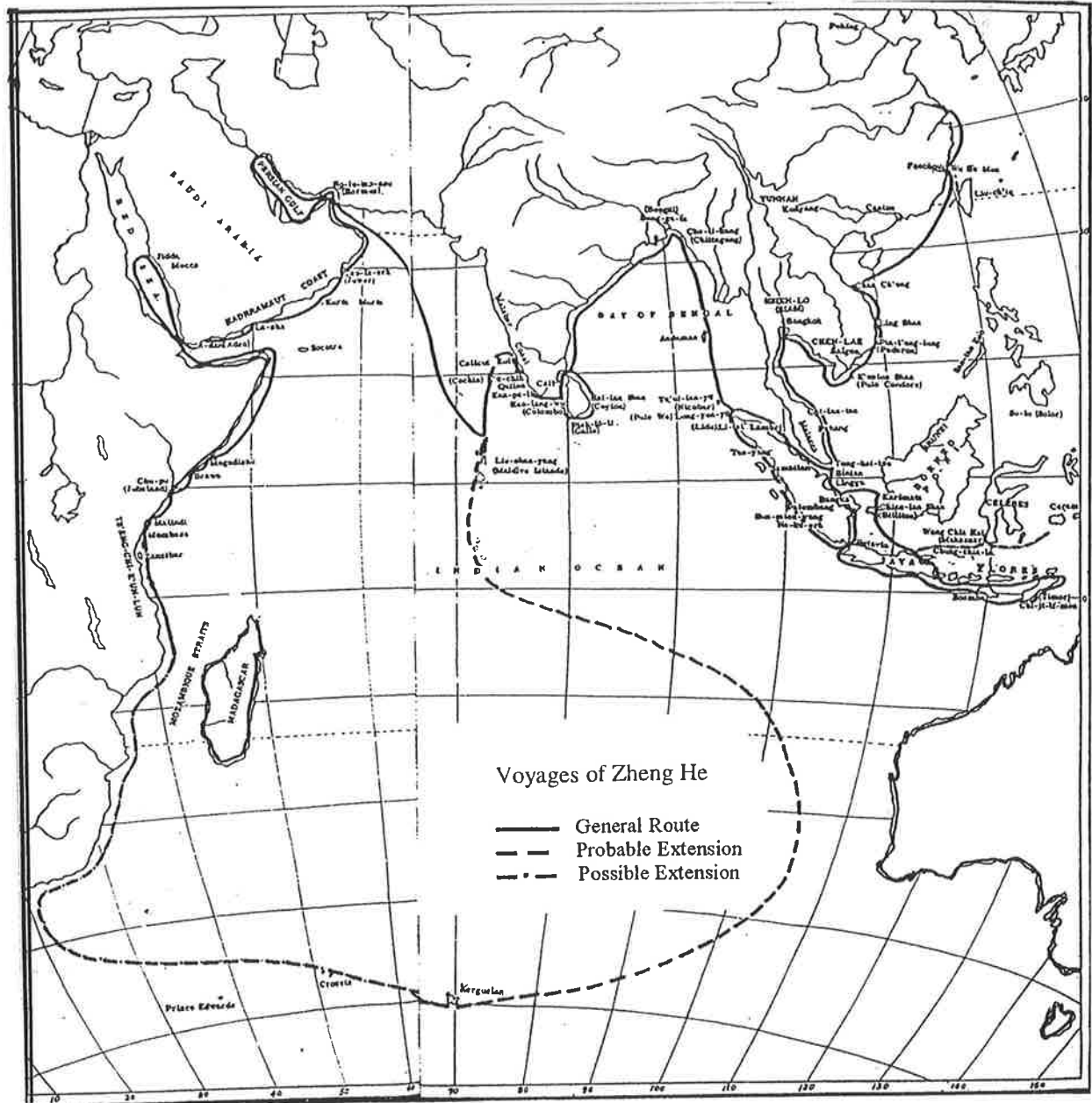
³² Jacques Gernet, *A History of Chinese Civilisation*, 2nd Ed., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, p. 401.

5. 1417-19: Hormuz again. Part of the fleet sailed from Sumatra to the coast of Somaliland and Aden.

6. 1421-22: Zheng He's fleet went to Sumatra, while another fleet went to East Africa and the Persian Gulf.

7. 1431-33: Champa, Java, Palembang (southeastern Sumatra), Malacca, and Hormuz. Part of the fleet sailed from Calicut to Jeddah, and the port of Mecca.

Figure 2.1 Zheng He's Voyages around Asia and Africa



Source: Kuei-Sheng Chang, "The Ming Maritime Enterprise and China's Knowledge of Africa prior to the Age of Great Discoveries" in Felipe Fernandez-Armesto, ed., *The Global Opportunity*, Brookfield, Vermont: Variorum, 1995, pp. 122-23.

In the course of these voyages, the Chinese did not set out to conquer foreign lands, as the Portuguese and other European countries later did, but were attempting to extend their sphere of influence. Zheng He could have easily subjugated the people he encountered, but he only attempted to disseminate China's civilisation to the local inhabitants, to set up tributary missions, and to show China's largesse through the presentation of precious items, such as utensils, books and silk.³³ When Vasco da Gama rounded the Cape of Good Hope in 1498 on his way to Calicut, India, he heard from African village elders that 'white ghosts' wearing silk hats had visited their villages 80 years before, and had done so with much bigger ships than his.³⁴ These Chinese expeditions to more than 30 countries were basically good-will visits, with diplomatic and trade objectives at their heart. Following these expeditions, China's paper currency was used commonly throughout the expeditionary region, and China emerged as a commercial giant.³⁵

Zheng's last voyage involved 27,500 men and 300 ships. The ships had names especially given to show their supposed peacekeeping intent, such as "Pure Harmony," "Last Tranquillity," and "Kind Repose".³⁶ Qui Nhon, in southern Vietnam, was the first stop, followed by Surabaya on the northern coast of Java, Palembang in Sumatra, Malacca on the Malay Peninsula, and Ceylon. He finally arrived at Calicut on the western coast of India on 10 December 1432. Zheng He died during this voyage.

In 1433, after Zheng He's last expeditions, the Ming court gave up the idea of maritime expeditions. The main reasons for this were: the tremendous expense of the voyages; rivalry between eunuchs and Confucian officials, who opposed the eunuchs' power and their dominance in foreign trade; and the restoration and improvement of the

³³ Denny Roy, "The China Threat Issue: Major Arguments", *The Asian Survey*, vol. 36, no. 8, (August 1996), p. 763.

³⁴ Louise Levathes, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

³⁵ Gwendda Milston, *op. cit.*, p. 211.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 169-73.

Grand Canal.³⁷ As early as 1411 the canal had been repaired, and from 1415 onward most direct trade – especially crucial grain shipments from South to North – went by canal, evading the Japanese pirates, and eliminating the need for regular naval escorts. Furthermore, Yongle’s construction of a new capital in Beijing, and other costly projects of expansion, drew criticism from officials. This eventually led to the Confucians regaining control, subsequently closing down most maritime expeditions after his death.³⁸ Mongol attacks in the Northeast also caused official attention to be drawn away from the sea. Accordingly, the maritime activities were neglected and shipyards closed down one by one. The shipbuilding works shrank, and the pioneer spirit of maritime expeditions also gradually faded away.

On 14 September 1433, the ambassadors of Sumatra, Ceylon, Calicut, Cochin, Hormuz, Dhufar, Aden and the other Arab states paid tributes at Fengtien Palace (presenting horses, elephants and even a giraffe). In this respect, the King of Malacca came with a retinue of over two hundred people. In 1437, after paying tribute, the King of the Ryukyu Islands asked the emperor for new court costumes, but the emperor declined the king’s request. Little by little the Emperor Zhengtong (1436-49) became disinclined to exchange gifts with foreign envoys.³⁹ In 1449, the Mongols took Emperor Zhengtong prisoner. He was not released until 1457, and only then for a ransom. In 1525, an imperial edict ordered coastal authorities to destroy all ocean-going ships, to ban sea-faring activities, and to arrest the merchants who sailed the sea without authorisation to enhance the ground force to cope with the threats from the Mongols. Thus Chinese naval adventures eventually ceased completely. The development of guns and cannon was also sluggish, allowing the European powers to surpass the Chinese in shipbuilding industries and maritime expedition. Had China preserved its ambitious

³⁷ Wolfram Eberhard, *op. cit.*, p.268

³⁸ J.A.G. Roberts, *A History of China Volume I, op. cit.*, p.186

³⁹ Wolfram Eberhard, *op. cit.*, p. 174.

maritime strategy, it might not have suffered the invasions that would come as a result of European and Japanese imperialism.

After the sudden cessation of the ocean voyages in the 1430s, the Ming dynasty began to present a defensive attitude towards the outside world. The Ming government's foreign trade and contact had been cut off in about 1500, at the same time as the Mongol invaders and the Japanese pirates put pressure on China to open trade with them; eventually, in 1567, the Ming dynasty could not help but rescind the ban on foreign trade.⁴⁰ From the beginning of the sixteenth century, Japanese pirates' plundering became more and more aggressive. At times, the Japanese pirates took over the Chinese coastal villages, robbing and terrorising the inhabitants. The activities of Japanese pirates, dating back to the early fourteenth century, diminished remarkably during the heyday of the Ming court, but after the sudden suspension of maritime expeditions, they re-emerged along China's coastal towns. The former lord of the seas was now at the mercy of looters and bandits.⁴¹

2.3 Western and Japanese Naval Challenges

After the rule of Emperor Yongle, the weakness of later emperors and the machinations of their ministers and the eunuchs accelerated the fall of the Ming Dynasty and allowed the rise of the conquering Manchus. Furthermore, a series of droughts and famines led to the rise of rebellion across the country.

The Manchus were descended from the Jurchen, who invaded Northern China in the twelfth century and founded the Jurchen Jin dynasty (1115-1234). Their homeland was east of the Liao River, but in the early seventeenth century, under an ambitious ruler, Nurhachi (1559-1626), they conquered the Chinese-settled area of the Liao-River Basin, an agricultural region that had been under Chinese influence since the Han

⁴⁰ J.A.G. Roberts, *A History of China Volume I, op. cit.*, pp. 196-97.

⁴¹ Louise Levathes, *op. cit.*, p.181.

Dynasty (206 BC-AD 220). During the Manchu dynasty, the whole Manchu population was divided into eight groups, based on the Ming garrison army system. Each of eight groups was called a Banner, which represents a regional military and administrative body.⁴² A total of 169,000 warriors were involved in the Banners, half of them Manchus, the rest Mongols and Chinese. The Mongols were nomads who raised cattle and horses, and they were frequently in conflict with the Tatar and Jurchen.

In 1636, the Manchu State became the Ta Qing or the 'Great Pure' Dynasty.⁴³ The newly founded Qing dynasty expanded its territory in Inner Asia, especially into Mongolia, Tibet and Chinese Turkestan (Xinjiang). In 1759, the whole of Chinese Turkestan was pacified, and a military occupation followed. In 1768, the area known as the Hsiyu or Western region, was renamed Xinjiang, meaning "New Territory."⁴⁴ The Qing hegemony over Inner Asia after 1755 began a new era between agrarian China and the tribes of the steppe, and eventually China incorporated Inner Asia as its territory up until the early twentieth century. The Qing dynasty's north-oriented policy allowed China to control the marginal caravan routes in arid Central Asia, leaving the British to conquer both the Asian and the world seas after their victory in the Seven Years' War with France during the 1750s.⁴⁵

Ironically, China stopped maritime expeditions at a time when the European powers were trying to find a sea route to the Far East. From the 1440s Portugal attempted to find a passage to China via the western coast of Africa.⁴⁶ The Portuguese reached southern China in 1513.⁴⁷ The transition from the Ming to the Qing dynasty in

⁴² J.A.G. Roberts, *A History of China Volume I, op. cit.*, p. 202. Banner forces were mainly stationed around Beijing and other seven largest cities in China for garrisoning the country. A "niru" is composed of 300 households of warriors, five "nirus" formed a battalion, and ten battalions formed a banner

⁴³ Gwendda Milston, *op. cit.*, p.217

⁴⁴ Immanuel C.Y. Hsu, *The Rise of Modern China*, 5th Ed., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995, p. 40.

⁴⁵ John King Fairbank, *China, op. cit.*, pp. 152-53. The Seven Years' War is the struggle between the British and French in the 1750s, allowing the British to secure Canada and India (J. C. Reville, *World History*, pp. 430-53).

⁴⁶ Louise Levathes, *op. cit.*, p.280.

⁴⁷ Timothy Brook, *The Confusion of Pleasure*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998, p. 124.

the mid-1600s coincided with the arrival of Europeans as traders and Jesuit missionaries.⁴⁸ The first Westerners who came to China were Portuguese traders. Since 1517 Portugal had sought bilateral trade with China, which had refused the former's request. However, in 1549, unofficial trade between the two countries was flourishing on Shangchun Island, south of Macao. The island later became a legal treaty port in 1557, a first small but long-term European toehold in China.⁴⁹ In the meantime the Jesuits established a mission in Japan in 1577, and in 1601 the Italian Jesuit Matteo Ricci, after twenty years of negotiation with the Qing government, was given permission to reside in Beijing.⁵⁰ During the sixteenth century, China opened its doors to the Portuguese for the purpose of international trade, but this also marked the opening of Western intervention in China's economic and political arena.

The Dutch, who had established a trading station on Taiwan in 1624, were replaced by the Portuguese traders in southern China, and they were replaced by the British in 1637. In 1699 the 'Macclesfield', a ship belonging to the East India Company, reached Guangzhou and, subsequently, the British began to export Chinese tea to the European market. In 1792, Britain dispatched Lord Macartney to China to gain access to the market. The Qing authorities rejected his proposal because he refused to kowtow and went down on only one knee.⁵¹ The Qing government treated Macartney as an envoy bearing tribute, not as a representative of a modern state seeking to improve mutual trade relations.⁵² The Chinese believed that European countries were less developed than China, and that therefore it was not necessary for China to open trading

⁴⁸ John King Fairbank, *China, op. cit.*, p. 151.

⁴⁹ Timothy Brook, *op. cit.*, p. 124.

⁵⁰ J.A.G. Roberts, *Modern China: An Illustrated History*, London: Sutton Publishing, 1998, p.19.

⁵¹ Kowtow is an act of supplication made by an inferior to his superior by three-time kneelings and nine-time knockings of his forehead to the floor in token of homage, worship, or deep respect. After the Opium War, the kowtow requirement was abolished for Western envoys.

⁵² J.A.G. Roberts, *Modern China: An Illustrated History, op. cit.*, pp.19-22.

relations with European countries. The importation of opium, however, changed the entire dynamic of Sino-European relations.

The opium poppy was first introduced into China by the Arabs and Turks in the late seventh or early eighth century. The Chinese used it as medicine to relieve pain and reduce tensions, but it was not until the 1660s that opium smoking was used for pleasure.⁵³ In the early eighteenth century, the Qing government began to worry that widespread addiction to opium had become a serious threat to its people and its silver reserve, and eventually banned its use and sale in 1729, and its importation in 1776.⁵⁴ In fact, the demand for opium also encouraged the domestic cultivation of opium poppies and increased imports from abroad through China's major ports, including Guangzhou and Shanghai. In 1767, China had imported 63 tons of opium, but by 1836, imports had grown to 1,890 tons. In the mid-nineteenth century, one seventh of the East India Company's revenues in India came from opium.⁵⁵ In 1837, a vigorous anti-opium campaign was waged against smugglers and dealers in the area around Guangzhou, but this was not enough to suppress the trade or to deter foreigners from promoting it. In 1838, Lin Zexu was appointed by the emperor to carry out a comprehensive suppression of the opium trade in Guangzhou. Lin addressed a letter of remonstrance to Queen Victoria, calling on her to exert influence to prevent the manufacture of opium by her subjects or on her territory.⁵⁶ He also ordered the foreign merchants to give up the opium trade, on penalty of death if found violating the decree. As a result, 21,000 chests of opium were surrendered to Lin, who destroyed them all.⁵⁷ During the suppression operation many of the foreigners departed for Aomen. Just after the Opium crackdown,

⁵³ Immanuel C.Y. Hsu, *op. cit.*, pp. 168-69.

⁵⁴ Jack Gray, *Rebellions and Revolutions: China from the 1800s to the 1880s*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1994, p.25.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ J.A.G. Roberts, *Modern China, op. cit.*, p. 28.

Lin's letter was not sent to the Queen.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

One chest is approximately 140 pounds.

the British government made a decision to wage a war on China, the first Anglo-Chinese war, and the so-called the 'Opium War' of 1839-42.⁵⁸

The direct cause of the war was the opium trade, but the outcome was the exposure of China's inability to defend itself against superior Western naval powers. The British believed that if it were to back down over the opium crackdown, its future trade with China and its privileges over the Asian states would be threatened. In 1839, the British navy blockaded the approaches to Guangzhou, seized the island of Zhoush near the port of Ningbo, and then moved north, threatening Tianjin and Beijing.⁵⁹ During the war the Manchu garrison fought bravely against the British, preferring to die rather than to surrender, and their wives committed suicide rather than be captured.⁶⁰ However, the Chinese fighting spirit could not overcome the British's well-armed warships and better-trained naval forces. In the end, the Chinese were totally defeated by the British due to the former's maritime weakness, outdated naval ships and weapons, and ill-trained sailors. When the British ship the *Nemesis*, an iron steam vessel of 700 tons with two 32-pound guns, reached China, the British navy had absolute tactical superiority over the Chinese navy.⁶¹ In the spring of 1842, the war concluded with a British victory, and China had to admit to its first humiliating defeat at the hands of a European power. In August 1842, the Qing government was forced to submit to the Treaty of Nanjing. As Denny Roy has indicated, it was the first of a number of unequal treaties under which China was opened up by foreign countries.⁶² By this treaty, the Chinese were forced to pay the British US\$21 million in compensation, to permanently cede Hong Kong Island

⁵⁸ East Asia Analytical Unit, *Asia's Global Powers China-Japan Relations in the 21st Century*, Canberra: The Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 1996, pp. 117-18.

⁵⁹ J.A.G. Roberts, *Modern China*, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 29-31.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

⁶² Denny Roy, *China's Foreign Relations*, London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1998, p. 9.

to Britain, and to open five more Chinese ports to British traders, including Guangzhou, Xiamen, Fuzhou, Ningbo and Shanghai.⁶³

While suffering disgrace at the hands of the Europeans, the weakened Qing confronted a domestic threat; nation-wide rebellions. The Taiping Rebellion launched an armed revolt against the Manchu regime between 1850 and 1864. In the mid-nineteenth century the southern Chinese were following Christianity rather than Taoism and Buddhism, and they were dissatisfied by the Qing's inability to protect its people, and to maintain its sovereignty against outside challenges.⁶⁴ Most of these rebellious forces were Christian peasants. From 1851 to 1853 the Taiping troops defeated both the Green Standard and the Banner Forces, and, finally, captured Nanjing in 1853.⁶⁵ However, by 1864, with the help of the Western powers (who provided both arms and key officers) the government forces crushed the rebellions.⁶⁶ The European missionaries, the Catholics and the Protestants were split over the interpretation of the Bible by the leader of the Taiping, Hong Xiuquan, and they regarded him as either a miscreant or an unorthodox crusader against a corrupt and pagan regime.⁶⁷ Moreover, the European imperialists were not interested in China's national reform and revival, but were devoted to their influence over the weakened Qing government.

Following the Opium War, the Manchu dynasty was gradually reduced to a semi-colonial and semi-feudal country after a series of defeats at the hands of the imperialist powers of the West. After the Taiping Rebellion, the Qing government failed to regain control of a number of army commanders who organised their own regional armies.⁶⁸

⁶³ J.A.G. Roberts, *Modern China, op. cit.*, p. 31.

⁶⁴ Arthur Cotterell and David Morgan, *China*, London: Harrap, 1975, p. 240.

⁶⁵ Ralph L. Powell, *The Rise of Chinese Military Power 1895-1912, op. cit.*, p. 22.

The Rebellion forces were originated from the southeastern provinces of Guangdong and Kwangsi, and they were mainly composed of peasants who worship God. "Taiping Kingdom" means "The Heavenly Kingdom of Great Peace."

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

⁶⁷ Arthur Cotterell and David Morgan, *op. cit.*, p. 241.

⁶⁸ Ralph L. Powell, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

The Chinese people traditionally believe the theory that domestic rebellion and foreign invasion occur when the central government fails to implement its authority effectively.⁶⁹ After the French and British inflicted another defeat upon China in 1856-60 in the Arrow War, the Chinese government conceded additional trading rights to European powers in the Treaty of Tianjin (1858), and the Treaty of Beijing (1860). As a result it had to open ten other ports.⁷⁰

China's relations with Russia stemmed from the Sino-Russian treaties of 1689 and 1727, through which the Qing government succeeded in keeping the Russians out of the Amur watershed and to the outer boundary of Mongolia.⁷¹ From 1727 until 1860, regular Sino-Russian trade was carried on the border area of both countries. In the meantime, Russian troops arrived in the Amur region in 1854, and established guard posts along the northern bank all the way down to Khabarovsk, where the Ussuri River enters the Amur. When the Qing government was under pressure from the combined forces of the Anglo-French, Russia signed the Treaty of Aigun in 1858, which ceded to Russia the northern bank of the Amur River.⁷² The Russian diplomat General Nikolai Ignatiev persuaded Anglo-French troops to withdraw from Beijing after the Arrow War. His mediation made possible the signing of the Sino-Russian Treaty of Peking, which gave Russia the Maritime Province between the Ussuri and the Pacific.⁷³ The Chinese defeat was mainly caused by the weakness of military forces and the Qing government's inability to control rebellions that sprang up throughout the country.

⁶⁹ Immanuel C.Y. Hsu, *op. cit.*, p. 221.

⁷⁰ J.A.G. Roberts, *Modern China, op. cit.*, p. 40. In October 1856, the Chinese arrested the crew of the British ship "Arrow" on charge of piracy, because the ship continued to stay in Xianggiang though its registration as the British possession had been expired. In the mean time the murder of a French missionary, Auguste Chapdelaine, inspired the French government to join with the British in the conflict.

⁷¹ John K. Fairbank, Edwin O. Reischauer and Albert M. Craig, *East Asia The Modern Transformation*, London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1969, p. 171.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 173.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

In the 1860s, high officials in the Qing court had argued successfully that the suppression of rebels in Xinjiang was more urgent than a naval build-up.⁷⁴ However, following the shameful defeats by the European sea powers, the Qing attempted to enhance the capability of its navy. Prince Kung and Wenhsiang argued that the Qing had to possess a strong navy to protect their country from outside maritime invasions. Li Hongzhang, who once recruited several thousand men for his Huai Army and neutralised the Taiping stronghold in Suzhou, also asked the court to cancel the Xinjiang campaign and divert its funds for the modernisation of naval force.⁷⁵ Following extensive debates between governmental officials, the Qing government finally decided to conduct the Xinjiang campaign as well as to launch naval development plan.⁷⁶ On 13 October 1885, the Qing authority ordered the establishment of the Board of Naval Affairs, which was to be controlled by the central government.⁷⁷ Prince Chun was named President of the Board, and two vice-presidential positions were given to Prince Ching (the Manchu representative) and Li Hongzhang (the Chinese representative).⁷⁸ However, the fund for a naval build-up was inadequate, and, more importantly, the Qing navy failed to establish a centralised fleet in spite of Li Hongzhang's effort to organise a unified navy. Accordingly, the newborn Admiralty could not be properly managed because Prince Chun and Prince Ching lacked the technical knowledge for naval operations. Even more significant in this respect was the shortage of much needed funds for the development of the navy, because a large proportion of the military budget went to the dowager Empress, who had been constructing a luxurious marble barge for her entertainment at the Summer Palace.⁷⁹

⁷⁴ Immanuel C. Y. Hsu, *op. cit.*, p. 319.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 321.

⁷⁷ Stanley Spector, *Li Hungchang and the Huai Army*, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1964, p. 187.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 188.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 193.

The weakness of the Manchu regime was again highlighted in the 1890s, when Japan provoked a war with China over their respective, competing influences in Korea. At the time of the Sino-Japanese War, the Qing navy possessed 65 warships in its four fleets, while Japan had only 32 principal ships.⁸⁰ In spite of the numerical inferiority, the Japanese navy easily defeated the Chinese due to both their level of training and superior tactics learnt from British instructors.⁸¹ In mid-September 1894, the heavily fortified city of Penyang fell to the Japanese, and Li Hongzhang's troops retreated across the Yalu River. Late in October, Japan landed on the Liaodong Peninsula and captured Port Arthur. When Weihaiwei was forced to surrender in February 1895, the remnants of the Chinese Fleet fell to Japan. The Chinese forces retreated west of the Liao River. Then an armistice was concluded, and, finally, the Treaty of Shimonoseki was signed on 17 April 1895.⁸² By the treaty China ceded both Taiwan and the Liaodong Peninsula to Japan, and the Qing government had to pay a large indemnity, the equivalent of roughly 15 percent of Japan's 1895 GNP.⁸³ With this indemnity, Japan established the Yawata Iron and Steel Company, which was to later become the Nippon Steel Corporation, the world's largest post-war steel producer.⁸⁴ This company contributed greatly to the development of Japanese warships and aircraft by providing steel to the defence industries.

These series of Chinese defeats were due not only to the Qing's failure to create a modern navy, but, more importantly, to the corruption that infected both the military hierarchy and the civil bureaucracy.⁸⁵ Militia armies, as with their predecessors, the Eight Banners and the Army of the Green Standard, could not cope with the invaders. The Banner Force, which assisted with the birth of the Qing dynasty, was unable to

⁸⁰ John K. Fairbank, Edwin O. Reischauer and Albert M. Craig, *op. cit.*, p. 383.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² Ralph L. Powell, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

⁸³ John Hunter Boyle, *Modern Japan*, Orlando, Florida: Harcourt Brace & Company Publishers, 1993, p. 132.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ Ralph L. Powell, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

suppress the revolts of the Three Feudatories. During the last gasp of the Ming dynasty, three Ming generals (Wu San-kuei, Shang Ko-hsi and Keng Chi-mao) defected to the Qing, thereby helping to found the Qing dynasty, and were rewarded with the titles of West-suppressing Prince in Yunnan, South-suppressing Prince in Guangdong and South-pacifying Prince in Fujian respectively.⁸⁶ Wu San-kuei revolted against the Qing in 1673, announcing himself as generalissimo of all forces in the country, and proclaimed the establishment of a new dynasty, the Chou. The other two feudatories joined him. Emperor Kangxi, realising his inability to suppress the rebellion with Banner Forces, thus had to invite the Chinese Green Standard army into the conflict, and in 1681, after eight years of severe fighting, the Three Feudatories were subdued.⁸⁷ But the Green Standard was only eventually defeated (in the White Lotus rebellion between 1796 and 1804); hence the court had to mobilise some 300,000 local militia for the suppression operation.⁸⁸ In all this, the major vulnerability of the Qing military was the regional armies controlled by local feudal lords.

Political corruption was another factor, which accelerated the collapse of the Qing government. Governmental officials rarely paid attention to the people's welfare, instead they indulged in literary activities and Buddhism, and they even sold their jobs and offices to rich people.⁸⁹ As a result, the Chinese learned a painful lesson from the Japanese, whose army and navy were well organised, highly trained and disciplined. The Chinese, earlier humiliated by the West, were further disgraced by an Oriental neighbour that had been considered as their long-time cultural protégé, the Japanese.⁹⁰

⁸⁶ Immanuel C.Y. Hsu, *op. cit.*, pp. 32-33.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

⁸⁸ John K. Fairbank, Edwin O. Reischauer and Albert M. Craig, *East Asia*, London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1969, pp. 116-118.

⁸⁹ Immanuel C.Y. Hsu, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

The white lotus rebellion aimed at the advent of Buddha, the restoration of the Ming and personal salvation from suffering in this world (p. 117).

⁹⁰ Ralph L. Powell, *op. cit.*, p.50.

Just six days after the signing of the Treaty of Shimonoseki, Russia instigated a move to force Japan to retrocede Liaodong in the name of the “Triple Intervention”, a Russian, French and German alliance to counter Japanese expansionism in Asia. Japan had no choice but to return Liaodong to China in fear for joint actions by three Western powers. In 1898, Japan acknowledged that Russia had persuaded China to lease the Liaodong Peninsula and Port Arthur to Moscow. In addition, Japan also learned that Russia had gained the concession for constructing a railroad network across Manchuria to link up with the Trans-Siberian railway. Japan, in response to the Triple Intervention, strengthened its naval forces and decided to go to war with Russia, whose economic penetration of Manchuria had begun in the same period. A decisive collision between Japan and Russia came in 1904-05. The Japanese navy quickly crushed the small Russian fleet based at Port Arthur, and, at the same time, the Japanese army defeated the Russian army stationed in Manchuria.⁹¹ When, after a nine-month voyage, 32 vessels of the Russian Baltic Fleet arrived at the Tsushima Strait between Korea and Japan, they were engaged by the Japanese Fleet and annihilated.⁹² As a result of this lopsided victory, Japan obtained Port Arthur and the Liaodong Peninsula, and claimed exclusive rights over parts of Manchuria and Korea.

In 1911, after a series of wars and rebellions on China’s territory, the Qing dynasty could not protect its regime in the face of European imperialism and Japanese aggression, and, finally, the dynasty succumbed to a revolutionary group, which included Yuan Shih-kai, Sun Yat-sen and Huang Hsing.⁹³ Although China has had a long history, many dynasties were replaced by another as a result of successful revolutions or rebellions.⁹⁴ If an emperor failed to rule well, it was believed that natural disasters, such as earthquakes, famine and rebellion would appear as signs from heaven that its mandate

⁹¹ William R. Keylor, *The Twentieth-Century World*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996, p. 16.

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ John K. Fairbank, Edwin O. Reischauer and Albert M. Craig, *op. cit.*, p. 640.

⁹⁴ H.R. Cowie, *Asia and Australia in World Affairs*, South Melbourne: Nelson, 1991, p. 83.

was being suspended.⁹⁵ This concept of interaction between heaven and humankind was developed by Tzu-ssu (Confucius' grandson) and Mengzi (373-228 BC).⁹⁶ According to their theory, whenever the ruler failed to exercise his rightful authority toward the state, heaven inflicted on him calamities and prodigies as warnings, and if the ruler were to hesitate in correcting his wrongdoings, it would again send extraordinary phenomena to frighten him.⁹⁷ If the ruler still did not change his ways, heaven would stop him from using his authority, and eventually invite revolt to terminate his dynasty. In the final stage of the Qing dynasty, the Chinese people thought that the Manchu dynasty had lost the mandate of heaven.

In 1905, Sun Yat-sen formed a Revolutionary Alliance to overthrow the Qing dynasty, and pave the way for a new Western style constitutional republic, which could better respond to China's needs.⁹⁸ By the end of 1911, 14 provinces of China had broken away from Manchu rule, and China's traditional dynastic system finally collapsed.⁹⁹ By the time China recognised the importance of maritime power in the modern world, it was already enduring the harassment of major maritime nations. China had become a victim of its own self-importance and could not protect itself from external naval challenges.

On February 12, 1912, the three-year-old boy Emperor Pu Yi was forced to abdicate by Yuan Shih-kai, who was given authority to organise a provisional government.¹⁰⁰ In the September 1912 election, the Kuomintang (KMT) emerged as a major political party under Sung Chiao-jen and Sun Yat-sen.¹⁰¹ In an attempt to unify the nation, revolutionary leader Sun Yat-sen surrendered the presidency to Yuan Shih-

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 83-84.

⁹⁶ Kung-chuan Hsiao, *A History of Chinese Political Thought*, Translated by F. W. Mote, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979, p. 484.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 496.

⁹⁸ Steven W. Mosher, *China's Plan to Dominate Asia and the World*, San Francisco: Encounter Books, 2000, p. 152.

⁹⁹ J.A.G. Roberts, *Modern China*, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

¹⁰⁰ H.R. Cowie, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.* p.86.

kai, but Yuan betrayed his promise to cooperate with the KMT. Instead he became president on 10 October 1913 by threatening the two houses of the parliament with his personal soldiers and police force.¹⁰² However, with the sudden death of Yuan Shih-kai in June 1916, China plunged into chaos and disorder, the so-called period of warlordism (from 1916 to 1927).¹⁰³ After Yuan's death, Sun Yat-sen resumed the presidency in the south, but north China was under the control of warlords. After Sun's death in 1925, Chiang Kai-shek worked eagerly to unify the nation, establishing the Nationalist government in Nanjing in 1928.

The era of the warlords ended, and was supplanted by the rivalry between the Nationalists' leader Chiang Kai-shek and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). After its foundation in 1921, the CCP was driven out into the mountains of southern China by the Nationalists, and its hardship continued for the next 22 years, until it finally achieved victory over the Nationalists in September 1949.¹⁰⁴ In July 1937, in the course of the civil war between the KMT and the CCP, full-scale war broke out between China and Japan near Beijing as a result of Japanese machinations.¹⁰⁵ The Chinese forces were again soundly defeated by the Japanese imperial army. Nanjing eventually fell to the Japanese on 12 December 1937, and the Japanese committed the 'rape of Nanjing', a most shameful and horrible episode during which Japanese soldiers massacred between 200,000 to 300,000 Chinese soldiers and civilians, and systematically raped at least 200,000 Chinese women.¹⁰⁶ These atrocities further weakened China's political stability.

To make matters worse, in the early 1940s, the Nationalist government imposed unpopular policies on Chinese peasants. The first was compulsory conscription for all men between the ages of 18 and 45, and the other was the new land tax system, which

¹⁰² Immanuel C.Y. Hsu, *op. cit.*, p. 478.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 482.

¹⁰⁴ John King Fairbank, *The United States and China*, 3rd Ed., Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971, p. 259.

¹⁰⁵ J.A.G. Roberts, *Modern China*, *op. cit.*, p. 190.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 190-91.

abolished the right of local government to collect taxes from its population.¹⁰⁷ Conscription was often carried out with certain irregularities, such as exemption for sons of the local elite, while sons of the poor and the weak were forced to enter the army. On the other hand, the Communists enforced new land reform law, regulating all land belonging to landlords. All public lands were subject to be taken over by the peasant association, and together with all other land in the village was to be divided equally among the total population.¹⁰⁸ By implementing its new reform measures, the KMT strayed from the original objectives of Sun Yat-sen's revolutionary ideology, namely the people's nationalism, people's government and people's livelihood. During the civil war the Nationalist regime was regarded as a corrupt and undemocratic government, whereas the Communists propogandised their revolution as anti-feudal and anti-imperialist.¹⁰⁹ As a consequence, the CCP was able to mobilise the peasants to join them, with more reasonable reform policy than the Nationalists. Until the Japanese surrender of 1945, China for most part suffered from a bloody and draining confrontation between the KMT and the CCP rather than these political bodies dealing with the threats from Japan.

In the final stage of the Qing dynasty the Chinese realised the important role a naval force played in preserving national security and prestige. However, the Manchu regime was unable to modernise its navy because the fate of the dynasty was severely challenged by nation-wide rebellions, which were aimed at overthrowing the dynasty. To make matters worse, foreign imperial interventionists did not allow the Qing government to modernise its navy. During the civil war and war with the Japanese, both the KMT and the CCP fought mainly inland in guerrilla-style war. Thus the important of the navy was neglected during the period.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 197.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 213.

¹⁰⁹ Lucien Bianco, *Origins of Chinese Revolution 1915-1949*, Translated from the French by Muriel Bell, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1967, p. 201.

Chapter Three

China's Emerging Sea Power in the PRC Period

3.1 China's National Defence Policy since 1949

China's defence strategy transformed according to the changing nature of internal and external environment. During Mao Zedong's period the 'people's war' doctrine was fundamental to every military campaign, including the Korean War, conflicts with Taiwan, and the 1979 Vietnam War. After Mao's death in 1976, Deng Xiaoping developed a new version of defence strategy, 'people's war under modern conditions'. This doctrine stresses the need for relatively well-trained and equipped professional troops rather than focusing on populous defence to withstand a Soviet land attack in the key strategic regions in north and northeast China.¹ However, in the early 1980s, this strategy was reformulated as 'active defence'. This new strategy was developed by Deng's proposal that, since the Soviet Union would focus more on European theatre than on China, thus his country could now concentrate on developing economy, science and technology, which would, in turn, provide the PLA with the technical and physical wherewithal for modernisation.² The concept of active defence means holding the invaders outside the country's key areas and waging a large-scale counteroffensive against enemy's initial attacks.³ The 1991 Gulf War gave an astonishing shock to the Chinese leaders in terms of what they would have to develop by way of new strategy in coping with modern, sophisticated warfare conducted by the US. In 1992, the post-Deng CMC was established to adopt a new strategy; the so-called 'high-tech defence strategy'. The PLA leaders realised that fighting in the high-tech war would require not only

¹ You Ji, *The Armed Forces of China*, St Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1999, p. 3.

² Deng Xiaoping, "Deng Xiaoping on the building of the armed forces in the new era", Beijing: Bayi Chubanshe, 1993, p. 121, quoted by You Ji, *The Armed Forces of China*, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

³ *Ibid.*

advanced weapons system but also Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) technology. The high-tech defence strategy has been a pillar of the modernisation of Chinese armed forces since the early 1990s.

The People's Republic of China (PRC) was founded in 1949 and proclaimed by Mao in Beijing's Tiananmen Square. Mao came to power on the basis of a doctrine which emphasised the use of "man over weapons" and a peasant-based "people's war". Mao demonstrated this concept during his struggle against the Japanese, and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)'s victory over the Kuomintang (KMT). He continued to emphasise that war was ultimately determined by the human factor.⁴ In 1940, Mao Zedong had set up three goals to fight Japan and unify China; namely the unified front, armed struggle and party building.⁵ His armed struggle was first demonstrated in the August of that year in North China against the Japanese forces, and, later, against KMT forces in North Kiangsu, where the CCP intended to establish its base.⁶ Such operations on China's territory called for land-based fighting, mainly guerrilla warfare. His people's war doctrine grew out of his peasant upbringing (the peasantry comprised over 80% of China's population in the 1920s), three decades in the field with the Red Army he helped create, and the tactical situation in which the CCP army was forced to fight a guerrilla war. Specifically, Mao's military doctrine in many respects seemed to derive from the *Art of War* by Sun Zi. The latter's intellectual foundation was the philosophical teachings of Lao Zi and Zhuang Zi, whose three pillars of military thought are that: mind is superior to matter, thought is more powerful than weapons, and doctrine overcomes strength.⁷ Sun Zi also emphasised the purpose and preparedness of the war as follows:

⁴ Ellis Joffe, *The Chinese Army after Mao*, London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1987, p. 73.

⁵ John King Fairbank, *The United States and China*, 3rd Ed., Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971, p. 275.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 276.

⁷ Georges Tan Eng Bok, "Strategic Doctrine," in Gerald Segal and William T. Tow, eds., *Chinese Defence Policy*, London: Macmillan, 1984, p. 4.

To have won a hundred battles is good but not the best; to force the enemy to yield without fighting is the best of all. Good information of both sides promises victory over the enemy in every battle; knowing well only one's own side but knowing little of the enemy will bring an even chance to win a battle; knowing about neither side suggests the defeat of every battle.⁸

In his texts, Mao reproduced a number of word-for-word quotes from Sun Zi's *Art of War*, such as: avoid the strong point and strike the weak flank; appear when and where the enemy does not expect it; cause an uproar in the east, strike in the west; and harass the enemy when they are in camp.⁹ Mao's military thought was also influenced by Marxism-Leninism, and Mao mobilised the peasantry's revolutionary potential in his rural movement in Hunan in 1927.¹⁰ In this context, China's military doctrine in Mao's era was therefore a mix of 'people's war' based on Sun Zi's strategic thought, Mao's military doctrine, and Marxism-Leninism. Mao emphasised in his selected writings that the Chinese had as a nation entered an entirely new era in their life and thinking through Marxism-Leninism. The vanguard of the Chinese proletariat learned Marxism-Leninism before the foundation of the Communist Party of China.¹¹ Given his intellectual origins, his early writings made no mention of naval warfare or the role of sea power in national strategy.¹²

The year 1950, from Beijing's point of view, was a busy year in building the foundations of a new nation. At that time the PRC was attempting to simultaneously strengthen party leadership and seize Taiwan from the KMT. When the Korean War broke out in June 1950, the PRC was therefore not expected to join the Soviet-backed North Korean aggression. China's plans for Taiwan were soon foiled by President

⁸ Sinolingua, *Chinese Maxims*, Beijing: Beijing Foreign Languages Printing House, 1994, pp. 148-49.

⁹ Georges Tan Eng Bok, *op. cit.*, pp. 4-5.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

¹¹ Mao Zedong, *Selected Readings from the Works of Mao Zedong*, Peking: Foreign Language Press, 1971, pp. 374-75.

¹² David G. Muller, Jr., *China as a Maritime Power*, Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1983, p. 47.

Truman's order to protect Taiwan with the US 7th Fleet.¹³ America's involvement in the Korean conflict and America's Taiwan policy impelled China to become deeply involved in the Korean War, and instigated China's occupation of Tibet in October 1950.

With the assistance of the Soviet Union, China's involvement in the Korean War helped Beijing to modernise its armed forces. In early 1951 China received a variety of weapons and equipment from the Soviet Union. Through its forced process of modernisation, China was able to launch a series of provocations against neighbouring countries, including Taiwan in 1954 and 1958, India in 1962, the Soviet Union on the Ussuri River in 1969, and the Sino-Vietnam conflict in 1979.¹⁴ China also supported insurgencies in Southeast Asian nations in the 1960s and in Cambodia in the 1980s. This involvement in regional conflicts seemed to derive from the Chinese Middle Kingdom orientation.¹⁵

The PRC maintained good relations with the Soviet Union from the former's foundation until the mid-1950s. Mao Zedong arrived in Moscow on 16 December 1949, and signed the Treaty of Friendship and other agreements on 14 February 1950. Through these agreements the Soviet Union agreed to transfer rights for the joint administration of the Chinese Eastern Railway, to withdraw its troops from the naval base at Port Arthur, and to grant a long-term credit of US\$300 million to China by the end of 1952.¹⁶ With the military aid provided by the Soviet Union to China during the Korean conflict, the two countries had cemented their ties through increased Soviet economic aid, the restoration of Port Arthur, and the signing of a nuclear cooperation agreement by 1955.¹⁷

¹³ John King Fairbank, *The United States and China*, *op. cit.*, pp. 351-52.

¹⁴ John W. Garver, *Foreign Relations of the PRC*, Eaglewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1993, p. 252.

¹⁵ Allen S. Whiting, *China Crosses The Yalu*, New York: The Macmillan Company, 1960, p. 2.

Lin Yutang has defined the concept of the Middle Kingdom that it is more than a geographical notion: it signifies a way of life which, by holding on to the mean, the normal and the essentially human, claims, as the old scholars did, that they have discovered all the essential truths of all schools of philosophy (Lin Yutang, *My Country and My People*, London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1938, p. 105).

¹⁶ Peter Jones and Sian Kevill, *China and the Soviet Union 1949-84*, London: Longman, 1985, p. 1.

¹⁷ *Ibid.* pp. 2-4.

After Stalin's death in 1953, and Nikita Khrushchev's rise to power in 1956, the relationship between China and the Soviet Union began to drift from its earlier nature. In his report to the 20th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party in February 1956, Khrushchev denounced Stalin's totalitarian rule, and proclaimed his own new policy initiatives. These included the Soviet party's support for peaceful coexistence toward countries with different social and political systems, opposition to Lenin's theory of inevitability of war as long as capitalism existed, and the possibility of certain countries' transition to socialism by peaceful and parliamentary means.¹⁸ At that time, China criticised the Soviet Union as being revisionist.¹⁹ After that time the two countries confronted each other over such agendas as the Soviet's lukewarm attitude toward the 1958 Taiwan Strait conflict, the retrenchment of Soviet military aides, the retraction of the Soviet's nuclear technology transfer to China since 1959, the Soviets' criticism of the China's Great Leap Forward movement (1958-59), and the withdrawal of Soviet technical advisers from China since 1960.²⁰

One particular episode further deteriorated the relationship between Beijing and Moscow. In 1959, the Chinese Defence Minister Peng Dehuai met Khrushchev in Albania, and dissuaded him from withdrawing his pledge of nuclear aid, while divulging the details of the failure of the Great Leap Forward. After returning home, Peng questioned Mao's view on the 'people's war', advocating the creation of a modern professional army with modern weapon systems, and further argued for close relations with the Soviet Union to obtain modern weapons.²¹ After this incident, Mao condemned Peng as a Soviet collaborator, and replaced him with Lin Biao on 17 September 1959. At

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

¹⁹ German Democrat Eduard Bernstein originated the term "revisionism" in 1898. He asserted that "Marx's theories should be revised in view of subsequent political and economic developments; hence it has been applied by communists to theories, which are considered to depart from the fundamental principles of Marxism". See Alan J. Day, *China and the Soviet Union 1949-84*, Essex: Longman, 1985, p. 10.

²⁰ Edwin E. Moise, *Modern China*, 2nd Ed., London: Longman, 1994, p. 147.

²¹ Immanuel C.Y. Hsu, *op. cit.*, p. 692.

the same time Mao admitted his fault in the Great Leap Forward movement by saying that:

I devoted myself mainly to revolution. I am absolutely no good at construction, and I don't understand industrial planning. So don't write about my wise leadership, since I had not even taken charge of these matters. However, Comrades, I should take primary responsibility for 1958-1959. It is I who am to blame.²²

Mao's self-criticism was intended to ease the dissatisfaction that had arisen within the CCP after the Great Leap Forward, and to purge his opponents in the CCP. The 1962 Cuban Crisis and Soviet MIG fighter sales to India further aggravated relations between the two nations.²³ After its armed clash on Damansky (Zhenbao) Island with the Soviet Union in March 1969, China recognised its military weaknesses, and therefore opened diplomatic relations with Canada, France and Belgium.²⁴ The split between China and the Soviet Union eventually led China to launch a dialogue with the United States. President Richard Nixon's visit to Beijing in 1972, to resolve the Vietnam issue and to constrain Moscow, marked a historical event for the new relationship between the two countries.²⁵ However, it took a further seven years for China and America to finally set up diplomatic relations. This followed the formal end of the Cultural Revolution and Mao's death in 1976, and the emergence of Deng Xiaoping at China's political centre in 1978.²⁶

Under Deng Xiaoping, a more rational, outward-looking foreign policy was developed, and China's military doctrine became far more balanced, modern, and focused. The cause of China's ongoing internal problems was revisited and the "Four Modernisations" policy was adopted. After the disastrous Great Leap Forward, Deng Xiaoping and Liu Shaoqi (the Chairman of the Chinese People's Republic) had argued that self-interest would be a fact of life; therefore the state had to offer garden plots to

²² Stanley Karnow, *Mao and China*, New York: 1972, quoted by Immanuel C. Y. Hsu, *op. cit.*, p. 693.

²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 26-27.

²⁴ Ezra F. Vogel, "How Can the United States and China Pursue Common Interests and Manage Differences?" in Ezra F. Vogel, ed., *Living with China*, London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1997, p. 22.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

peasants and bonuses to workers.²⁷ Deng Xiaoping was arrested in October 1969 and moved to Xinjian, Jianxi Province to do manual labour on charge of criticism of Mao's economic policy, forced collectivisation and endless moral exhortations.²⁸ Following his rehabilitation in 1973, Deng worked with the then Premier Zhou Enlai on the future "Four Modernisations" policy. Deng, as First Vice-Premier, boldly began to seek material incentives and to import foreign technology, but the Maoist radicals stripped him of his post, and sent him into another exile in 1975.²⁹ But Mao's death brought the arrest of Mao's widow and other key leftists, later known as the "Gang of Four", and in the meantime Deng returned to Beijing.³⁰ The PRC leaders and the Chinese people showed Deng a hearty welcome during his re-emergence, because he had consistently urged the reform of China and the adoption of pragmatic economic policy.

Deng's consolidation of power paved the way for China's leadership to pursue reform policies in earnest. To boost its industry and to invite foreign investment, Deng launched a series of drastic measures, including the setting up of four special economic zones (Zhuhai, Shenzhen, Shantou and Xiamen), granting permission to private enterprises to be created, signalled the abolition of the communes, and the gradual cessation of rationing.³¹ The goal of this policy was to transform China into a modern state by the year 2000.³² This economic policy enabled China to become one of the largest economies in the world by the late 1990s. Military modernisation was also one of the most important tasks for the Chinese leadership.

²⁷ Steven W. Mosher, *China's Plan to Dominate Asia and the World*, San Francisco: Encounter Books, 2000, p. 63.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ Mark Borthwick, *Pacific Century*, 2nd Ed., Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1998, p. 410.

Gang of Four includes Jiang Qing (Mao's fourth wife), Zhang Chuengqiao, Yao Wenyuan and Wang Hongwen. They played a dominant political role during the Cultural Revolution decade (1966-1976) until Mao's death in September 1976.

³¹ Ezra F. Vogel, "How Can the United States and China Pursue Common Interests and Manage Differences?" *op. cit.*, p.23. See also J.A.G. Roberts, *Modern China*, *op. cit.*, p. 269.

³² Immanuel C.Y. Hsu, *op. cit.*, p. 803.

Since the early 1970s, Deng Xiaoping and Zhou Enlai had believed that if China continued to insist on a policy of isolation, the Party would face the same fate experienced by the Qing dynasty.³³ They also realised that the China's overall economic condition fell well behind that of the West and the Asia's Newly-Industrialising Countries (NICs), thus they understood that foreign trade and investment would be crucial for the development of their nation. In his visit to Japan in December 1979, Deng revealed his ambitious plan that, by the end of the twentieth century, China would quadruple its GNP of US\$250 billion to US\$1 trillion, with a per capita GNP of up to US\$1,000.³⁴ China has, in effect, adopted an open-door economic policy that falls within the guidelines Deng Xiaoping's theory of establishing a socialist country with Chinese characteristics.³⁵

As a result of reform policy, China achieved remarkable economic progress during the ten-year period from 1978 to 1987. Its agricultural achievement, for example, was tremendous. China achieved a trade surplus of US\$4 billion in agricultural products between 1980 and 1984, transforming it from being a net importer of these products to an exporter of grain, soybeans, and raw cotton.³⁶ China's industry also grew rapidly with an annual growth rate of 10 percent between 1978 and 1986. However, the overheated economy created many adverse effects, such as chronic budget deficits from 1978 to 1985, trade deficits of US\$28 billion between 1985 and 1986, and high inflation rates of 15 and 20 percent per year.³⁷ Deng's plans for military modernisation in the 1980s were not overly significant, as he believed that by concentrating on the areas of economy, science and technology in the first instance, this would eventually create a more solid

³³ Denny Roy, *China's Foreign Relations*, Oxford: Roman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1998, p. 85.

³⁴ Immanuel C.Y. Hsu, *op. cit.*, pp. 841-42.

³⁵ Rong Yiren, "China: Moving towards the Twenty-first Century", in Fumio Itoh, ed., *China in the Twenty-first Century*, Tokyo: United Nations University Press, 1997, p. 4. See also Bill Gertz, *The China Threat*, Washington D.C.: Regnery, 2000, p. 11.

Bill Gertz defined the term, "socialism with Chinese characteristics" as a communism that fulfils China's sense of its own superiority. He further argued that such socialism referred to itself as the Middle Kingdom - the place between heaven and earth.

³⁶ Immanuel C.Y. Hsu, *op. cit.*, p. 846.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 856-57.

base for the development of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) and the other branches of the military.³⁸ During the 1980s, the PLA embarked on ambitious military reforms, including the demobilisation of one million officers and soldiers, the conduct of intensive professional training, and the introduction of an 'active defence' doctrine instead of the previous 'people's war' mentality.³⁹ Although the notion of active defence was designed to prevent invaders from entering Chinese territories, most military leaders still preferred the traditional idea of a 'people's war' doctrine in the event of protracted war.⁴⁰

By the early 1980s China's military technology base was far behind that of the West. During the Carter and Reagan administrations, Washington needed to form an anti-Soviet front in response to Moscow's invasion of Afghanistan.⁴¹ In this process, the US chose China as its strategic partner against the Soviet expansionism. Beijing was then able to access Washington's modern weapons systems, including the TOW anti-tank system, HAWK anti-aircraft missiles, gas turbines, artillery-manufacturing technology and selected avionics systems.⁴² However, this imported technology was not sufficient for China to fully enhance its obsolete weapons systems. In spite of Beijing's close cooperation with Washington during the 1980s, the Chinese leadership placed military modernisation as the lowest of all the priorities in the 'Four Modernisations' campaign.⁴³ As a result, the major achievement of the PLA modernisation of the 1980s was the introduction of a professional education and a training system. By the late 1980s, due to the open-door policy, China had to face the unexpected cultural shock of liberal thought being disseminated among students and citizens. Understandably, the importation of foreign technology brought with it the appearance of Western democratic values, such as

³⁸ You Ji, *The Armed Forces of China*, St. Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1999, p. 4.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁴¹ William T. Tow, "Strategy, Technology, and Military Development in Sino-Soviet Strategic Relations", in June Teufel Dreyer, ed., *Chinese Defence and Foreign Policy*, New York: Paragon House, 1988, pp. 282-83.

⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 283-84.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 281.

freedom of speech and freedom of association. This grassroots liberalisation eventually culminated in the tragic Tiananmen Square Massacre on 4 June 1989.

After the suppression of the Tiananmen uprising, Deng boldly undertook political restructuring and military reform. He designated Jiang Zemin as his successor, and purged President Yang Shangkun's faction from the PLA, in fear that a Yang-dominated PLA would challenge Jiang's position as the Chinese new leader.⁴⁴ At the same time, Deng tried to renovate the PLA by cutting ground forces and replacing obsolete weapons. However, the PLA leadership and high-ranking policy makers began to revise the Dengist theory of 'active defence' after observing pinpoint strikes by the US in the Gulf War in 1991. They redefined and outlined a high-tech defence strategy as follows:

Firstly, they formulated a two-tiered high-tech defence strategy; one tier for building-up nuclear capability to deter big powers, the other tier for improving conventional war fighting ability to cope with any regional crisis. Secondly, as a force restructuring effort, ground forces were decreased, and the navy, air force and strategic missile force (SMF) were enhanced. Thirdly, a high-tech military Research and Development (R&D) policy has been adopted to enhance C4I (Command, Control, Communication, Computer and Information), the space program and electronic warfare capabilities. Fourthly, they regarded foreign procurement and military budget as a key to modernise the PLA.⁴⁵

Subsequently, Deng's military reform efforts were handed over Jiang Zemin, who eagerly sought new doctrine of 'high-tech defence strategy'. Realising the lessons of the Gulf War, Jiang and military leaders chose a number of essential elements of high-tech war, including re-armament of the minds of military leaders by developing the new dimension of war-fighting theories, the importation of major military powers' theories and practice, enhancing information warfare capabilities, and the improvement of research and development on RMA.⁴⁶ Jiang's efforts for military modernisation followed through the investigation of past defence strategy and future courses of action toward the Chinese twenty-first century force. The Chinese leaders stressed the need to develop such

⁴⁴ Denny Roy, *China's Foreign Relations, op. cit.*, p. 110.

⁴⁵ You Ji, "The PLA's Military Modernisation in the 1990s", in Stuart Harris and Gary Klintonworth, eds., *China as a Great Power*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995, p. 234.

⁴⁶ You Ji, *The Armed Forces of China, op. cit.*, pp. 18-19.

policy options as force balance, research and development, arms sales and procurement and more balanced global and regional strategy.

3.1.1 Force Balance

The PLA has conducted a series of force restructuring measures since the mid-1990s. The total of China's armed forces was reduced from 2,935,000 in 1996 to 2,470,000 in 2000.⁴⁷ The ratio of the ground forces in the PLA has fallen from 75 percent to 70 percent of the total armed forces, while the ratio of naval force and air force slightly increased during the same period (See Table 3.1).⁴⁸

Table 3.1 Force Structure of China and the US

Component	China: 1996/2000 (%)	US: 1996/2000 (%)
Strategic Forces*	100,000/100,000 (4%)	
Army	2,200,000/ 1,700,000 (70%)	495,000/ 471,700 (34%)
Navy**	265,000/ 220,000 (9%) (Marines: 5,000)	580,600/ 540,500 (40%) (Marine Corps: 169,800)
Air Force	470,000/ 420,000 (17%)	388,200/ 353,600 (26%)
Total	2,935,000/ 2,440,000 (100%)	1,483,800/1,365,800 (100%)

Source: Military Balance 2000-2001, pp. 25-30,194-97.

Military Balance 1996-1997, pp. 22-27, 179-81.

* US Strategic Forces are included in relevant services, Navy and Air Force.

** Navy includes Marine Forces, in both China and the US.

This trend shows that China's total troop numbers have gradually reduced, while the proportion of personnel of the navy and air force has been increasing. However, the army still dominates the PLA. The army fulfils the fundamental responsibility of defending China's land territory from outside challenges, as well as securing domestic stability. For this purpose, China maintains a large army consisting of over 70 percent of its total armed forces.⁴⁹ Proportionally, China's naval strength is still low, being only nine percent of the total armed forces. But the proportion could be easily increased if Beijing

⁴⁷ The Military Balance 1996-97, *IJSS*, (October 1996), p. 179, and Military Balance 2000-2001, *IJSS*, (October 2000), p. 195.

⁴⁸ The Military Balance 2000-2001, *op. cit.*, p. 195.

decided to convert a number of infantry divisions in the coastal areas into marine expedition forces. If China were to convert five coastal divisions (approximately 60,000 personnel) to naval infantry, the naval force would reach about 12 percent of the total forces.⁵⁰ Given China's limited amphibious capability, the real dilemma is how they could transport such large numbers to invade Taiwan or any other disputed island. A solution to this problem would be politically and internationally sensitive for other countries in the region, such as Taiwan, Japan, and the territorial claimants of the South China Sea.⁵¹ If China were to decide to occupy Taiwan by force, such a change in the overall balance within the armed forces would come to pass. According to Military Balance 2000-2001, the US Navy is composed of 40 percent of its total armed forces; on the other hand, China's naval strength is only nine percent of its total armed forces (See Table 3.1). Although the mission of the US Navy is quite different to that of China's, the Chinese navy is still too small to fulfil its ambitions.

3.1.2 Research and Development (R&D)

China's defence industry began with the establishment of the Central Ordnance Commission in 1951 to assimilate Soviet weaponry and for the building of its national defence industry.⁵² Between 1953 and 1959, Moscow provided China with the means to build submarines, surface ships, minesweepers, and patrol boats.⁵³ In 1967, a concerted effort was made to develop military and scientific research, when Mao approved Nie Rongzhen's proposal to consolidate the defence science system into 18 research and design academies under his Defence Science and Technology Commission (DSTC).⁵⁴

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ According to *Jane's Defence Weekly* of 15 April 1998, the 31st Group Army in Nanjing Military Region has three infantry divisions capable of amphibious operations.

⁵¹ John Wilson Lewis and Xue Litai, *China's Strategic Seapower*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994, p. 102.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 75.

⁵³ Bernard D. Cole, *The Great Wall at Sea*, Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2001, p 94.

⁵⁴ John Wilson Lewis and Xue Litai, *China's Strategic Seapower*, *op. cit.*, p. 83.

Within the space of a year, the Commission secured 133,000 technicians and workers in more than 100 research institutes, but Nie's power base soon collapsed due to the machination of jealous opponents.⁵⁵ In 1968, Lin Biao and Mao's wife Jiang Qing stripped Nie of his post through a combined plot. In the late 1960s most defence industries were in the hands of Lin Biao, and their production increased. However, after Lin's death in 1971, defence output and construction of new production facilities were again cut severely.⁵⁶ After Zhou Enlai's death in 1976, Mao's wife Jiang Qing and her extremist associates controlled the DSTC and many defence bodies.⁵⁷ From its inception to the fall of the Gang of Four, the DSTC had been used as an arena for political power struggles. Despite the political turmoil between 1965 and 1976, the shipbuilding industry was greatly expanded. As a result, the PLAN had 528 shipyards with 540,000 staff and workers, 162 factories, and more than 80 research institutes.⁵⁸

Between 1966-1976 China moved and constructed a great number of defence industrial complexes in remote areas of southern and western China, the so-called 'Third Front', encompassing regions south of the Great Wall and west of the Beijing-Guangzhou Railway.⁵⁹ Mao's 'Third Front' policy stemmed from his strategic thinking of relocation of key defence plants from vulnerable coastal areas. He wanted to protect the defence complexes from outside maritime challenges. Mao feared the Western encroachment of the Chinese shoreline, the Japanese naval invasions of its coastal areas, and, more importantly, the Soviet naval expansion (since the late 1960s) into the seas adjoining China's territorial waters.⁶⁰ By 1980, China operated 39 shipbuilding bases and

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 84.

⁵⁶ Sydney Jammes, "Military Industry", in Gerald Segal and William T. Tow, eds., *Chinese Defence Policy*, Hong Kong: Macmillan, 1984, P. 119.

⁵⁷ John Wilson Lewis and Xue Litai, *China's Strategic Seapower*, *op. cit.*, p. 87.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 88.

⁵⁹ David M. Finkelstein, "China's National Military Strategy", in James C. Mulvenon and Richard H. Yang, eds., *The People's Liberation Army in the Information Age*, Santa Monica: RAND, 1999, P. 190. See also John Wilson Lewis and Xue Litai, *China's Strategic Seapower*, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

The Third Front areas include Sichuan, Guizhou, Shaanxi, Gansu, Henan, Hubei, Hunan, Qinghai and Ningxia.
⁶⁰ John Wilson Lewis and Xue Litai, *China's Strategic Seapower*, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

43 related research institutes in the interior and 268 ordnance factories in 'Third Front' localities, employing 280,000 workers and technicians, manufacturing 6 million guns, 100,000 artillery pieces, and huge quantities of ammunition.⁶¹ The 'Third Front' projects saw the investment of 220 billion *yuan*, and required 16 million people to build 29,000 factories, which comprised about 1300 medium-sized and about 600 large-scale enterprises.⁶² By 1989, China's defence industry ranked among the world's largest in terms of scale, with more than 3 million researchers and workers, and about 2,000 defence plants and institutes.⁶³ China's 'Third Front' strategy, however, seemed to bring with it some adverse effects, such as a passiveness in its defence strategy, and an inefficient use of resources in the defence industries.

After the emergence of Deng Xiaoping, the defence industrial system experienced a drastic reduction, based upon his assumption that a war between China and the Soviet Union might not occur within ten years.⁶⁴ As a result, the research fund for defence science and technology was reduced. After the PLA's successful crackdown in the Tiananmen Massacre of 4 June 1989, Premier Li Peng promised to increase defence outlays in focusing on research and manufacture of new weapons and equipment, but also to introduce national policies that would see some of the military-industrial production capability move to manufacture of products for the civilian sector.⁶⁵

China has also been improving its C³I (Command, Control, Communication and Information) capability. In the 1980s, China's C³I efforts were supported and encouraged by the US in order to counter the perceived Soviet expansionism in East Asia. Washington helped Beijing to build two large SIGINT (Signal Intelligence) stations along the Sino-Soviet border, these stations being equipped with the US electronic warfare

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 96, 99.

⁶² John Frankenstein, "China's Defence Industry", in James C. Mulvenon and Richard H. Yang, eds., *The People's Liberation Army in the Information Age*, *op. cit.*, p. 191.

⁶³ John Wilson Lewis and Xue Litai, *op. cit.*, p. 102.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 100.

(EW) system.⁶⁶ However, China's C³I system is still believed to be vulnerable because the Chinese lack skilled manpower in that field and they have difficulties in obtaining such advanced technology from abroad.⁶⁷ Thus, Chinese leaders have decided to develop indigenous C³I capability. China launched its third-generation telecommunications satellites in 1997 and 1998 to build its own network in the first decade of the new century.⁶⁸ China has also actively engaged in a space program. By 1998, China had launched 53 spacecraft since the Changzheng rocket, the country's first, was sent into orbit in 1970.⁶⁹ According to the Chinese Academy of Aerospace Technology, China will, before 2010, send a manned satellite to the moon's surface to establish research laboratories there.⁷⁰ China's C³I technology is still at the rudimentary stage at this point, but it will be gradually enhanced in the course of the present decade.

China has also eagerly developed its nuclear arsenal. China's Strategic Missile Force (SMF), or the Second Artillery, operates surface-to-surface ballistic missile systems. The SMF has about 100,000 troops, or only 4 percent of the total armed forces, but its budget by the end of 2000 amounted to 12 to 15 percent of the total defence spending and about 20 percent of the PLA's total procurement budget.⁷¹ From the 1960s through the 1980s, the Chinese nuclear strategy was that of minimum deterrence because of its limited capability, financial constraints, shortage of key materials and low-level technological base.⁷² However, after the Gulf War in 1991, the SMF has enhanced its war fighting capability through various training and exercises, including retaliation after a

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 101.

⁶⁶ You Ji, *The Armed Forces of China*, *op. cit.*, p. 72.

⁶⁷ Michael Swaine, "Chinese Military Modernisation and Asian Security", *The Asia /Pacific Research Centre*, Stanford University, (August 1998), P. 7.

⁶⁸ You Ji, *The Armed Forces of China*, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ Gerald Segal, "China", in Regina Cowell Karp, ed., *Security without Nuclear Weapons*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990, p. 52, Quoted by You Ji, *The Armed Forces of China*, *op. cit.*, p. 85. See also *The Military Balance 2000-2001*, p. 194.

⁷² You Ji, *The Armed Forces of China*, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

nuclear surgical strike, biochemical warfare and maritime warfare.⁷³ Since most of China's nuclear weapons are land-based, they are extremely vulnerable to an enemy's first strike, thus the Chinese have invested heavily in Xia-class submarine-launched ballistic missiles.⁷⁴ The PLA leaders know well that nuclear submarines are vital for their second-strike nuclear capability. However, a single Xia-class SSBN is not believed able to perform such a mission, thus the Chinese are developing new versions of nuclear submarines (nicknamed 093 and 094) which, by 2003, will be able to carry HL-2 nuclear missiles with multiple independently-targeted re-entry vehicle (MIRV) nuclear warheads.⁷⁵

As a result of the Gulf War, the concept of RMA was widely quoted by Chinese strategists. The CMC leaders realised that the high-tech war required sophisticated weapon systems, highly trained troops and superior tactics and strategy. To effectively meet these needs, the Chinese leaders have eagerly sought to develop modern weapons and equipment, and to import more sophisticated military hardware from the West.

3.1.3 Arms Sales and Procurement

China's arms sales are closely connected with its foreign policy.⁷⁶ In the 1950s Moscow provided arms to Beijing as a means of political influence. Similarly, Beijing has provided its allies with military aid as a useful way of enhancing its political influence. In most cases, arms sales began with military aid to some countries. China's arms sales have also followed this pattern. For 30 years following its inception, the PRC offered military aid to Third World countries, mainly anti-Soviet and anti-America regimes such as Muslim rebels in Afghanistan, as well as some African and Middle Eastern countries.⁷⁷

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 93.

⁷⁴ Zalmay M. Khalilzad, et al, *The United States and a Rising China*, Santa Monica: RAND, 1999, P. 55.

⁷⁵ You Ji, *The Armed Forces of China, op. cit.*, p. 98.

⁷⁶ Anne Gilks and Gerald Segal, *China and the Arms Trade*, London: Croom Helm, 1985, p. 1.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

Before the late 1970s, China supplied arms to revolutionary regimes for ideological reasons, including those in Angola, Tanzania, Congo, Sierra Leone, Sudan and Zaire.⁷⁸ Since the early 1980s, however, China began to sell its arms only for its own profit. Sales have been to countries such as Bangladesh, Burma, Egypt, Thailand, Iran and Iraq.⁷⁹

China's arms transfer model has been similar to that of the US and the former Soviet Union. It developed from small arms to large arms, licensed production, military training, and to the dispatch of its own troops.⁸⁰ As a result of the Iran-Iraq War (in which it served as a major arms supplier), China, by 1987, became the world's fourth largest seller of conventional arms.⁸¹ China's arms sale caused Washington anxiety because it sold Intermediate Range Ballistic Missiles (IRBMs) to Saudi Arabia and Silkworm missiles to Iran in 1987. China delivered M-9 and M-11 short-range ballistic missiles (SRBM) to Syria and Pakistan respectively in the early 1990s.⁸² China's arms sales were significantly increased during the period from 1987 to 1990, reaching about US\$2.8 billion annually.⁸³ However, they were sharply diminished from the end of the Iran-Iraq War, and the emergence of the high-tech war conducted by the US in the *Desert Storm*. Furthermore, with the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Russia began selling more advanced arms to the same countries for a much cheaper price. Such a strategic environment has hindered China's arms sales to its former customers.

The importation of military technology is one of the key areas for China's defence development strategy. The PRC's import list includes advanced jet fighters, airborne early warning and other avionics, anti-ship missiles, submarines and dual-use communications technology.⁸⁴ China has been working to import those technologies

⁷⁸ Danniell L. Byman and Roger Cliff, *China's Arms Sales*, Santa Monica: RAND, 1999, p. 3.

⁷⁹ Anne Gilks and Gerald Segal. *op. cit.*, p. 3.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ Danniell L. Byman and Roger Cliff, *op. cit.*, p. vii.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁸³ Mel Gurtov and Byong-Moo Hwang, *China's Security*, London: Rienner Publishers, 1998, p. 215 (Table 7.1).

⁸⁴ John Frankenstein, "China's Defence Industries", *op. cit.*, p. 202.

through diverse channels, including Russia, America, Israel and Western European countries. Russia has been a major donor of military hardware and software to China since the early 1950s.

Since the early 1990s, Russia has again been the most important contributor of military assets to China. Russian President Boris Yeltsin's December 1992 visit to Beijing resulted in China acquiring advanced weapons from Russia.⁸⁵ Between 1990 and 1997 China purchased two Sovremenny-class destroyers, 50 SU-27 fighters, 25 MI-8 helicopters and four Kilo-class diesel electric submarines from Russia, which amounted to 72 percent of its total arms imports during the period.⁸⁶ Russia is also trying to sell the IL-78 aerial tanker, which extends the flying radius of the SU-30MK fighter from 930 to over 1,600 miles.

In 1996, China announced that it would spend US\$5.0 billion in building ten high-technology manufacturing zones, including Guangdong, with a target year of 2010.⁸⁷ With the defence industrial cooperation agreement with Russia in 1992, China plans to purchase a number of weapons and a variety of equipment. More importantly, it plans to produce 200 SU-27s.⁸⁸ According to the *Defence News*, there are indications of transfers from Moscow to Beijing, such as cruise missile warfare capabilities, and exchanges of nuclear propulsion technology for submarines and backfire bombers.⁸⁹ Russia is also marketing a lighter-weight supersonic anti-ship missile, the Yakhont, which could be fitted to China's existing warships, notably Kilo-class submarines. Russia's arms sales to China and other Asian countries would

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 226.

⁸⁶ GAO's Report to US Senate: "US and Euro Military Export to China", *US General Accounting Office*, Washington D.C.: June 16, 1998, p. 8.

⁸⁷ Susan Willet, "East Asia's Changing Defence Industry", *Survival*, vol. 39. no. 3., (Autumn, 1997), p. 109.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 109-110.

⁸⁹ *Defence News*, September 4, 1997.

clearly fuel a regional arms race, increase weapons proliferation, and erode regional stability and security.⁹⁰

America was one of the biggest sources for China's arms imports in the 1980s. Between 1982 and 1988 China imported approximately US\$8 billion worth of US commercial high technology. However, after the Tiananmen massacre, Washington imposed economic and military sanctions against China. As a result of this, China made Israel an alternative source of military high-tech and hardware. However, the US continued to support China's efforts for improving its military technology, albeit selectively. Between 1990 and 1997 China imported munitions and equipment from America, including avionics for F-8 fighters, four torpedoes for tests and evaluation, two AN/TPQ-37 counter-artillery positioning radar, and large-calibre artillery munitions. However, China's purchase of foreign military technology does not necessarily mean that PLA capabilities will increase, unless the PLA masters the logistics, training and doctrinal challenges associated with each new system.⁹¹ As such, military hardware cannot be the sole element for the development of modern military capability. The doctrinal basis, training and exercises are equally important on the modern battlefield.

The relationship between China and Israel, it should be said, has been a delicate one. While Israel recognised the PRC in January 1950, China continued to cultivate its relations with Arab countries following the Bandung Conference of April 1955. China continued to hold a hostile attitude toward Israel until the resumption of full diplomatic ties between Beijing and Tel Aviv in January 1992.⁹² However, Israeli state-owned companies, which negotiated weapons deals with China in the early 1980s, transferring

⁹⁰ Stephen J. Blank, "Russo-Chinese Military Relations and Asian Security", *Issues & Studies*, vol. 33, no. 11 (November 1997), p. 92.

Kilo-class submarine has 18 Type-53 wire-guided mines, with 52 personnel on board, the speed of 7-8 knots per hour under the water, and can operate up to 60 days, and can submerge 300 metres under the sea.

⁹¹ Richard D. Fisher, "How American Friends are Building China's Military Power", *The Heritage Foundation* Background No. 1146, 5 November 1997.

⁹² Moshe Yegar, "The Establishment of People's Republic of China-Israel Relations", in Jonathan Goldstein, ed., *China and Israel 1948-1998*, London: Praeger, 1999, pp. 8-9.

technologies for jet fighters, tanks, air-to-air missiles, and the air-defence missiles to China.⁹³ In the late 1990s, Israel planned to outfit the IL-76 transport aircraft (with its 230 mile-range Phalon airborne early-warning and control system [AWACS]) purchased from Russia, and wanted to sell them to China, but the AWACS deal, which was worth some US\$250 million, was suspended under pressure from the United States.⁹⁴ Instead, China is likely to upgrade its airborne early-warning capability through the UK-supplied *Searchwater* system, designed specifically for maritime surveillance.⁹⁵ The Israeli-Chinese weapons deal was regarded as a sensitive one, since Israel is a potential foe to Syria, Iran and Saudi Arabia, all of which have been the recipients of Chinese missiles and other weapons.⁹⁶

3.1.4 Regional and Global Strategy

Since the late Deng Xiaoping's rise to power, the tension between China and its neighbours has substantially eased. China's constructive negotiations with Russia, India and the newborn Central Asian Republics have shown an apparent mutual willingness to settle many of its border disputes peacefully.⁹⁷ Between 1996 and 1997, China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan signed the Five-Party Military Agreements in Shanghai and Moscow, agreeing to limit military activities within 100km of any border area.⁹⁸ From China's point of view, Russia and the Central Asian Republics are of particular strategic significance, since they share common borders with China, and, more importantly, they possess abundant energy resources which China needs to further fuel its booming economy. China has also made cooperative diplomatic gestures towards the

⁹³ Mel Gurtov and Byong-Moo Hwang, *op. cit.*, p. 228.

⁹⁴ The Military Balance 2000-2001, *IISS*, October 2000, p. 183.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ Mel Gurtov and Byong-Moo Hwang, *op. cit.*, p.228.

⁹⁷ Harry Harding, "A Chinese Colossus?", in Desmond Ball, ed., *The Transformation of Security in the Asia/Pacific Region*, London: Frank Cass, 1996, p. 111.

⁹⁸ Mark Burles, *Chinese Policy Toward Russia and the Central Asian Republics*, Santa Monica: RAND, 1999, p. 6.

international community through the United Nations, the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), and Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC).

At the same time, China has significantly strengthened its military posture by purchasing advanced weapons and technology from Russia and elsewhere. China has also developed its own indigenous weapons system, including missiles and nuclear arsenal, and exported these technologies to Pakistan, North Korea, and countries in the Middle East and North Africa. China maintains the world's third largest nuclear arsenal after the US and Russia. China's Strategic Missile Forces possess about 20 DF-5A ICBMs, 100 IRBMs (20 DF-4, 30 DF-3A, 50 DF-21), one Xia SSBN with 12 JL-1, 20 DF-15 launchers with 200 M-9 missiles, and approximately 100,000 troops in its Strategic Missile Forces (SMF).⁹⁹ The troops of the SMF were increased in number from 90,000 in 1996 to 100,000 in 2000, and the current troop level is believed to be almost the same as that of Russian strategic missile forces. By 2005, China could operate DF-31s (a land mobile ICBM, with a range of 8,000 km), JL-2s by 2008 (a similar version of SLBM) and DF-41s by the same year (which has 12,000 km range and MIRV) (See Table 3.2).¹⁰⁰

Table 3.2 The Evolution of China's Conventional and Nuclear Missiles

Chinese name	Western version	Range (km)	Payload (kg)	Deployed
DF-3A	CSS-2	2800	2150	May 1971
DF-4	CSS-3	4750	2200	1980
DF-5A	CSS-4	13000	3200	August 1981
JL-1/DF-21	CSS-N-3/CSS-5	1700	600	1985
JL-2/DF-31	None	8000	800	2008/2005*
DF-41	None	12000	800	2005*
DF-25	None	1700	2000	Mid -1990s
M-9/DF-15	CSS-6	600	950	1996*
M-11/DF-11	CSS-7	300	800	1996*

Sources: You Ji, *The Armed Forces of China*, pp. 89-91, 101.

* *Military Balance 2000-2001*, pp. 186-87.

⁹⁹ *The Military Balance 2000-2001*, p. 194.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 186.

Beijing signed the nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT) in 1992, but it announced that it would no longer accept any restrictions on its selling nuclear technology abroad.¹⁰¹ China's military connection with countries in the Gulf and North Africa has loomed large. Pakistan, Iran and Syria are well known as major recipients of China's missile and nuclear technologies. Aside from these nations, China is trading with Iraq by providing a gas turbine electrical power generating plant worth US\$160 million.¹⁰² According to a *Global Intelligence Update* report, one of China's largest telecommunications companies, Huawei Technologies Company violated UN sanctions against Iraq by selling and installing fibre-optic communications cables in 2001.¹⁰³ China has demonstrated that it intends to extend its sphere of influence over these countries while they are alienated by the US and Russia. Realists argue that international politics is essentially conflictive, and power is the most important tool in implementing state behaviour.¹⁰⁴ China appears to be following the theory of realism.

By 2000, the PLAN had not developed enough power projection capability to fulfil its broader goals. However, it is continuing to modernise its naval assets through the purchase of state-of-the-art destroyers, frigates, and light attack craft, and the construction of nuclear ballistic missile submarines, better missiles and long-range supply ships for landing forces.¹⁰⁵ To build up its defence industry, China has recruited more than 10,000 Russian scientists and engineers, and there is also evidence that it has waged an extensive espionage operation to steal US weapons technology from America's research laboratories over the past two decades.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰¹ Bill Gertz, *The China Threat*, Washington D. C.: Regnery Publishing, Inc., 2000, p. 108.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ Stratfor, "China: Huawei's Massive US Connections", *Global Intelligence Update*, 19 March 2001.

¹⁰⁴ James E. Dougherty and Robert L. Pfaltzgraff, Jr., *Contending Theories of International Relations*, 4th Ed., New York: Longman, 1996, p. 12.

¹⁰⁵ Steven W. Mosher, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 90-91. See also Bill Gertz, *The China Threat*, Washington D.C.: Regnery, 2000, pp. 129-133.

As a nuclear weapons state, China has been for some years a great power, with a permanent seat on the UN Security Council. Its increasingly important role in world affairs cannot be ignored. There is no doubt that prospects for peace, stability and prosperity in Asia and the world depend heavily on China's responsible and stable membership in the international community.¹⁰⁷ The history of the rise and fall of the western European powers in the sixteenth century (notably Spain, the Netherlands, France and Britain) shows a significant correlation between productive and revenue-raising capabilities on one hand and military strength on the other.¹⁰⁸ The British Empire, for example, rose to its zenith as a global power, in naval, colonial, and commercial terms, when its economy dominated the world.¹⁰⁹ With its sustained economic achievement and forced pace of modernisation, China is seeking greater influence beyond its borders, pursuing active participation in the international political and economic institutions and concomitantly increasing its maritime strategic orientation.¹¹⁰ Through this effort the Chinese are confident that their country will eventually become a superpower in both military and diplomatic terms.

3.2 Shaping and Evolution of the China's Navy

3.2.1 Force Structure of China's Armed Forces

The PLA consists of Strategic Missile Forces (with 20+ ICBMs, 100+ IRBMs one Xia-class SSBN and about 20 SRBMs), Army, Navy, Air Force and Paramilitary (People's Armed Police: 1.3 million troops).¹¹¹ China's Army is composed of 21 Integrated Group Armies (or the equivalent to Western corps, 44 infantry divisions,

¹⁰⁷ *US Department of Defence*, "The US Security Strategy for the East Asia-Pacific Region 1998", November 25, 1998.

¹⁰⁸ Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*, New York: Vintage Books, 1987, p. xvi.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. xviii.

¹¹⁰ Michael D. Swaine and Ashley J. Tellis, *Interpreting China's Grand Strategy*, Santa Monica: RAND, 2000, pp. 3-4.

¹¹¹ *The Military Balance 2000-2001*, pp. 194-197.

including seven mechanised infantry divisions, five independent divisions and three artillery divisions), which are deployed in seven Military Regions, 27 Provincial Military Districts and four Garrison Commands. Navy possesses 69 submarines, 62 principal surface combatants, 368 patrol and coastal combatants, 39 minelayers and mine countermeasures, 56 amphibious vessels, 163 support and miscellaneous ships, two marine brigades (3 army divisions also have amphibious mission), and naval air force of 471 shore-based combat aircraft and 35 armed helicopters.¹¹² Its Air Force has 33 air divisions (about 3,000 combat aircraft), 16 air defence artillery divisions (with about 16,000 guns), and 28 independent air defence artillery brigades (more than 100 SAM units).

The China's navy consists of the North Sea Fleet, the East Sea Fleet and the South Sea Fleet. The North Sea Fleet is responsible for the defence and security of the Yellow Sea and the Bo Sea, which China regards as the most important maritime areas because both seas are located the oceanic gateway to safeguard its capital city of Beijing.¹¹³ During the final stage of the Qing dynasty, this region was the site of some major sea battles between China, Japan and Russia. In the Cold War era, the PRC had a great concern for the region because of the ever-present threat of Soviet naval expansion. This fleet, which has the largest number of major surface combatants and is the home of China's nuclear submarine fleet, is a priority in the navy's long-term force deployment because of potential challenges posed by Russia, Japan and the fragile situation of the Korean Peninsula.¹¹⁴

The area of responsibility of the East Sea Fleet extends from the Nanjing Military Region, the littoral areas of the southern half of the Yellow Sea, all of the East China

¹¹² The Military Balance 2001-2002, *IJSS*, October 2001, p. 190.

¹¹³ You Ji, *The Armed Forces of China*, St Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1999, p. 176.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 177.

Sea, and the Taiwan Strait.¹¹⁵ Given the fact that the PRC's ultimate national goal is the re-integration of Taiwan, this fleet has considerable strategic significance. During the seaborne conflicts between the PRC and the ROC, this region was major battle arena. If and when China decides to go through with the forcible occupation of Taiwan, the East Sea Fleet would resume a critical role for the island operation.

The South Sea Fleet is responsible of the South China Sea region. This fleet is home to the PLAN's newly developed Luhai-class guided-missile destroyers, as well as China's marine units. The importance of this region is growing because the complications over the sovereignty of disputed islands there, and the exploitation of offshore mineral resources are crucial for China's national prestige and economy. This region is of strategic significance because the US and East Asian countries are heavily dependent on these waters as regional waterways for their force projection and commercial shipping alike. If it comes about, any measures of naval rivalry between China and great powers is most likely to develop in this area. China's strategy for the force structure and deployment of its three fleets is, of course, most likely to be dependent upon the changes that may occur in the security environment in the Asia-Pacific region. Given their geographical proximity, China's three fleets could easily readjust their force structure by transferring needed ships from one fleet to another if situation requires.

3.2.2 Evolution of the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN)

Mao's war doctrine was primarily a land-based defence policy, which had at its heart the mobilisation of the masses. During the wars against the Nationalists and the Japanese, the CCP had used guerrilla-style tactics; thus Mao had not experienced naval warfare until the establishment of the PRC. Mao's theory of city encirclement from forces in the countryside was widely accepted as an outstanding tactics not only for his

¹¹⁵ Bernard D. Cole, *The Great Wall at Sea*, Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2001, p. 83.

campaign against the Communists and the Japanese, but also for the struggle of many oppressed nations and peoples, particularly those countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America that were at one time under the rule of imperial powers.¹¹⁶ On 3 October 1949, five battalions of the PLA's 61st Division launched an assault on Nationalist-held Dengbu Island. Even with their initial victory over the island operation, the PLA units could not prevent enemy reinforcements by sea, and subsequently the Communist troops retreated in defeat, having suffered 1,490 casualties.¹¹⁷ In the same month, the PLA's 10th Army attempted to occupy the island of Quemoy (Jinmen). The PLA took the island in a surprise attack against the outnumbered troops of the Nationalists, but after suffering more than 9,000 casualties, it was defeated by Taiwan's seaborne counterattack.¹¹⁸ During both operations, the PLA landed on the islands only temporarily, with poorly armed junks and on rafts without any firepower support from artillery or aircraft.¹¹⁹ However, the PLA did manage to capture Hainan Island from the KMT in March and April 1950, with only about 500 casualties.¹²⁰ In this case, the PLA's victory was due mainly to geographical factors, since the island was located about 15 nautical miles from the mainland, and nearly 100 nautical miles from Taiwan. All three amphibious operations were executed using the traditional doctrine of 'people's war', with the result that the PLA suffered as many as 11,000 casualties in the three campaigns.

After suffering defeats from the sea in the early 1950s, Mao set up naval headquarters in Beijing and ordered all regional navies to be assigned to the Commander of the Navy, Xiao Jingguang, Mao's long time friend and PLA officer.¹²¹ At that time,

¹¹⁶ Lin Biao, "Long Live the Victory of People's War", Peking Review, (3 September 1965), quoted by J.L.S. Girling, *People's War*, London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1969, p. 49.

¹¹⁷ John Wilson Lewis and Xue Litai, *op. cit.*, p. 219.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ David G. Muller, Jr., *op. cit.*, p. 16.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 15. On 1 May 1949, the East China People's Navy was established by an army general Zhang Aiping as its commander in Jinan, Shandong, and a month later, the Naval Academy for the East China Military Zone was

the PRC navy had only 30 landing ships of US World War II construction, all left behind by the ROC (Republic of China) navy.¹²² In 1950, the PLA developed a plan to invade Taiwan with 4,000 motorised junks and 200,000 troops.¹²³ However, the plan was aborted due to a US policy initiative. On 27 June, President Truman reversed US policy towards Taiwan from one of non-interference to a firm commitment of defending the island, by saying that:

The occupation of Taiwan by Communist forces would be a direct threat to the security of the Pacific area and to the US forces performing their lawful and necessary functions in the area. Accordingly, I have ordered the Seventh Fleet to prevent any attack on Formosa. As a corollary of this action, I am calling upon the Chinese Government on Formosa to cease all air and sea operations against the mainland.¹²⁴

Realising the potential severity of the communist threat through its tracking of the Korean War, the Truman administration had decided to defend Taiwan. His adamant declaration and the formidable interposition of the Seventh Fleet prevented the PRC from any further attempts to invade Taiwan. The most important outcome of the US intervention was the Chinese loss of self-esteem, a frustration caused by failing to incorporate Taiwan into a total unified nation. The Chinese were subjected to attrition by the US, due to the former's weak military power, especially their feeble navy. However, the continuous sea challenge from Taiwan, supported by the US Seventh Fleet, had the effect of stimulating the development of the PRC Navy thereafter.¹²⁵

Chinese leaders also realised the importance of the naval force during the Korean War. The September 1950 Inchon Amphibious Operation by the United Nations forces surrounded the North Korean forces, who had occupied a good deal of South Korean territory, and compelled the invading troops to withdraw. After studying the operation,

established in Nanjing to prepare for the liberation of Taiwan and to build up the People's Navy in the future (David G. Muller, Jr., p. 14).

¹²² *Ibid.* p. 15

¹²³ Greg Austin, *China's Ocean Frontier*, St Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1998, p. 61.

¹²⁴ Harry S. Truman, "Statement by the President on the Situation in Korea," in *Public Papers of the President of the United States: Harry S. Truman, 1950*, Washington D.C.: US Government Printing Office, 1965, p. 492, quoted by David G. Muller, Jr., *op. cit.*, p. 17.

¹²⁵ David G. Muller, Jr., *op. cit.*, p. 18.

Mao learned how amphibious assaults and air bombardments were important for victory in modern warfare. The Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance, and Mutual Assistance was signed in 1950, after which the Soviet Union provided the Chinese navy with naval advisers, strategy, equipment, technology and engineers.¹²⁶ The number of the Soviet naval advisers increased from 500 in 1950 to almost 2,000 in 1953, and, moreover, they were assigned to all the Chinese naval units, bases and shipyards.¹²⁷ Furthermore, many Chinese naval officers were sent to the Soviet naval institutions for training. The Soviet Union's intention to support the growth of China's navy was, quite clearly, aimed in part at acquiring a naval presence in China's ports and gaining influence in the Chinese navy. In fact, in return for Moscow's assistance, Mao agreed to the Soviet request to use Lushun port as a Soviet forward naval base until 1952.¹²⁸ In the 1950s, China was able to develop its navy from a nominal one to a real naval force in terms of equipment and doctrine, owing largely to Soviet assistance.

The ROC Navy mirrored these developments through the enhancement of its force development, with the support of US naval advisers, and the importation of ex-US military vessels and smaller craft. Since May 1951, hundreds of US naval advisers helped the ROC naval units in conducting their operations, intelligence, logistics, and introducing dedicated training.¹²⁹ During the period between 1952 and 1955, there were a number of island conflicts between Beijing and Taipei. Taiwan lost many of its islands in these conflicts. The US had shown its firm commitment to defend Formosa, but during the operations, Washington's position towards the island conflicts was one of non-interference. The December 1954 US-ROC Mutual Defence Treaty stipulated that the US would defend Taiwan, but not the offshore islands. Thus, President Dwight Eisenhower

¹²⁶ Bernard D. Cole, *The Great Wall at Sea*, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

¹²⁷ David G. Muller, Jr., *op. cit.*, p. 19.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

¹²⁹ US Pacific Command Weekly Intelligence Digest, 8-54 (19 February 1954), p. 14. Quoted by David G. Muller, Jr., *op. cit.*, p. 20.

did not take any side in the island dispute.¹³⁰ Another reason for the lukewarm US attitude toward the island conflicts was the location of these islands. Many of the disputed islands were located close to the mainland, far away from Formosa.

Since China received its first submarine from the Soviets in July 1953, the PRC navy had continued to expand substantially, with the addition of various vessels, including destroyers, minesweepers and submarines being in clear evidence. From 1955 on, China was able to build modern warships in its shipyards with the assistance of Soviet shipbuilding experts.¹³¹ Another island crisis occurred on the Taiwanese-controlled Jinmen Island in August 1958. The PRC opened up with heavy artillery fire and increased MIG patrols in an attempt to blockade the island.¹³² The blockade continued until the end of September, but China announced a partial cease-fire because the US dispatched aircraft carriers to the vicinity of the island. As a result, the PRC's Jinmen incursion was frustrated by the overwhelming superiority of the US sea power.

When the PLAN's first five-year plan was presented to the Politburo in December 1953, Mao designated three tasks for the navy: to wipe out the pirates in the coastal areas; to assist the army in taking over Taiwan; and to resist foreign invaders attacking China from the sea.¹³³ Clearly, Mao's concept of the Chinese naval mission was still limited to coastal defence. In 1957, Xiao Jingguang, the first Commander-in-Chief of the PLAN (1950-1979), visited Moscow for talks on naval cooperation between China and the Soviet Union. In February 1959, the Sino-Soviet Navy New Technology Agreement was signed, through which Moscow sold to China five types of vessels: diesel-powered missile submarines, medium torpedo boats, large and small missile boats and hydrofoil

¹³⁰ Steven W. Mosher, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

¹³¹ Bernard D. Cole, *The Great Wall at Sea, op. cit.*, p. 18.

¹³² David G. Muller, Jr., *op. cit.*, p. 35.

¹³³ Xiao Jingguang, "Memoirs of Xiao Jingguang", Beijing: PLA Press, 1988, p. 114, quoted by Jun Zhan, "China Goes to the Blue Waters" *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, vol. 17, no. 3, (September 1994), p.184.

torpedo boats.¹³⁴ After the 1959 dismissal of Defence Minister Peng Dehuai on charges of heading an anti-party plot, the navy development plan was jeopardised.¹³⁵ In the spring of 1960, as discord with Moscow was rising, the Chinese Central Military Commission decided to assemble Golf-class and Romeo-class submarines using the remaining Soviet equipment and components, and the PLAN expanded the Dalian and Huangpu shipyards, while adding to these by constructing the Bohai shipyard near Huludao, Liaoning.¹³⁶ The construction of its first Romeo-class submarine was completed at the Jiangnan Shipyard in October 1964. In the same year, the first Hainan-class submarine chaser was launched at Huangpu. The 195-foot *Hainan* was to become the PRC's primary anti-submarine warfare platform for the next two decades.¹³⁷

This additional emphasis on naval power helped the PRC win two limited battles with Taiwan in 1965. Between 30 April and 1 May 1965, a 450-ton ROC patrol craft operating in Chinese coastal waters was attacked and badly damaged by six PRC gunboats.¹³⁸ On 6 August 1965 the ROC responded to the April attack, sending a 1,250-ton ROC patrol ship and a 450-ton patrol craft in order to land on the Fujian-Guangdong provincial border area. However, the two Taiwanese ships were taken by surprise and sunk by the PLAN, and a total of 203 Nationalists were killed or captured.¹³⁹ This battle marked a turning point in the naval rivalry between the PRC and ROC. By the end of 1965, the PLAN confidently controlled the East China coast from ROC incursions and harassment. With this victory, the PRC felt encouraged to further strengthen its naval power. From 1965 to the fall of Defence Minister Lin Biao in 1971, spending on the Chinese naval force increased by about 10 percent a year. Although Defence Minister Lin

¹³⁴ Jun Zhan, "China Goes to the Blue Waters" *op. cit.*, p. 187.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ John Wilson Lewis and Xue Litai, *op. cit.*, pp. 75, 81.

¹³⁷ David G. Muller, Jr., *op. cit.*, pp. 92-94.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 98.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

had an army background, he thought that the navy would play an important role for the security of China in the future. Thus, he undertook a naval development plan to cope with the sea threats from the USSR and the US.¹⁴⁰

China's naval build-up was encouraged mainly by the potential threat of the Soviet Union and Beijing's need to protect its sovereign island groups and shipping lanes. It was not until after the 1969 Sino-Russian confrontation that the importance of naval force was fully recognised. During the 1970s China allocated approximately 20 percent of the defence budget to the naval forces.¹⁴¹ During that period China's conventional submarine fleet tripled from 35 to 100 vessels, missile craft grew from 20 to 200 ships, two nuclear-powered attack submarines (SSN) and several guided missile frigates were newly commissioned, and the number of sailors doubled.¹⁴² China's offshore oil and gas exploration activities on and near some of the disputed islands and seas also called for China having a strong navy. China constructed its own exploratory wells and granted oil concessions to foreign companies in the region.¹⁴³ China also claimed numerous islands, reefs, and islets in the South China Sea as its sovereign territory, and it further argued that the Senkaku Islands belong to China.

During his 16 years as Defence Minister, Lin Biao helped the navy build more than 800 naval vessels, including 12 destroyers, 50 submarines, 200 torpedo craft and 525 patrol craft.¹⁴⁴ The death of Lin Biao in 1971 brought about the retrenchment of

¹⁴⁰ Kim Duk-ki, *China's Navy in the 21st Century (in Korean)*, Seoul: Korea Institute for Maritime Strategy, 2000, p. 65.

¹⁴¹ CIA Research Paper SR 80-10091, "Chinese Defence Spending", July 1980, quoted by Bruce Swanson, "Naval Forces", in Gerald Segal and William T. Tow, eds., *Chinese Defence Policy, op. cit.*, p. 85.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

¹⁴³ Chien Chung, "Confidence-Building Measures in the South China Sea", in Hung-mao Tien and Tun-jen Cheng, eds., *The Security Environment in the Asia-Pacific*, London: M. E. Sharpe, 2000, p. 282.

¹⁴⁴ David G. Muller, Jr., *op cit.*, p. 98.

military spending, which greatly hindered the development of the Chinese navy.¹⁴⁵ After the death of Lin Biao, Mao's close associates challenged his naval development plan. In 1972, Zhang Chunqiao, a member of the Gang of Four, stated that since China had been a continental power and possessed well-developed guide missiles capable of hitting any target, building a larger navy would be a waste of money and contradict Mao's emphasis on an army-dominated force structure.¹⁴⁶ This reaction against the importance of naval power was shown to be short-sighted after Mao's 1974 South Sea Fleet engagement with the South Vietnamese navy over the Paracel Islands. The Chinese navy sank one Vietnamese frigate, captured 49 men on board, and captured the Paracels.¹⁴⁷ Soon after the Paracel invasion, Beijing publicised the war as a 'victory of Mao Zedong's people's war at sea', because the Chinese navy could crush the Vietnamese troops by resorting to rifles and grenades.¹⁴⁸ Mao Zedong died in September 1976, and immediately after his death the Gang of Four was arrested. The purge of the radicals opened the way for the naval modernisation program.¹⁴⁹ However, as has already been discussed in detail earlier, Mao's 'people's war' strategy remained deeply rooted in the minds of most military leaders, who devoted themselves to Mao's doctrine and the theory of continental power until early 1980s.

In the 1970s the Chinese navy resumed a mission of defending sea regions within land-based radar range (about 50 nautical miles from the coastline).¹⁵⁰ However, from the late 1970s, Deng Xiaoping became deeply concerned about the Soviet naval surveillance activities near the Chinese waters of the carrier *Minsk* and submarines, and

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 106. In 1971, Lin Biao attempted to assassinate Mao Zedong, but Mao detected this plot. On 12 September 1971, Lin's plane took off heading for the Soviet Union, but the plane crashed in Mongolia under mysterious circumstances.

¹⁴⁶ John Wilson Lewis and Xue Litai, *op. cit.*, p. 223.

But in May 1975, Mao Zedong supported the building of the navy and opposed the radicals on this issue.

¹⁴⁷ David G. Muller Jr., *op. cit.*, p. 153.

¹⁴⁸ Jun Zhan, *op. cit.*, p. 181.

¹⁴⁹ David G. Muller Jr., *op. cit.*, p. 158.

¹⁵⁰ Bruce Swanson, "Naval Forces", in Gerald Segal and William T. Tow, eds., *Chinese Foreign Policy*, London: Macmillan, 1984, p. 90.

over the Soviet naval presence in Cam Ranh Bay.¹⁵¹ China also had been watchful against the Soviet's support of various kinds of vessels to the Vietnamese navy. All these sea challenges stimulated the Chinese leaders into enhancing their navy.

Between 14 and 21 April 1975, the Soviet navy demonstrated its new global naval outreach by conducting a large-scale naval exercise, *Okean 75* in the Western Pacific and the Indian Oceans.¹⁵² This exercise alarmed the Chinese leaders, who feared the growing Soviet maritime challenge. Two weeks after the exercise, Mao announced that the Chinese navy should be ready to any enemy's challenge.¹⁵³ At the same time, the changing nature of China's relationship with both the Soviet Union and the US gave added impetus for Chinese naval development. In December 1978, China and the US announced that they would establish full diplomatic relations on 1 January 1979. China's diplomatic relationship with the Soviet Union deteriorated as a result of the Sino-US partnership. China's month-long limited war against Vietnam in 1979 (in which the PLA suffered some 26,000 casualties, to take an area only fifteen kilometres into Vietnamese territory) consolidated Deng Xiaoping's and his military leaders' belief that both its capabilities of C4I system and logistics were inadequate for modern warfare, and that the PLAN needed a higher level of readiness than was provided by nominal manpower and munitions.¹⁵⁴ In 1980, the CCP protested that a Soviet drive for control of the Strait of Malacca represented a significant challenge to the China's national interest. Remin Ribao highlighted this challenge in an article:

If the Soviet Union can control the Strait of Malacca, it can squeeze out and strike blows at US influence in this region, cut off the supply of important strategic materials to Western Europe and the US, cut off this sea lane on which Japan relies for its existence, complete its naval encirclement of China, strike economic blows at the Southeast Asian countries which are closely tied to the Strait of Malacca, and threaten the independence and security of the Southeast Asian countries.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 88.

¹⁵² Bernard D. Cole, *The Great Wall at Sea*, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

¹⁵³ David G. Muller Jr., *op. cit.*, p. 171.

¹⁵⁴ Karl W. Eikenberry, "China's Challenge to Asia-Pacific Regional Security", in Richard J. Ellings and Sheldon W. Simon, eds., *Southeast Asian Security in the New Millennium*, New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1996, p. 100.

¹⁵⁵ Remin Ribao, 2 August 1980, quoted by David G. Muller Jr., *op. cit.*, p. 174.

In December 1979, the PLAN established its first marine brigade on Hainan Island. The PLAN's amphibious forces experienced drastic restructuring. In the early 1950s, when Mao intended to incorporate Taiwan into the PRC, there were as many as eight naval infantry divisions in the PLA.¹⁵⁶ These units were deactivated in 1957 due to the tentative renunciation of incorporating Taiwan, but they were re-activated again in 1979 as an amphibious force and assigned to the South Sea Fleet.¹⁵⁷ China's Marine Brigade is today composed of about 5,000 troops, with a variety of units, such as three marine battalions, one mechanised battalion, one light tank battalion, one artillery battalion and special reconnaissance units.¹⁵⁸ Three army divisions have been designated to resume amphibious operations with the Marine Brigade in case of an emergency situation.¹⁵⁹ A majority of its 700 landing craft are small and believed to be inadequate for ocean navigation, and most of its 55 large and medium ships are also more than 40 years old.¹⁶⁰ If China intends to seize Taiwan by force, it would have to transform a number of shore-based infantry divisions into naval infantry units for the required amphibious operation. A more urgent task for the Chinese navy, however, is to equip sufficient modern amphibious craft to carry their troops to disputed islands. Further, China will require well-trained marine forces and logistic support capability if it is serious in reclaiming Taiwan by force.

When Admiral Liu Huaqing resumed the post of Commander-in-Chief of the Navy in 1982, the PLAN opened a new era for its development. After taking office, Liu stressed that the Chinese navy had to grow rapidly into a major sea power in the Pacific region, in order to support China's economic modernisation, otherwise China would

¹⁵⁶ You Ji, *The Armed Forces of China*, *op. cit.*, p. 193.

¹⁵⁷ Bernard D. Cole, *The Great Wall at Sea*, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

¹⁵⁸ Military Balance 2000-2001, p. 196.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁰ You Ji, *The Armed Forces of China*, *op. cit.*, p. 194.

again lag behind in the technological revolution, and might eventually be consigned to the 'dustbin of history'.¹⁶¹ Liu developed his new naval doctrine, 'offshore defence', in 1982. He did so by arguing that it is unlikely that there will in the near future be a large-scale foreign invasion of China from the seas, thus China's navy should have a long-distance combat capability that stretches well beyond China's coast.¹⁶²

From the late 1980s, the PLAN initiated a series of restructuring efforts. As the Soviet threat diminished, the Yantai Base was merged with the Qingdao Base, and the specialised naval bases and patrol areas were also removed under the 'leaner and meaner' restructuring program.¹⁶³ As a second stage of restructuring, a large number of obsolete warships were also decommissioned and scrapped, including four destroyers and more than half of its 100 submarines, torpedo and missile boats.¹⁶⁴ In the third stage, the reform of the naval tertiary education system was introduced. In this process, a couple of naval academies were downgraded, and in 1985 the National Defence University was established in Beijing.¹⁶⁵ However, this restructuring represented only the beginning of the naval modernisation. The PLAN's long-term goal of creating a blue water navy has, it must be observed, a long way to go.

It was in the early 1980s that China's Navy began to emerge as one of the great sea powers in the Asia-Pacific, and this was achieved through the introduction of nuclear submarines. By 1983, the Chinese navy had taken its place as one of the major maritime forces in the East Asian waters, with its first nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine (SSBN) in operation. Admiral Liu Huaqing, who was the Chinese Navy's Commander-in-

¹⁶¹ Hua Wen, "Inside Story of Liu Huaqing's Promotion to Deputy Secretary-General of the CMC", *The Mirror Monthly* 184, Hong Kong: (January 1988), p. 38. Quoted by Jun Zhan, "China Goes to the Blue Waters", *Strategic Studies*, vol. 17, no. 3, (September 1994), p. 190.

¹⁶² Jun Zhan, *op. cit.*, p. 190.

Liu defined 'offshore' as the sea area from the Chinese coast to the first island chain of the Western Pacific, up to Kurile Islands in the north, and the Ryukyu Islands, Taiwan, the Philippines, Kalimantan and Natuna Besar in the east and south.

¹⁶³ You Ji, *The Armed Forces of China*, *op. cit.*, p. 185.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 186.

¹⁶⁵ Bernard D. Cole, *The Great Wall at Sea*, *op. cit.*, p. 120.

Chief from 1982 until 1988, steered Chinese naval strategy. Trained at the Voroshilov Naval Academy in the Soviet Union in the 1950s, Liu put forward China's first blue water naval strategy in the following way:

Firstly, the strategy stressed long-range manoeuvrability of the naval fleet, embracing Chinese waters adjacent to Vladivostok in the north, to the Strait of Malacca in the south, and continuing to the first island chain of the West Pacific in the east. Secondly, the strategy gives priority to preparation for regional flash point conflicts, which extends the PLAN's power projection in and beyond the Spratly Islands. The navy has been entrusted with missions to capture islands, protect and blockade sea-lanes of communications, and pursue other overseas operations. Thirdly, the strategy is aimed at being an ultimate deterrent against the big powers.¹⁶⁶

Liu also established a couple of naval research institutes, and encouraged researchers to study numerous research projects. He received a proposal from the researchers, a three-stage development plan for the twenty-first century navy. According to the proposal, "from the present to 2019, China develops its navy with large surface combatant vessels and nuclear attack submarines as its core force to protect all Chinese territorial waters; from 2019 to 2039 China acquires two or three light aircraft carriers, and becomes a major force in the Western Pacific; from 2040 on, the Chinese navy grows into a major world sea power like the US Navy."¹⁶⁷ Liu's long-range strategic plan has been the backbone of the Chinese naval development.

As a result of Liu's leadership, by the mid-1980s China's Navy had extended its sphere of operations into the Western Pacific. In 1986, for the first time in its history, the Chinese navy conducted a 'long-distance joint fleet exercise' in the Pacific; an operation led by the North Sea Fleet Commander Ma Xinchun.¹⁶⁸ A number of naval vessels and two B-6 bombers participated in the exercises. When the young officers landed on some islands where US and Japanese soldiers had fought during the Pacific War, they lamented that "the US and Japan fought here 40 years ago, what a shame we just landed here

¹⁶⁶ You Ji, "The PLA's Military Modernisation in the 1990s", *op. cit.*, p.247.

¹⁶⁷ Shijie Ribao Staff Reporter, "Asian Neighbours are Nervous about Beijing's Sea Expansion", *Shijie Ribao*, 5 August 1992, quoted by Jun Zhan, *op. cit.*, p. 191.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 193.

today”.¹⁶⁹ In May 1987, the East Sea Fleet voyaged into the Pacific through the Miyako Channel (in the southern Ryukyus), and at the same time the seven-vessel South Sea Fleet conducted a patrol mission and ocean survey in the South China Sea.¹⁷⁰

Deng and his colleagues knew well that the past century of humiliation was mainly caused by a feeble military posture, and particularly that of a weakened navy. Thus, they developed a plan to build the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) into a world-class force with state-of-the-art weapons and equipment, and, more significantly, to develop the People’s Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) into a blue water navy capable of projecting power to compete against the navies of the Soviet Union and the US.¹⁷¹

3.3 The PLA in the Post-Deng Era

In the post-Deng era, China has been more assertive than ever before, with naval modernisation through the acquisition of sophisticated weapons and the development of a blue water naval strategy. This new strategy was devised to primarily counter increasing US naval activities in the East and South China seas, and to protect China’s claims to the disputed islands. China clearly wants to be a global sea power.¹⁷² Before the accomplishment of such a grand strategy, the Chinese believe that they should have a strong navy to unify Taiwan and to control their claimed sovereign territories. In addition, their navy should be strong enough to secure energy resources in the South China Sea and to guarantee the unimpeded shipping of Middle Eastern oil, which has become increasingly important to China’s economy.¹⁷³ To effectively achieve these goals, the PLAN has been developing the following three-phase plan: acquiring new equipment

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁰ The Chinese Naval Journal, *Hai Jun*, (December 1987), quoted by Jun Zhan, *op. cit.*, p. 194.

¹⁷¹ Bill Gertz, *The China Threat*, Washington D.C.: Regnery Publishing Inc., 2000, p. 16.

¹⁷² Ulysses O. Zalamea, “Eagles and Dragons at Sea”, *Naval War College Review* (Autumn 1996).

[Khttp://user.ids.net/nwc/eagl-a96.html](http://user.ids.net/nwc/eagl-a96.html)<http://user.ids.net/nwc/eagl-a96.html> (Internet Accessed, on 24 November 1998)

¹⁷³ John Diamond, “War with China?” *Defence News*, September 19, 1997.

to, by the end of the twentieth century, deter local threats and win battles at low cost; securing a projection capability beyond the Western Pacific with aircraft carriers by the first decade of this century; becoming a global sea-power beyond 2010.¹⁷⁴

In addition to its internal weapons and equipment development programmes, the Chinese navy has imported sophisticated technologies from Russia, France, UK, Italy and Israel. The US has been one of the most significant suppliers for China, providing a Landsat satellite ground station that since 1986 has allowed the PLAN to monitor areas of Eastern Russia, Japan, Taiwan, and the Sino-Vietnamese border.¹⁷⁵ The PLAN also acquired Russian-made Raduga SS-N-22 anti-ship missiles, which have a range of 93 miles and a speed of Mach 2.3. It is believed that the missile system was retrofitted to the two Sovremenny-class destroyers that China had bought from Russia. According to the Military Balance, China is negotiating with Russia for the purchase of two more destroyers of the same kind.¹⁷⁶ The only naval defence system that can currently detect these supersonic anti-ship missiles is the US Aegis radar and missile combination.¹⁷⁷ The Sovremenny-class destroyer carries up to forty-four 30-mile-range SA-N-17 anti-aircraft missiles, one Kamov KA-27 anti-submarine helicopter, extensive electronic warfare systems, and 130 mm guns. These destroyers, when added to the four modern Kilo-class attack submarines, would increase the ability of the Chinese navy to harass US naval ships in China's seas and to attack Taiwanese naval ships. The Chinese navy is, with Russian support, working towards the construction of a new type of nuclear-powered attack submarine (Type 093), and the PLAN might have more than 15 new conventional and nuclear attack submarines by the year 2010.¹⁷⁸ After the acquisition of the

¹⁷⁴ *Nihon Keizai Shimbun*, April 29, 1996.

¹⁷⁵ Peter Kien-hong Yu, "The PLA Navy and Regionalism", in Richard H. Yang et al., eds., *Chinese Regionalism*, Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1994, p. 150.

¹⁷⁶ The Military Balance 2000-2001, p. 183.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

¹⁷⁸ Richard D. Fisher, Jr., "China's Arms Require Better US Military Ties with Taiwan", *The Heritage Foundation*, Backgrounder No. 1163, (March 11, 1998), p.7.

Sovremenny-class destroyer, US military leaders expressed a great concern about the destroyer. The Washington Times reports:

US Defence Department officials said that Russia recently delivered the first shipment of 24 SSN-22 anti-ship supersonic cruise missiles to China for the Sovremenny-class destroyer. US Representative Dana Rohrabacher, California Republican, stated, "The Chinese communists now have the ability to sink American aircraft carriers and kill thousands of Americans." - - Richer Fisher, a specialist on the Chinese military in the Jamestown Foundation, said that, "Taiwan has no defensive system that can take out this missile besides a pre-emptive attack on the destroyer itself, which increases instability on the Taiwan Strait".¹⁷⁹

China's desire to possess an aircraft carrier has been one of the most significant issues among Chinese leaders. China's *708 Institute* first began feasibility studies on carrier design in its 600 metre-model pool in the early 1980s in Tai Lake, Jiangsu Province.¹⁸⁰ In 1985, China purchased the retired aircraft carrier *Melbourne* from Australia, and studied its design features. In April 1987, the naval air units conducted their first take-off and landing trial on a simulated deck at a naval base in North China. Using a catapult, naval pilots reached 250 km/hour at 60 metres. In November 1990, a model of China's first-generation carrier was displayed in Beijing. The carrier was designed to have a displacement of 40,000-50,000 tonnes, and 20 fixed-wing planes on deck and another 20 in the hangar.¹⁸¹

China's aircraft carrier acquisition effort has, in the past few years, been furthered through the purchase of a number of decommissioned carriers from abroad. In March 1998, a Macao company bought an unfinished carrier *Varyag* from Ukraine in an attempt to turn it into a floating amusement park.¹⁸² In August 2000, Tianma Shipbreaking of Tianjin paid the Russian navy US\$8.4 million for the decommissioned *Kiev* for scrap.¹⁸³ In September 2000, China bought the carrier *Minsk* from South Korea for US\$5 million.

¹⁷⁹ Bill Gertz, "Russia Sends Cruise Missiles to China for New Warships", *The Washington Times*, 19 May 2000

¹⁸⁰ Ye Zhi, "Come, the Aircraft Carriers", quoted by You Ji, "The PLA's Modernisation in the 1990s", *op. cit.*, p. 248.

¹⁸¹ Shi Fei, "The General Developmental Trend of the Chinese Military", quoted by You Ji, "The PLA's Modernisation in the 1990s", *op. cit.*, p. 248.

¹⁸² Mark J. Porubcansky, "The Aircraft Carrier Varyag," *The Associated Press*, 21 March 1998.

¹⁸³ *The Times of India*, "China buys Russian aircraft carrier, but only for scrap," 31 August 2000.

The stated intention was to turn the vessel into an amusement park. South Korea had itself purchased the carrier from Russia in 1995 in order to turn it into a floating hotel.¹⁸⁴ Though the Chinese leadership steadfastly denied their intentions in pursuing carrier development, Beijing has long desired to possess a carrier to modernise its navy and to be able to project military power into the South China Sea and beyond. With regard to the Chinese aircraft carrier program, a number of defence experts have expressed their views on this subject. Chung-in Moon has stated that China is building a blue-water navy, and plans to equip a carrier on its fleet in the early twenty-first century.¹⁸⁵ Richard Fisher, an authority on China's military strategy, points out that China could build a 48,000-ton carrier with up to 40 fixed-wing aircraft on deck by 2005.¹⁸⁶ The Taiwan Security Research Institute has also reported that China's first locally built aircraft carrier of 48,000 tons with 24 fighter planes on board will be in full service in 2005, and it plans to invest US\$585 million to build its own carrier.¹⁸⁷ However, Robert Ross, of the Henry L. Stimson Centre, argues that it could take slightly longer for China to possess carriers, by stating that, "If China were to begin building a carrier [in 1997], current estimates predict that one could be operational by 2010, and a third might be completed in the year 2020".¹⁸⁸ According to a press report, China will possess its first carrier by 2005, with a second in service by 2009.¹⁸⁹ Most strategic studies experts predict that China will boast of possessing an aircraft carrier within a decade, either buying one from a foreign seller or manufacturing it domestically.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁴ Margaret Wong, "Soviet Pride to Sino Fun Park," *The Associated Press*, 28 September 2000.

¹⁸⁵ Chung-in Moon, "Changing Threat Environment, Force Structure, and Defence Planning: The South Korean Case", in Natalie Crawford and Chung-in Moon, eds., *Emerging Threat, Force Structure, and the Role of Air Power in Korea*, Santa Monica: RAND, 2000, 93.

¹⁸⁶ Richard D. Fisher, *Dangerous Moves*, *op. cit.*,

¹⁸⁷ *Agence France Presse*, "China's First Aircraft Carrier Ready for Service in 2005," 12 January 2000.

¹⁸⁸ Robert Ross, "Assessing the China Challenge", *Asian Security Series*, Henry L. Stimson Centre, (May 1997).

¹⁸⁹ *Agence France Presse*, "China's First Aircraft Carrier", 1 December 2000.

¹⁹⁰ The views on China's aircraft carrier option can be found in interviews with some specialists on China: Mr Zhai Kun in China Institute of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR) notes that China will buy aircraft carrier from foreign country in a decade; whereas Dr Wang Yizhou in Chinese Academy of Social Science (CASS) indicates that China will possess aircraft carrier through both means, buying from abroad or building in its arsenal.



If China possessed a carrier – for example, a similar type to the Ukrainian 67,000-ton Kiev-class carrier, which can carry 80 to 100 aircraft – China’s force projection capability would be exponentially increased. Another source indicates that the Chinese navy has plans to establish two carrier battle groups in the early years of the next decade.¹⁹¹ It is unlikely that in less than a decade China could possess such a formidable carrier battle group – in effect similar to a US Nimitz class carrier battle group – made up of six warships, 90 aircraft and 8,000 personnel.¹⁹² At any rate, all indications are that China will have a carrier in a decade by purchasing from abroad, and its second and third carrier will be built domestically. Its carrier force will enhance the force projection capability of the Chinese navy in the Western Pacific as well as in the Indian Ocean. More significantly, it would then be better placed to challenge American naval activities in the region. Although China is still a relatively poor country on a per capita income basis, it obviously has immense potential in being able to concentrate its resources and abilities into the forms of military strength necessary to become a global sea power.¹⁹³

China is also eager to enhance its naval forces. Through the rejuvenation of its naval assets, by 2010 the PLAN will, as suggested earlier, possess at least one aircraft carrier, four Sovremenny-class destroyers and five Luhai-class destroyers, nine Jiangwei-class frigates, 12 Type-093/094 submarines and four Kilo-class submarines, and 100 FH-7 naval aircraft (See Table 3.3).

On the other hand, Dr J. N. Mak in Maritime Institute of Malaysia (MIMA) says that China will have a helicopter carrier rather than an aircraft carrier.

¹⁹¹ Shi Fei, “The General Developmental Trend of the Chinese Military”, quoted by You Ji, “The PLA’s Modernisation in the 1990s”, *op. cit.*, p. 248.

<http://www.lookoutpoint.com/china.html> (Internet Accessed, on 3 May 1998).

¹⁹² David Isenberg, “The Illusion of Power: Aircraft Carrier and the US Military Strategy”, *Cato Institute Policy Analysis* no. 134, (June 1990).

¹⁹³ Ulysses O. Zalamea, “Eagles and Dragons at Sea”, *Naval War College Review* (Autumn 1996)

<http://user.ids.net/nwc/eagl-a96.html> (Internet Accessed, on 23 July 1999).

Table 3.3 The Prospect of PLAN's Major Ships and Naval Aircraft by 2010

Type	Class	Displacement	Inventory (2000/2010)
Aircraft Carrier		45,000	0/1
Destroyers			
Type 956	Sovremenny*	8,840	1/4
Type 054	Luhai	6,600	1/5
Frigates			
Type 059	Jiangwei III	3,000	0/3
Type 057	Jiangwei II	2,250	2/6
Submarines			
Type 094	NEWCON SSBN	8,000	0/8
Type 093	NEWCON SSN	6,500	0/4
	Kilo	2,325	2/4
Type 039	Song	2,250	2/5
Amphibious			
Type 074	Yuting	4,800	6/20
Naval Aviation			
FH-7	Attack		25/100

Source: Federation of American Scientists, People's Liberation Army Navy
<http://www.fas.org/man/dod-101/sys/ship/row/plan/index> (Internet Accessed, on 1 May 2000)

*: Military Balance 2000-2001, p. 183.

The Chinese naval challenges are currently being met in a relatively reactive way, given the limitations of the PLAN. However, they are likely to be pursued proactively if and when China's naval projection capability reaches a critical mass, which will allow it to control and shape the usage of the vital sea lines of communication (SLOC) in the region.

Chapter Four

China's Expanding Maritime Sphere of Influence in the Western Pacific and the Indian Ocean

4.1 China's Navy and Its Threat Perception

Chinese leaders aspire to a great China, a country with a world-class economy and military, and with the restoration of full sovereignty over Taiwan and other disputed islands within its claimed territorial boundaries. Before the accomplishment of such a grand strategy, the Chinese believe that they should have a strong navy. In addition, they consider that their navy should be strong enough to secure energy resources in the South China Sea and to guarantee the unimpeded shipping of Middle Eastern oil, which has become increasingly important to China's economy.¹ After the end of the Cold War, the Chinese leadership began to realise the importance of the naval component in accomplishing their grand strategy.

Unlike Mao and Deng, Jiang Zemin has had little military experience. As a result of Jiang's background, senior leaders in the PLA have become more influential in national policymaking since the early 1990s.² However, Jiang has slowly grasped the control of the PLA by cautiously restricting the PLA from commerce, and at the same time by increasing defence outlays.³ Jiang's military doctrine has stressed the high-tech defence strategy, and he has tried, in parallel, to provide sufficient resources to the PLA. Following the 1998 Jiang Zemin's decision, China cut 1.5 million troops from its armed forces, choosing instead to enhance its military assets by importing sophisticated weapons and equipment from abroad. To implement Jiang's high-tech defence strategy,

¹ John Diamond, "War with China?," *Defence News*, September 19, 1997

² Andrew Scobell, *Chinese Army in the Era of Jiang Zemin*, Carlisle, PA: US Army War College, August 2000, p. 15.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

Admiral Shi Yunsheng, Commander of the PLAN, outlined China's twenty-first century naval strategy in the following fashion:

First, an offshore defence strategy; second, making the navy strong with science and technology, narrowing the gap between it and other military powers; third, more advanced weapons, including warships, submarines, fighters, missiles, torpedoes, guns, and electronic equipment; and fourth, trained personnel and more qualified people.⁴

Although Admiral Shi's blue print for the development of the PLAN seems too far, it is essential goal of China's navy to accomplish its national objectives of the unification of Taiwan, control of the South China Sea and maritime expansion into the Western Pacific and the Indian Ocean.

Undoubtedly, the Taiwan issue is one of the most urgent tasks for the Chinese leaders. It is quite likely that any attempt to invade Taiwan by the PRC would invite US naval intervention. Furthermore, island disputes in the South China Sea and exploration of offshore resources in those areas have become increasingly important to China. This strategic environment requires a well-developed naval force. Although China currently has only limited capability of defending its claimed sea region, it is expanding its role of power projection toward East, South China Seas, the Yellow Sea and the Sea of Japan.⁵

Furthermore, China is working to expand its strategic depth to more remote regions around Australia, South Africa and the US to emphasise its position as a world power.⁶ China's naval ambitions are not only concerned with its neighbouring seas, but also extend to a far broader context. In recent years, China boldly conducted a number of expeditions to the Antarctic and the Arctic. China began its Antarctic expeditions in 1984, and Arctic expeditions in 1999, through which PLAN units engaged in such operations as oceanographic survey and sea-bottom research for the purpose of increasing their Anti-submarine Warfare (ASW) capability.⁷ In 1997, the Hong Kong-

⁴ *Xinhua*, 21 April 1999, quoted by Bernard D. Cole, *The Great Wall at Sea*, Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 2001, p. 173.

⁵ "Jane's Fighting Ships 2001-2002 Foreword", 30 April 2001.

<http://www.janes.com/press/pc010430.shtml> (Internet Accessed, on 20 December, 2001).

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Bernard D. Cole, *The Great Wall at Sea*, Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 2001, p. 34.

based Hutchison-Whampoa Company purchased the rights to port facilities on both the Pacific and Atlantic terminals of the Panama Canal.⁸ In addition, the Chinese government has finalised an agreement with Egypt, allowing ships of the China Ocean Shipping Company (COSCO) to use port facilities along the Suez Canal.⁹ It is quite possible that such an agreement could possibly interfere with the transit of US aircraft carrier battle groups, in the event of the emergence of an international crisis. All these developments demonstrate how China wants to expand its maritime interest to the world's oceans. The challenge of maritime rivalry and tensions in the Western Pacific will, as a consequence, be added to by China's maritime ambitions through its increasing naval power and willingness to contest land claims in adjoining seas.¹⁰

As Tai Ming Cheung writes, the build-up of the Chinese naval force is an important component in Beijing's efforts to expand its diplomatic influence.¹¹ China has actively conducted port calls around the world to demonstrate its more pronounced naval profile. From March to May 1997, Chinese naval vessels visited US, Mexico, Chile, Peru, Thailand, the Philippines and Malaysia.¹² In recent years, the PLAN vessels also conducted a wide range of visits around the globe, sailing to some 23 countries in Asia, America, Africa, Europe and Oceania.¹³ Such diplomatic gesture intended to promote mutual understanding, as well as informing the countries visited that China's naval interests are growing on a global scale. Washington and Tokyo have become worried about Beijing's recent moves to expand its maritime power. Similarly, though, Beijing

⁸ Stratfor, "Chinese Involvement Does Not Substantially Increase Canal Zone Risk", *Global Intelligence Update*, 28 June 1999.

⁹ Stratfor, "From Singapore to Port Said: China's Influence over the World's Waterways", *Global Intelligence Update*, 10 May 2000.

¹⁰ Sam Bateman, "Sources of Conflicts at Sea in the Context of the Western Pacific", in Seo-Hang Lee and Jin-Hyun Paik, eds., *Conflict and Order at Sea*, Seoul: Institute of East and West Studies, 1998, p. 70.

¹¹ Tai Ming Cheung, *Growth of China's Naval Power*, Singapore: ISEAS, 1990, p. 17.

¹² Information Office of the State Council of PRC, *China's National Defence*, Beijing, 1998, p. 34.

¹³ "PLA Navy Fleet concludes Voyage to Australia and New Zealand", *People's Daily*, 31 October 2001.

has viewed Tokyo's active involvement in the peacekeeping operation (PKO) since 1991 as a signal of its reviving military adventurism towards the Asia-Pacific region.¹⁴

To implement its maritime expansion, China is currently modernising its naval assets. The PLAN commissioned the first of its Song-class submarine in the late 1990s. The Song-class submarine was fitted with the C-801 and C-802 anti-ship cruise missiles, which is capable of submerged launch.¹⁵ It is also expected that the new Type 093 and 094 nuclear-powered submarine (SSN) would provide China with a high level of maritime deterrence and capability. The Type 093 SSN, which China is building is a modified version of the Russian Victor-3 SSN, the first example of the class of vessel is expected to come into service until 2005.¹⁶ However, the Type 094 nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine (SSBN) does not seem to be likely to be in service until the end of the decade.¹⁷ The newly built Luhai-class destroyers will significantly enhance anti-submarine and anti-ship warfare capabilities. The Luhai-class guided missile destroyer Shenzhen features a considerable number of new advanced specifications, including C-802 surface-to-surface missiles with a range of 65 nautical miles, a 42 nautical miles increase over the older C-801.¹⁸ The PLAN also enhances its naval air force by contracting KH-35 long-range anti-ship missiles with Russia, and which are to be used in the latest batch of 40 Su-30 MKK, which are likely to be deployed in the PLAN aviation units.¹⁹

However, China's efforts at naval modernisation are affected by a number of domestic factors, which potentially restrain change in the latter area. Traditionally, army officers have dominated important positions in China's military-related institutions. PLAN officers, relatively speaking, have had little opportunity to hold important

¹⁴ Chang Ya-chun, "Beijing's Maritime Rivalry with the US and Japan", *Issues and Studies*, vol. 34, no. 6, (June 1998), p58.

¹⁵ Frank W. Moore, "China's Military Capabilities", *Institute for Defence and Armament Studies (IDDS)*, June 2000.

¹⁶ The Military Balance 2001-2002, *IJSS*, October 2001, p. 172-73.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 173.

¹⁸ "China's New Destroyer", *Jane's Press Centre*, 18 February 2000.

¹⁹ The Military Balance 2001-2002, *op. cit.*, p. 177.

positions in China's military hierarchy. Out of these, in fact, only Liu Huaqing, who had been commander of the PLAN from 1982 until 1988, reached a very senior level (as Vice Chairman of the Central Military Commission [CMC] during the period between 1989 and 1997). As noted earlier, Liu developed the maritime concept of offshore defence by elaborating a first and second island chain strategy for the blue-water navy. Though Liu's maritime strategy was an ambitious one, the PLAN has been suffering budget constraints in its effort to bring this plan into operation, due to the army-dominated power structure in the PLA and the CMC. In addition, technically, China lacks the capability of building sophisticated naval vessels and has a limited capability of C³I and reconnaissance, therefore depends mainly on such weapon systems through the importation from Russia. To overcome those constraints, in 1998, Jiang established General Armament Department (GAD) to enhance the PLA's research, development and acquisition efforts.²⁰ Since the mid-1990s, China has begun to increase defence budget significantly (from US\$ 6.7 billion in 1994 to US\$ 14.5 billion in 2000, marking annual increase of 16 percent).²¹ The budget, however, remains something of a mystery. The purchase of Russian-built Su-27 and Su-30 fighter aircraft was not included in the official defence budget.²² According to the Military Balance 2001-2002, China's real military spending in 2000 was approximately 5.3 percent of the country's GDP.²³ However, budget for the PLAN, moreover, is still unknown. Bernard Cole suggests that a suitable line for the development of China's blue-water navy would be that, "Beijing should reorder its Four Modernisation priorities to place the military first or second on the scale, with most of the resulting increase allocated to the navy."²⁴ Given the PRC's first priorities are its economic development and traditional army-dominated PLA system; the PLAN's development of its blue-water capacity can only be achieved

²⁰ Michael McDevitt, "Ruminations about how little we know about the PLA navy", A Conference Paper, *China Studies Centre*, US National Defence University, October 2000, p. 18.

²¹ The Military Balance 1995-96 and 2000-2001.

²² The Military Balance 2001-2002, *op. cit.*, p. 177.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Bernard D. Cole, *The Great Wall at Sea*, *op. cit.*, p. 185.

through the government's recognition of the PLAN's current problems in coping with the changing environment in the Western Pacific and the Indian Ocean. In addition, sustained economic development is crucial for the overall force modernisation.

Chinese leaders well know that now is not the time for them to compete against the US hegemonic sea power in the Western Pacific because of the current limitations of the PRC's naval power. China must wait until it possesses enough military power to compete against the US. As one source predicts, "To delay or avoid a direct confrontation of the US, Beijing is undertaking a policy of distraction, and actively seeking to drive a wedge between Washington and its regional allies."²⁵ Larry Wortzel, an expert on China's military strategy in the region, also indicates that, "Beijing's strategy is to buy time for increasing its military potential, which is slowly improving its capacity to be a stronger military power".²⁶ In this context, China is likely to strongly pursue the development of its economy to enhance its military capability, including its naval force through the acquisition of sophisticated warships and the enhancement of training and exercises.

In the long run, however, China continues to aspire to its goal of becoming a superpower, sharing a leading role in the international community with the US. In addition to this long-term goal, however, the Chinese are also keenly aware that they should have a blue-water naval capability in order to control the South China Sea, and to safeguard sea-lanes from the Middle East to the Chinese ports; a more pragmatic issue that goes to the very heart of China's economic modernisation.

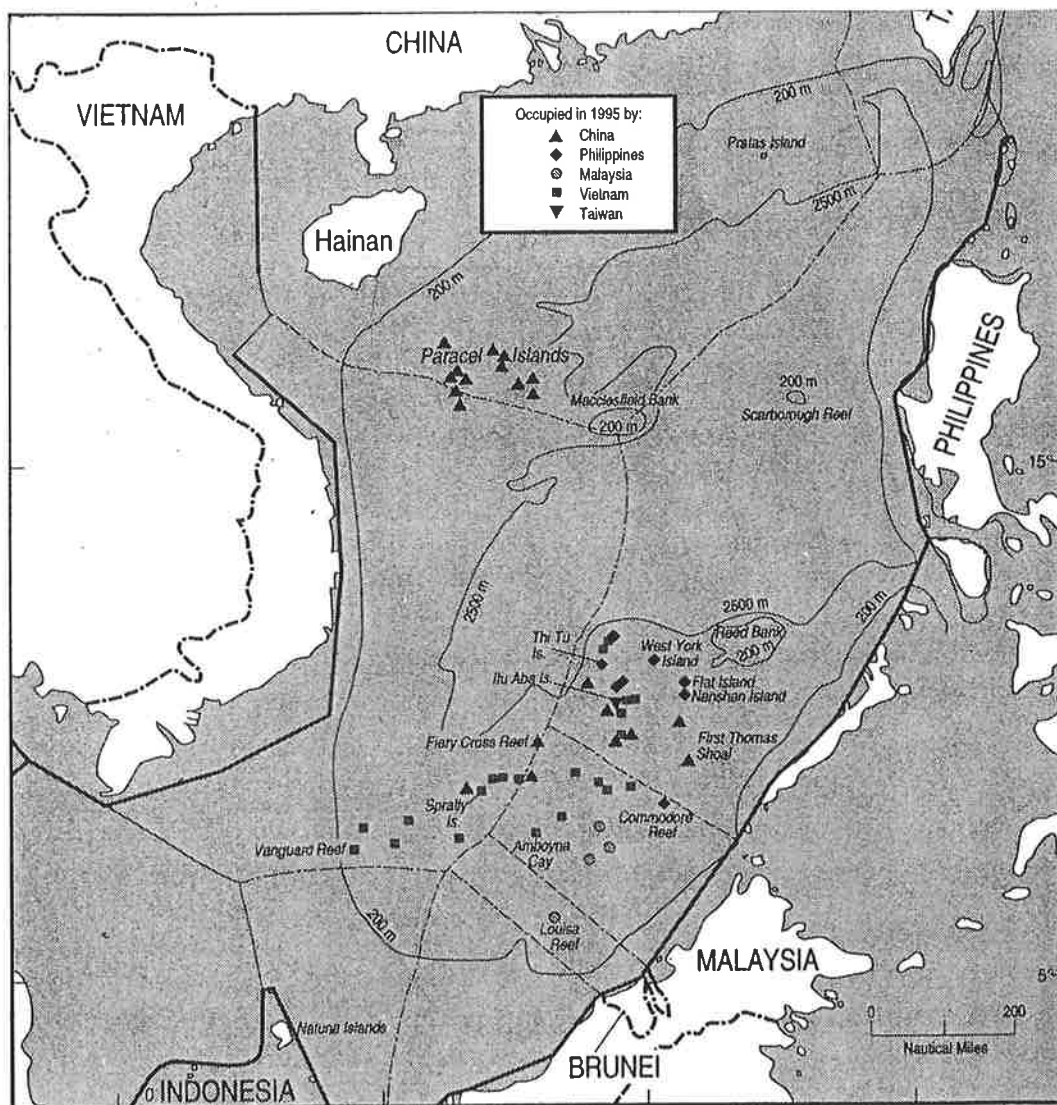
4.2 The South China Sea

²⁵ Stratfor, "China's Policy of Distraction Involves Japan", *Global Intelligence Update*, 13 December 2000.

²⁶ Larry M. Wortzel, "China's Military Potential", *Strategic Studies Institute*, US Army War College Review, (2 October 1998), p. 4.

The South China Sea – known in Chinese as Nan Hai, or the South Sea – is part of the Western Pacific Ocean, and is bounded on the northeast by the Taiwan Strait (by which it is connected to the East China Sea), on the east by Taiwan and the Philippines, on the southeast and south by Borneo, the southern limit of the Gulf of Thailand, and the east coast of Malay Peninsula, and on the west and north by the Asian mainland.²⁷ In this body of water lie the Spratly Islands, the Paracel Islands, the Pratas Islands, the Macclesfield Bank and the Scarborough Reef are the main groups (See Figure 4.1).²⁸

Figure 4.1 Boundary of the South China Sea by equidistance lines from claimed or approximated coastal baselines and occupation of islands



Source: Mark J. Valencia and Jon M. Van Dyke, "Comprehensive Solutions to the South China Sea Disputes", in Sam Bateman and Stephen Bates, eds., Canberra: ANU, 1996, p. 237 (Figure 11.4).

²⁷ 1996 Encyclopaedia Britannica (CD Resource).

²⁸ Bob Catley and Makmur Kelliat, *Spratlys*, Sydney: Ashgate, 1997, p. 3.

Through its presence in the South China Sea, and particularly on the Spratlys, China intends to become a sole sovereign nation controlling the area, and possibly to expand its influence widely into the region as a whole.²⁹ The Spratly Island group is composed of some 230 small islands, rocks and reefs, and the combined land area of these islands is approximately one square mile. The largest island is less than a mile long and 600 metres wide and all but 26 are under water during high tide. By 1997, Vietnam occupied 21 islands and reefs, China and the Philippines occupied eight each, Malaysia occupied three, and Thailand one.³⁰ However, the Chinese have asserted that the Spratly Islands have been Chinese administered territory from as far back the Song Dynasty (AD 960 - 1279).³¹

The Spratly Islands were named after the captain Richard Spratly, who visited the islands with his private whaler, *Cyrus* in the mid-nineteenth century.³² In 1933, French forces in Vietnam occupied the Paracel Islands and Itu Aba, the largest island of the Spratlys, and subsequently Vietnamese settlers landed on both island groups.³³ In 1939, Japan military occupied the entire Spratlys, along with the Paracels. In 1941, the Japanese built a communication and weather station on the Itu Aba Island for their naval operation in the Western Pacific Ocean.³⁴ When the US submarine *Hoe* and its aircraft bombed the Itu Aba in May 1945, the Japanese garrison had to leave the islands.³⁵ After the end of WWII, Taiwan's navy reoccupied the island, and established direct postal and satellite communication links between Taiwan and the Taiwanese on the island.³⁶ On 1 December 1947 the Chinese Communist regime announced formally the incorporation of the Spratlys and Paracels (referred to as the Xisha Islands) into Guangdong Province.

²⁹ Bob Catley and Makmur Kelliat, *op. cit.*, pp. 216-17.

³⁰ Scott Snyder, "The South China Sea Dispute", Special Report, *US Institute of Peace*, Washington D. C. August 1996, quoted by Denny Roy, *China's Foreign Relations, op. cit.*, p. 185.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 185.

³² Bob Catley and Makmur Kelliat, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

³³ Chien Chung, "Confidence-Building Measures in the South China Sea", in Hung-mao Tien and Tun-jen Cheng, eds., *The Security Environment in the Asia-Pacific*, New York: M. E. Sharpe, 2000, P. 266.

³⁴ David G. Muller Jr., *China as a Maritime Power, op. cit.*, p. 81.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ Chien Chung, *op. cit.*, p. 264.

The PRC again declared and reiterated a fresh its claims over the islands in October 1949, and again in September 1951. Chinese claims are based on a number of historical records, including the maritime expedition to the Spratlys by Chinese vessels in the Han dynasty in AD 110 and also those in the Ming dynasty (during the period between 1403 and 1433).³⁷

Other claimants also argued that they had historical records to assert the sovereignty over several islands in the South China Sea. In 1951, Vietnam insisted that the Spratly (Truong Sa in Vietnamese) and Paracel (Hoang Sa in Vietnamese) Islands belonged to Vietnam; in 1971, the Philippines made an official claim to 53 islands, cays, shoals and reefs of the Spratlys and designated them as part of Palawan Province; and in 1978, Malaysia occupied three islands of the Spratlys, arguing that they are on its own continental shelf.³⁸ The dispute concerning sovereignty over the Spratly and Paracel Islands, as well as the adjacent ocean-space, has been a thorny issue between China and other claimants, and has triggered several military clashes over the past two decades (See Table 4.1).

Table 4.1 Military Clashes in the South China Sea

Countries	Military Clashes
China and Vietnam	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. China seized the Paracel Island (1974). 2. Navies of both countries clashed in Johnson Reef in the Spratlys (1988). 3. Vietnam accused China of landing troops on Da Luc Reef, and China seized 20 Vietnamese ships transporting goods from Hong Kong (1992). 4. Both countries clashed in their oil exploration blocks (1994).
China and Philippine	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. China occupied Philippine-claimed Mischief Reef (1995). 2. Both nations clashed in Scarborough Shoal (1997). 3. Two Chinese fishing boats were sunk by Philippine warships (1999).
Philippine and Vietnam	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Vietnam fired on a Philippine fishing boat near Tennent Reef (1998). 2. Vietnam fired on a Philippine reconnaissance aircraft in Spratlys (1999).
Malaysia and Philippine	Both military aircraft nearly engaged over a Malaysian-occupied reef (1999).
Taiwan and Vietnam	Taiwanese artillery fired on a Vietnamese supply ship (1995).

Source: US Energy Information Administration, "The South China Sea Tables", February 2001.

³⁷ US Energy Information Administration, "The South China Sea Tables", February 2001. <http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/schinatab.html> (Internet Accessed, on 21 March 2001).

³⁸ Bob Catley and Makmur Kelliatt, *op. cit.*, pp. 25-27.

In the early 1990s, Indonesia voluntarily mediated to resolve the Spratly issue, but it gave up because China's claims might extend to its own Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) and continental shelf, including the Natuna gas fields.³⁹ Furthermore, in 1993, China revealed the existence of a map asserting that almost every island in the South China Sea was Chinese territory, including the Natuna Island.⁴⁰ China's claims annoyed Indonesian leaders, and they consequently protested against China's assertiveness. Since then, Indonesia has ceased to arbitrate in the Spratly issue. Any potential resolution of the Spratlys question seems to favour China, because the latter's claim to the whole Spratly group in 1946 and, subsequent occupation of Itu Aba Island, predate any other claim to the islands.⁴¹ Even with China's preoccupation over the islands, the Spratlys continue to be a contentious issue between claimants. Greg Austin has suggested three likely methods of reaching a resolution of the Spratly issue: judicial arbitration, to which all parties agree; long-term abandonment of sovereign claims in favour of a multilateral cooperative regime; or use of force to expel rival claimants.⁴² Given its past courses of action toward many disputed islands, it seems likely that China would eventually resort to force against its opponents, and tackle the latter on a one-by-one basis.

The Paracel Islands consist of 11 coral islets and numerous reefs and rocks, located in the area some 175 nautical miles Southeast of Hainan. For centuries, the islands have been used as shelters by Chinese and Vietnamese fishermen, but the islands were first discovered by the Ming dynasty's Admiral Zheng He early in the fifteenth century.⁴³ As a colonial power in Vietnam, France claimed the sovereignty of the

³⁹ Ian Townsend-Gault, "South China Sea" in Sam Bateman and Stephen Bates, eds., *Regional Maritime Management and Security*, Canberra: ANU, 1998, p. 117.

⁴⁰ Denny Roy, *op. cit.*, p. 188.

⁴¹ Greg Austin, *China's Ocean Frontier*, St Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin Australia Pty Ltd., 1998, p. 160.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 161.

⁴³ David G. Muller, Jr., *op. cit.*, p. 80.

Paracels in 1816, but did not occupy them until 1912.⁴⁴ Then the Japanese controlled the area from 1939 until the signing of the 1951 San Francisco Peace Treaty.⁴⁵ When Hainan fell to the PRC in 1950, the ROC naval garrison in the Paracels abandoned the islands and fled to Taiwan.⁴⁶ Pratas Islands (Dongsha, in Chinese) lie 120 nautical miles off the coast of China. The KMT government set up a weather station on one of the Pratas Islands in 1926, and maintained it until 1937, when Japan forcibly occupied the island. The Taiwanese navy re-occupied it in 1946 and has since re-established its weather and communication stations there.⁴⁷

Offshore oil production has recently become a matter of concern in the South China Sea. The dispute between China and Vietnam over oil drilling activities in the region has been looming large. In March 1997, Vietnam protested that a Chinese oil exploration rig had ventured into its own territorial waters. Among the states claiming the sovereignty over the Spratlys, China and Vietnam, in particular, are working with foreign oil companies in offshore oil exploration in the disputed area. In March 1997, at the request of the Vietnamese government, China moved the Kan Tan III exploration rig to a location about 65 nautical miles off the coastline of Vietnam, where drilling for gas began.⁴⁸ Despite the compromise, there still exists a potential conflict between the two countries with regard to sovereignty and oil drilling rights. Even though China has supported and endorsed the idea of joint exploration, it has nonetheless taken its own unilateral actions by strengthening its military presence in the area, signing an exploration deal with a US oil company, and enacting its own domestic law, which lists the Spratlys as part of the country's sovereign territory.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ David B.H. Denoon and Wendy Frieman, "China's Security Strategy", *Asian Survey*, vol. 36, no. 4 (April 1996), p. 425.

⁴⁶ David G. Muller, Jr. *op. cit.*, p. 80.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 82.

⁴⁸ Alan Dupont, "The Environment and Security in Pacific Asia", *IJSS*, Adelphi Paper 319, June 1999, p. 31.

While asserting claims to the Paracel and Spratly islands, China is very cautious not to allow relations with ASEAN nations and Japan to deteriorate, and most certainly not to the point of allowing them to form an anti-China alliance. In April 1997, China expressed that it was willing to discuss the Spratly dispute multilaterally (as ASEAN has long demanded) rather than on a one-to-one basis.⁴⁹ But it is unlikely that China is ready to negotiate the South China Sea dispute with ASEAN nations multilaterally. Susan Willet elaborates on this point in the following way:

Beijing is reticent about a multilateral security framework for two main reasons: as a large state, China would prefer to negotiate one-to-one with its invariably smaller neighbours over disputes such as the ownership of the Spratly Islands rather than allowing them to gang up on China in a collective forum; China fears that internal matters –the Taiwan question, Chinese military modernisation, or China’s lack of military transparency - might be placed on the agenda of a multilateral security organization, allowing foreigners to erode Chinese sovereignty.⁵⁰

As Denny Roy has suggested, China’s foreign relations are rooted in the ‘Realist’ assumption that “moral and ideological concerns are secondary to the desire of states to maintain and increase their power relative to the other governments”.⁵¹ Given its history of struggle over the disputed islands and waters, China’s policy toward neighbouring countries tends to resort to power rather than negotiation. However, it would probably be difficult for China to seize the entire Spratly group by force if ASEAN nations were to take a consolidated action against China’s aggression. At the same time, it would also not be straightforward for ASEAN nations to form a united front to counter China’s claim. The US is unlikely to intervene in the Spratly issue unless the freedom of navigation is threatened, but China is anxious about US involvement in any possible military clash. In 1997, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Shen Guofang emphasised that Asian security should be decided and managed by Asians, and that a multilateral arrangement should be set up to replace the US alliance safeguarding Asian nations.⁵²

⁴⁹ “Statement at the Dialogue Session”, The 30th ASEAN PMC, 28-29 July 1997.

⁵⁰ Susan Willet, “East Asia’s Changing Defence Industry”, *Survival*, vol. 39, no. 3, (Autumn 1997), pp. 148-49.

⁵¹ Denny Roy, *China’s Foreign Relations*, Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1998, p. 229.

⁵² Peter Morgan and Murakami Mutsuko, “Can Beijing Trust Tokyo?”, *Time*, August 1, 1997.

According to his statement, China seems to agree with the multilateral negotiation to resolve Asian issues, but the underlying motivation in upholding such a policy appears to be aimed at eliminating Washington's involvement in the Asia-Pacific politics.

Will there be any military conflict between China and relevant claimants in the South China Sea? Some specialists on China's foreign policy suggest that there will be no military conflict, with the joint exploration of resources in the disputed areas being the more likely outcome.⁵³ However, China's declaration of its sovereign rights over the South China Sea will not be relinquished. Furthermore, most claimant nations have limited military power and economic potential compared to those of China. Thus, if any dispute were to erupt between China and another claimant, the latter could not compete against the former. Instead, many of the claimants and China's neighbouring countries would have to cooperate (albeit reluctantly) with China. Although China agreed to unimpeded international navigation through the South China Sea, Beijing would insist on its exclusive rights of sovereignty and interest with respect to the disputed waters. The South China Sea issue is, of course, only part of China's naval ambitions, with the country continuing to assert its authority over other important sea-lanes in the Western Pacific and the Indian Ocean.

4.3 China's Intention to Expand Its Maritime Influence into the Indian Ocean Region

After the demise of the Soviet Union and the withdrawal of both the navies of the US and the USSR from the Philippines and Vietnam, China is expanding its sphere of influence into the Indian Ocean region as an initial stage of a broader scheme of

⁵³ During interviews with some academics, a variety of comments were expressed. Mr Zhai Kun in CICIR notes that there will not be any military clash since China's most urgent task is the unification of Taiwan. On the other hand, Dr Wang Yizhou in CASS suggests that though there will not be a war between claimants, minor boat clashes are likely anytime in the future.

involvement throughout the Asian region. China's intention appears to be similar to that of the Pax Americana, which aims at the ambition of America's global primacy; and particularly so with regard to more prolific maritime dominance.⁵⁴ China believes that through Thailand, Singapore, Myanmar, Pakistan and Iran, it could play an important role in the regional waterways.⁵⁵ This is being done with an eye not only China's future economic interests in Southeast Asia, but also the diminution of India's influence over the Indian Ocean region. China has tried to maintain a good relationship with the above-mentioned countries. However, some countries such as the US, Japan, Australia, the Philippines, Vietnam and India are seen as obstacles in the broader Chinese plan for their influence over the Western Pacific. Sooner or later, the Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia and Bangladesh could be driven to a closer relationship with China.⁵⁶

Why does China want to control the Indian Ocean? China believes that there are two areas of strategic significance for its future national interest, the Persian Gulf and the Straits of Malacca (because they provide the maritime conduit for energy supplies from the Gulf States to the East Asian nations, including China).⁵⁷ Chinese leaders still believe that there exist several barriers to them in achieving their national goal of maritime expansion. The first and foremost task is to enhance its economic power to a level equivalent to that of America's in terms of gross domestic product (GDP). The second task is to achieve blue water naval capability in order to protect its interest in disputed islands and seas, as well as energy passageways for the transport of oil and other sources of energy, and, in the process, to eventually become a great sea power. The third is to secure stepping-stone states from the South China Sea to the Arabian Sea, including

⁵⁴ Steven W. Mosher, *China's Plan to Dominate Asia and the World*, *op. cit.*, p. 156.

Stephen Mosher asserts that America's failure to shoulder its responsibility as a distant maritime power would eventually encourage China's aggression in the Asia-Pacific region and elsewhere. See also, Samuel P. Huntington, "Why International Primacy Matters", *International Security*, (Spring 1993), p. 83.

⁵⁵ For this scheme China seems to classify some Asian littoral nations into three categories, namely close tiers, equidistance tiers, and potential aggressors. Close tiers include Thailand, Cambodia, Singapore, Myanmar, Pakistan and Iran. Equidistance tiers are composed of Korea, Malaysia, Indonesia, Bangladesh, and Saudi Arabia. Potential aggressors could be Japan, the Philippines, Vietnam, India and the US.

⁵⁶ Steven W. Mosher, *op. cit.*, pp. 98-108.

⁵⁷ Douglas Bakshian, *Voice of America*, May 21, 1998.

Malaysia, Indonesia (for unimpeded passage through the Straits of Malacca), Myanmar (for the supply and maintenance of naval and commercial vessels), and Pakistan and Iran (for navigational safety along the Strait of Hormuz and the Arabian Sea).

China's leaders firmly believe that the fate of their country is to a large extent dependent upon a sustained economic growth. If the economic growth rate were to decline to 6-7 percent, China could have difficulties creating about 10 million jobs each year to keep pace with its growing population.⁵⁸ For China, sustained economic development is, in turn, a crucial factor for the legitimacy of the communist party and government. Considering the history of Japan's 30 year-effort of rapid growth (1950-1980), China has to make every possible effort for its national prosperity in the next 10-15 years.⁵⁹ China's fast-growing economy has greatly increased its patterns of oil consumption, thus making it a net oil importer since 1993. In 1996, China's net oil imports were 0.21 million barrels of oil per day (bbl/d)⁶⁰, but by 2000, China became the third biggest oil consumer in the world, amounting to 4.6 million bbl/d, and its net oil imports reached 1.4 million bbl/d (See Table 4.2).⁶¹

Table 4.2 Top Ten Net Oil Importers in 2000 (million barrels per day)

Rank	Country	Consumption	Production	Net Imports
1	United States	19.5	9.0	9.8
2	Japan	5.6	0.1	5.6
3	Germany	2.8	0.1	2.7
4	South Korea	2.1	0.1	2.0
5	France	2.0	0.1	2.0
6	Italy	2.0	0.1	1.8
7	Spain	1.5	0.0	1.5
8	India	1.8	0.7	1.1
9	China	4.6	3.2	1.4
10	Taiwan	0.8	0.0	0.8

Source: US Energy Information Administration, Top Ten Net Oil Importers, 2000.

*Note: Production includes crude oil, lease condensate, natural gas liquids, other hydrocarbons and alcohol, and refinery gain.

⁵⁸ "East Asian Wobbles", *The Economist*, December 23, 1995-January 5, 1996, p. 36.

⁵⁹ Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis, "Exploring US Missile Defence Requirements in 2010", *Federation for American Scientists*, April 1997.

<http://www.fas.org/spp/starwars/advocate/ifpa/index.html> (Internet Accessed, on 23 July 1999).

⁶⁰ Ji Guoxing, "China versus Asia Pacific Energy Security", *The Korean Journal of Defence Analysis*, Vol. X, No. 2, (Winter 1998), p. 116.

⁶¹ US Energy Information Administration, Top Ten Net Oil Importers, 2000.

<http://www.eia.doe.gov/security/topimp.html> (Internet Accessed, on 21 March 2001).

According to recent estimates, China's oil imports are expected to rise from 1.4 million bbl/d, in 2000 to three million bbl/d by 2010, and seven million by 2015.⁶² In a couple of decades, China has either to import a large sum of oil from the Middle East, or to make a further concerted attempt at oil and gas domestically. Consequently, the Strait of Malacca and the Strait of Hormuz could emerge as strategic chokepoints for China's maritime interests. China believes that through close cooperation with Myanmar, Pakistan and Iran, it could guarantee the security of its sea lines of communication on the Southeast Asian seas and the Indian Ocean. Myanmar, as China's closest ally in Southeast Asia, has provided the Chinese navy with a free run of port facilities on Myanmar's offshore islands and a listening post on the Indian Ocean.⁶³ The Beijing-Yangon alliance enables China to constrain India's naval ambition between the two Chinese allies, Myanmar and Pakistan, effectively thwarting New Delhi's influence in South Asia.⁶⁴

China has long maintained a close relationship with Pakistan and Iran through the export of nuclear and missile technology, and through the sales of conventional arms. Both Iran and Pakistan have launched short-to-medium-range missiles using this technology. The two countries have also tried to maintain a close relationship with China in an attempt to continue their own military modernisation. China's leadership believes that a strategic alliance with these nations is beneficial to counter US maritime domination over the region. China believes that it can eventually achieve such an ambitious plan through its naval force modernisation and bilateral naval cooperation with these friendly nations. The plan aims not only at China's future economic interest in the region but also at the monitoring of Indian and US naval activities on the Arabian

⁶² Kent E. Calder, "Asia's Empty Tank", *Foreign Affairs*, (March/April 1996), p. 58.

⁶³ Steven W. Mosher, *China's Plan to Dominate Asia and the World*, San Francisco: Encounter Books, 2000, p. 111.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 112.

Sea and the Bay of Bengal.⁶⁵ To effectively introduce a scheme of maritime expansion into the Indian Ocean region, China has maintained a good relationship with Myanmar, Pakistan and Iran.

Myanmar

The Chinese believe that Myanmar could provide their country with access to the Indian Ocean through the Malacca Strait. Myanmar's military regime, the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), which has experienced increasing international isolation and pressure following the suppression of the 1988 democratic movement in the country, has developed close military and diplomatic ties with Beijing.⁶⁶ As Bertil Lintner notes:

China has already taken several steps towards establishing a trade route through Myanmar to give its Yunnan province an outlet to the Indian Ocean, which neighbouring states fear that the Myanmar's connection might contribute not just for trade but also for Beijing to play a significant naval role in the Indian Ocean.⁶⁷

Swaran Singh affirms that "About 3,000 Chinese army engineers have been in Myanmar to supervise the construction of three main roads from the Chinese border to Yangon and to the coast as well as the railroad lines which are developed by Beijing to facilitate the shipment of consumer goods produced in western China to Pakistan, the Middle East and the rest of the world".⁶⁸ China gained access to critical waterways in Myanmar through the sale of ten Hainan-class naval patrol boats and radar equipment to the country. Furthermore, China is negotiating access to two strategic islands, the

⁶⁵ Yosseff Bodansky, "China's Naval Surge for the Strait of Malacca".

<http://freeman.io.com/m-online/bodansky/beijing.html> (Internet Accessed, on 23 November 1998).

⁶⁶ Mohan J. Malik, *India's Relations with China: Post-Soviet Union*, Melbourne: Longman, 1995, p. 148. Myanmar has renamed its military regime from the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) to the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) in December 1997.

⁶⁷ Bertil Lintner, 'Burma Road', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 6 November 1997.

⁶⁸ Swaran Singh, "Continuity and Change in China's Maritime Strategy" *Strategic Analysis*, vol. 23, no. 9, (December 1999), p. 126.

Ramree and the Zdetkyi Kyun, close to the northern entrance of the Malacca Strait to control strategic chokepoints.⁶⁹

China's upgrading of Myanmar's naval bases on the Mergui and the Coco Islands caused serious concerns to India and Japan: India's concern for Coco Island as an outlet to the Bay of Bengal and the Andaman Sea where the Indian Navy had hitherto held sway; and Japan's concern for Mergui Island as an entrance to the Malacca Strait where Japan considers to be a lifeline for its economy.⁷⁰ China is also interested in naval facilities at Bassein (an island in the Irrawady River delta), which might cause Sino-Indian naval rivalry and pose a detrimental development for ASEAN security.⁷¹ Most military thinkers and security planners think that Japan and China, not to mention the US, Australia and New Zealand, will go to war to defend their national interests if the three vital straits of Southeast Asia - the Malacca, Lombok, and Sunda - are threatened by a hostile power or combination of powers.⁷²

Bodansky, in his article 'China's Surge for the Strait of Malacca', points out that Myanmar, with its long coastline from the Bay of Bengal to the Andaman Sea, offers a strategic staging point for controlling western approaches to the Strait of Malacca.⁷³ The relationship between China and Burma stemmed from the Chinese communist party's involvement in Burma. In the early 1950s, the PLA entered Myanmar's territory on the pretext of eliminating KMT troops who had fled the mainland during the civil conflict in China. The real intentions of the Chinese Communists were to assist the Burmese Communist Party (BCP) insurgency against the then government.⁷⁴ China's active support of the BCP caused deterioration in the relations between the two governments

⁶⁹ Barbara J. Taber, "China and Southeast Asia", *International Relations Journal* (Summer 1996), p. 4.

⁷⁰ June Teufel Dreyer, "China's Strategic View: The Role of the People's Liberation Army" *Strategic Studies Institute*, U S Army War College 7th Annual Strategy Conference Paper, (26 April 1996).

⁷¹ Leszek Buszynski "China and the ASEAN Region", in Stuart Harris and Gary Klintworth, eds., *China as a Great Power*, Melbourne: Longman, 1995, p. 180.

⁷² Blas F. Ople, "The Strait of Lombok and other Choke-points", *Panorama*, (October 1996), p. 2.

⁷³ Yosseff Bodansky, "China's Surge for the Straits of Malacca", <http://freeman.io.com/m-online/bodansky/beijing.html> (Internet Accessed, on 15 March 1998)

⁷⁴ Marvin C. Ott, "From Isolation to Relevance", in Robert I. Rotberg, ed., *Burma*, Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1998, p. 71.

that lasted for nearly thirty years. However, with Beijing's renunciation of BCP policy and the signing of a border-trade agreement between China and Burma in August 1988, the two countries have closely cooperated in both economic and military fields.⁷⁵ Burma's international isolation after the harsh repression of the pro-democracy movement in Rangoon in 1988 helped China and Burma become close allies. Since then, China has supplied about US\$1.2 billion worth of weapons and military equipment to Myanmar.⁷⁶ In return, China has secured a profitable market for its huge defence industry and probably access to intelligence on movements through the congested shipping lanes from the Indian Ocean and the Strait of Malacca.⁷⁷ Since the mid-1990s, Beijing has been upgrading and enhancing Myanmar's air force, including its air base infrastructure. Between 1991 and 1992, China began to support Myanmar's naval modernisation program by providing six Hainan-class fast attack craft, and by supporting the construction of naval port facilities on the Hainggyik and Great Coco Islands.

Since 1994, the Chinese have conducted large-scale dredging works in these islands for the navigational safety of their naval vessels in the future. These two islands are located at a crucial point in the shipping lane between the Bay of Bengal and the Strait of Malacca. There is no doubt that this 800-mile long waterway could become an important passage for commercial goods, military weapons and equipment from China to Myanmar and other China's allies. Moreover, if China secured a naval base in Myanmar's territory, this Irrawady route could provide China with necessary supplies for its naval force.

In addition to official contact, the Chinese are vigorously involved in Myanmar's community as well as border trade.⁷⁸ Myanmar's markets have already been flooded by cheap Chinese products, and a large amount of real estate in Myanmar's major towns has

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 71-72.

⁷⁶ Yosseff Bodansky, *op. cit.* Burma's new military regime renamed its nation from Burma to Myanmar, and its capital from Rangoon to Yangon in 1988. In this thesis, new names will be used if relevant events of the country take place after 1988.

⁷⁷ Marvin C. Ott, *op. cit.*, p. 72.

⁷⁸ Frank S. Jannuzi, "The New Burma Road", in Robert I. Rotberg, ed., *Burma, op. cit.*, p. 197.

been bought and developed by the Chinese, driving the Burmese out to new settlement suburbs.⁷⁹ The border trade has helped landlocked Yunnan Province to export its products to northern Myanmar. The official and unofficial relations between the two countries have helped China's naval surge into the Indian Ocean.

If China were to establish a naval base in Myanmar, what would the implications be? From India's point of view, the Beijing-Yangon alliance enables China to squeeze India between two allies, Myanmar and Pakistan, and effectively check India's naval activities toward the Indian Ocean.⁸⁰ India worries that China is pursuing an expansionist path toward Myanmar. India has been courting Myanmar's Army Chief Maung Aye and was furious when head of Myanmar's intelligence service Lt.-General Khin Nyunt visited Pakistan in 2001, at the same time as India's army chief was visiting Yangon.⁸¹ Jiang Zemin visited Myanmar on 12-15 December 2001 to reinforce close ties between the two countries. Myanmar's geostrategic location continues to hold important implications for its two neighbouring giants, China and India. For the United States, China's Myanmar connection seems more problematic. As noted earlier, Washington has imposed sanctions against Yangon; thus Beijing's support to Yangon's military junta is becoming a cause of great concern for the American foreign policy. More importantly, Beijing-Yangon naval ties would pose substantial threat to the US naval strategy in the Malacca Strait and the Indian Ocean. To cope with this contingency, the United States is eager to engage China and other ASEAN nations. If China were to have a naval base in Myanmar, Washington would reconsider its military presence in regional countries, including Thailand, Vietnam or Singapore.

Pakistan

⁷⁹ Swaran Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 121-22.

⁸⁰ Steven W. Mosher, *op. cit.*, p.112.

⁸¹ Bertil Lintner, "Burma Friend of Necessity", *FEER*, December 27, 2001-January 3, 2002.

Since the 1964 Kashmir dispute between India and Pakistan, Beijing has taken the side of Pakistan. Beijing supported Pakistan for geostrategic reasons, as Pakistan is considered India's most troublesome adversary.⁸² Since India's 1975 nuclear test, Pakistan has insisted that acquiring nuclear technology is essential to its national survival. Although much of the needed material for nuclear weapons development came from the West (including Germany, Switzerland, Sweden, Canada and the US), China has been a primary supplier of Pakistan's nuclear project.⁸³ In the early 1980s, China reportedly provided Pakistan with the blueprint for a 1966 design of a U-235 nuclear-implosion device.⁸⁴ In 1986, China concluded a comprehensive nuclear cooperation agreement with Pakistan. Although Beijing signed the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty in 1992, it violated the arms control regime by providing Pakistan with nuclear technology.⁸⁵

In the mid-1990s the US government provided China with advanced technologies, such as super-computers, satellites and other technology, expecting China would respond by not continuing to deliver nuclear, chemical and biological weapons to what the United States regarded as 'rogue states'.⁸⁶ However, China has continued transferring nuclear weapons-related materials to Iran and Pakistan, and provided ballistic missile technology to North Korea, Saudi Arabia and Libya.⁸⁷ Between 1994 and 1995, China transferred nuclear-related supplies to Pakistan, including 5,000 ring magnets for uranium enrichment, and in 1996 Pakistan imported a specialised nuclear material-related furnace from China.⁸⁸ In July 1997, Pakistan test-fired its own Hatf missile. Finally, on May 28 and 30, 1998 Pakistan detonated six nuclear devices.⁸⁹ It is

⁸² Denny Roy, *China's Foreign Relations*, *op. cit.*, p.172.

⁸³ Marcus Warren, "Pakistan's Nuclear Program at a Screwdriver Level", *The Washington Times*, February 20, 1996, p. A1.

⁸⁴ Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis, "Exploring US Missile Defence Requirements in 2010", *op. cit.*

⁸⁵ Bill Gertz, *The China Threat*, Washington D.C.: An Eagle Publishing Company, 2000, p. 107.

⁸⁶ Steven W. Mosher, *China's Plan to Dominate Asia and the World*, *op. cit.*, p. 139.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis, "Exploring US Missile Defence Requirements in 2010", *op. cit.*

⁸⁹ J. Mohan Malik, "India Goes Nuclear", *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, vol. 20, no. 2 (August 1998), p. 191.

likely that Pakistan will continue to enhance its nuclear development posture to counter India's nuclear initiatives.

When it comes to the missile issue, Pakistan's perception of its vulnerability is quite significant. Most of Pakistan's major economic and population centres lie in a band between 50 and 250 kilometres from the Indian border, while India has much greater strategic depth with its key western cities of New Delhi and Mumbai being over 350 km and 600 km respectively from Pakistan's nearest border.⁹⁰ This is one of the reasons why Pakistan feels the need for longer-range missiles than India. As for missile systems, China helped Pakistan build the Hatf I and Hatf II missiles.⁹¹ The M-11 (CSS-7) was first test-fired by China in 1990, and China transferred M-11 missiles to Pakistan in 1991.⁹² In July 1991, Washington imposed sanctions on two Chinese companies (the Great Wall and China National Precision Machinery Import-Export Company), on charge of their having transferred the M-11 short-range ballistic missiles to Pakistan.⁹³ The missile deal brought about a harsh dispute between China and the United States because the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) bans the export of missiles exceeding a throw-weight of 500 kg and a range of 300 km. China insists that the M-11 has a range of just under 300 km, but some US experts estimate that the M-11 exceeds the guidelines of the MTCR.

The political compromise was at last concluded in October 1994, when China and the US issued a joint statement on missile proliferation in which China agreed to ban exports of MTCR-class missiles, and the US agreed to lift sanctions. However, it is reported that at least ten Chinese missile experts are assisting with technical advice to researchers in a medium-range missile factory in Fatchgarh near Islamabad.⁹⁴

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² Marcus Warren, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

⁹³ Edward Timperlake and William C. Triplett II, *Red Dragon Rising*, Washington D.C.: An Eagle Publishing Company, 1999, pp. 190-91.

⁹⁴ "China and Pakistan's Missiles", *Foreign Report, Jane's Information Group*, 2 May 1996, p. 2.

Will China continue to provide Pakistan with missile and nuclear technologies in the future? Ma Yanbing in China Institute of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR) asserts that as the objective of China's foreign policy is peaceful co-existence and non-alignment, there will be no China's political intention in weapons deals with Pakistan or with any other country.⁹⁵ However, China's missile and nuclear deals with Pakistan will likely continue as long as Sino-Indian rivalry exists. China and Pakistan believe that a strategic partnership on arms deals between the two countries is very important for their national interests. From China's point of view, Pakistan is an important ally in the Indian Ocean for the purposes of achieving China's goal of developing a sphere of influence on the Indian Ocean. At the same time, Pakistan regards China as one of its most important strategic partners in its own efforts to cope with threats from India.

China has continuously tried to strengthen its naval cooperation with Pakistan. Chinese leaders think that through a close naval cooperation with Pakistan they can expand maritime influence toward the Arabian Sea, and thereby check Indian naval activities in the Indian Ocean. Ehsan Ahrari has reported the recent development of Sino-Pakistani naval partnership as follows;

China has increased its naval presence in Pakistan and is building a deepwater port in the Pakistani coastal city Gwadar at the mouth of the Persian Gulf. A less-publicised aspect of this development is that Pakistan has granted docking permission to Chinese naval vessels, thereby giving China a permanent presence in the Indian Ocean. Pakistan has also conducted a naval exercise with Bangladesh in the Bay of Bengal, the first Pakistani naval presence in that body of water since the creation of Bangladesh. The Pakistani navy also made its first port call to a military base in Burma, where China has long maintained its own naval presence. The activities of the Chinese and Pakistani navies have intensified India's own "look east" policy, whereby its navy is interested in nurturing naval cooperation with Vietnam and Burma.⁹⁶

During the America's war with the Taliban, the US and Pakistan closely cooperated each other, and Pakistan seemed to lean more in more friendly ways in the direction of the US than China. However, Pakistan returned to China's umbrella of

⁹⁵ This view can be found in an interview with Ma Yanbing in CICIR in Beijing in September 2000.

⁹⁶ Ehsan Ahrari, "Strategic Moves in Southern Asia", *FEER*, 28 June 2001.

support after realising that it was not receiving promised aid in the measure it expected in return for its support for the US and its 'war on terrorism'.⁹⁷ While much of the promised US economic and military aid has not materialised, China offered Pakistan US\$1.2 million in aid in September 2001.⁹⁸ After Pakistani President Musharraf's visit to Beijing in December 2001, the relationship between China and Pakistan seems to become much closer. This diplomatic gesture is related to the triangular relations of Afghanistan, India and Pakistan. Harmid Karzai, the Chairman of Afghanistan's interim government, as well as other regional leaders, appear to be moving closer to India. They believe that India has supported the Northern Alliance in their struggle against the Taliban, and that close ties with India would help them keep neighbouring Pakistan off-balance.⁹⁹ The recent acute confrontation between New Delhi and Islamabad further enhances strategic partnership between Beijing and Islamabad.

Iran

Iran seeks to enhance its political and military influence over the Middle East and to reduce the interference from foreign powers, especially the US, in the Persian Gulf region. The Iranian government is thought to have three primary national objectives: ensuring the survival of its Islamic government; limiting foreign influence in the Middle East; and spreading Islamic fundamentalism abroad.¹⁰⁰ For these national goals, Iran is developing three security policy objectives.¹⁰¹ The first is to form an alliance with India, China, and Russia to cope with the threat from the US. The second is to deter its rival, Iraq and the US with its weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and missile delivery system. The third is to secure the Strait of Hormuz, which could provide Iran with regional political leverage with OPEC members and a strategic chokepoint for its

⁹⁷ Free Intelligence Briefing, "Pakistan: Returning to China's Umbrella of Support", *Stratfor*, 21 December 2001.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ Strategic Forecasting, "Pakistan Jilted as Afghans Warm to India", *Stratfor*, 4 January 2002.

¹⁰⁰ Office of the Secretary of Defence, "Proliferation: Threat and Response", April 1996.

¹⁰¹ Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis, "Exploring US Missile Defence Requirements in 2010", *op. cit.*

national security. To meet these national objectives, Iran has been enhancing its military power through the development of a nuclear program, missile proliferation, and even chemical and biological weapons. The US views Iran with particular concern, regarding it a sponsor of international terrorism, a threat to US security interests in the region as well as a threat to US friends and allies in the Middle East, especially to Israel.¹⁰²

Beijing believes that its cooperation with Iran could bring benefits not only for its national interest in the Gulf, but also for its internal stability. China anticipates that its close ties with Iran would guarantee its increasing flow of oil from the Middle East, and help to restrain radical Islam in China's western provinces.¹⁰³ China wants good relations with Iran for other reasons: Iran is viewed as a potential counterbalance to US influence in the Persian Gulf; and China needs Iran as a market for its military sales.¹⁰⁴ The Chinese arms trade with Iran has, since the early 1980s, involved thousands of tanks, armoured personnel carriers, and artillery pieces, as well as thousands of anti-tank missiles, more than a hundred fighter aircraft, and dozens of small warships.¹⁰⁵ China sold a number of Houdong fast patrol boats to Iran in 1996. The patrol boats, equipped with C-802 anti-ship cruise missiles, could pose a serious threat to American ships and the 15,000 US troops in the region.¹⁰⁶ In fact, in the late 1990s, two Iranian Houdong boats boldly approached the US aircraft carrier *Kitty Hawk* and the cruiser *Cowpens*, close enough to fire C-802 cruise missiles, but the simulated attack was then broken off.¹⁰⁷ China's weapon deals with Iran continue to be a matter of concern to the US naval activities in the Gulf.

Since 1985, China has also provided Iran with nuclear-related technology, selling several nuclear research reactors and helping construct a safeguard uranium hexafluoride

¹⁰² Bates Gill, "Chinese Arms Exports to Iran", *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, vol. 2, no. 2, (May 1998).

¹⁰³ Douglas H. Paal, "China and the East Asian Security Environment", in Ezra F. Vogel, ed., *Living with China*, *op. cit.*, p. 114.

¹⁰⁴ Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis, "Exploring US Missile Defence Requirements in 2010", *op. cit.*

¹⁰⁵ Bates Gill, *op. cit.*

¹⁰⁶ Bill Gertz, *The China Threat*, *op. cit.*, p. 104

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

plant in Iran.¹⁰⁸ During the Iran-Iraq War, one of China's most controversial arms transfers was the Silkworm (HY-2) anti-ship missile, which hit an American-owned tanker and a Kuwaiti tanker in May 1987.¹⁰⁹ In October 1993, *Defence News* reported that China and Iran had signed a US\$5 billion contract, including the transfer of 600 M-11 missiles.¹¹⁰ Chinese companies are also supporting Iran's effort to produce M-9, M-11 and M-18 missiles.¹¹¹ Iran's missile capability has been one of America's troublesome foreign policy issues. When Iran launched a missile with an 800-mile range in July 1998, the CIA estimated that Iran would be able to target Israel in a decade or so.¹¹² According to a Pentagon study, China, Iran and Syria are developing an even more sophisticated cruise missile with a range of 1,500 miles, and capable of delivering a nuclear, chemical and biological warhead.¹¹³ China has also been helping Iran develop chemical weapons. In 1996, the *Washington Times* revealed that, "the Chinese provided Iran with the technology for advanced chemical weapons factories".¹¹⁴ China has been actively involved in Iran's state-of-the-art weapons program and selling sophisticated arms to the country. In September 1996, the Iranians and the Chinese announced a US\$4.5 billion arms deal that included missile systems, such as the C-801 and C-802 cruise missiles.¹¹⁵ Iran, with China's continuous support, will pursue a leading position in the Middle East by developing nuclear weapons, missiles, and chemical and biological weapons.¹¹⁶ For Beijing, a strong Iran helps enable China's efforts to secure sufficient oil and to achieve its maritime interest in the Hormuz Strait.

¹⁰⁸ Federation of American Scientists, "The Proliferation Primer", A Majority Report to US Senate, January 1998.

[Http://www.fas.org/spp/starwars/congress/1998-r.html](http://www.fas.org/spp/starwars/congress/1998-r.html) (Internet Accessed, on 9 June 1999).

¹⁰⁹ Bates Gill, *op. cit.*

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹¹ Edward Timperlake and William C. Triplett II, *Red Dragon Rising, op. cit.*, p.104.

The range of M-9, M-11 and M-18 missiles is 350 miles, 150 miles and 650 miles respectively.

¹¹² Steven W. Mosher, *China's Plan to Dominate Asia and the World, op. cit.*, p. 102.

¹¹³ Edward Timperlake and William C. Triplett II, *Red Dragon Rising, op. cit.*, pp. 107-08.

¹¹⁴ Julia Chang Bloch, "Commercial Diplomacy", in Ezra F. Vogel, ed., *Living with China, op. cit.*, p. 203.

¹¹⁵ *Jane's Defence Weekly*, (11 September 1996), quoted by Edward Timperlake and William C. Triplett II, *Red Dragon Rising, op. cit.*, p. 108.

¹¹⁶ Edward Timperlake and William C. Triplett II, *Red Dragon Rising, op. cit.*, p. 99.

China is building up its own military readiness and expanding maritime influence, not only to assert itself on neighbouring countries but also to obtain littoral stepping-stone allies to assist it in developing its sea power in the Western Pacific and the Indian Ocean. It is also strengthening its navy to secure a position of hegemonic maritime nation over the Asia-Pacific region, and to compete against the current guarantor of regional security, the US.¹¹⁷ It is obvious that China intends to expand its maritime influence into the Indian Ocean through close diplomatic ties and arms sales to countries, such as Myanmar, Pakistan, and Iran. China also has in mind the need to ensure safe oil imports from the Persian Gulf, and to guarantee an unimpeded ever-increasing seaborne trade with the countries of South Asia and the European Union through regional waterways.

4.4 China's Interest in the Southeast Asian SLOCs

4.4.1 The Role of the Southeast Asian SLOCs

The sea-lanes from the Persian Gulf to the countries of East Asia have strategic significance, as the economies of most East Asian countries are heavily dependent upon imported mineral energy from the Middle East. The sea-lanes, in particular, provide the US with a transit passageway for its force projection in the event of a crisis in the Gulf and elsewhere. The major SLOCs in the Southeast Asia maritime region include the South China Sea, the Straits of Malacca and Singapore and some Indonesian straits, namely the Sunda, Lombok-Makassar, Ombai-Wetar Straits. The South China Sea is important for international navigation, but the Indonesian archipelagic straits are more significant because those waterways are crucial chokepoints for every user to pass

¹¹⁷ Steven W. Mosher, *China's Plan to Dominate Asia and the World*, *op. cit.*, p. 95.

through for the purpose of foreign trade and oil imports. According to 'The Time Atlas of the Ocean' there are seven important straits in the world oceans (See Table 4.3).¹¹⁸

Table 4.3 Main Straits Used for International Navigation

Strait	Sovereignty	Depth (m)	Under keel clearance (m)	Length (NM)	Number of ships per day
Dover	France-UK	20 - 37	5.2	30	350
Malacca/Singapore	Indonesia/Malaysia/Singapore	21 - 97	3.5	500/75	150/150
Gibraltar	Spain/Morocco	82 - 1,000	unlimited	36	140
Hormuz	Iran/Oman	55 - 91	unlimited	100	80
Dardanelles/Bosporus	Turkey	45 - 90/70	unlimited	31/15	57/57
Sunda/Lombok	Indonesia	27 - 183/ 192 - 1280	unlimited	70/27	-
Bab el Mandeb	Djibouti - Yemen - Ethiopia	42/305	unlimited	50	-

Source: Alastair Couper, ed., *The Times Atlas of the Oceans*, London: Times Books Ltd., 1983, p. 150.

Of these the Strait of Malacca is the second busiest in the world after the Dover Strait. The Sunda and Lombok Straits are also important waterways for nations between East Asia and the South Pacific. Australia, in particular, is heavily dependent upon these straits for its exports to Japan and Korea. During the Cold War era these waterways were mainly controlled by the US, and this resulted in no significant issue between the two superpowers. However, with the growing interests of the Chinese navy and the Indian navy in the South China Sea and the Strait of Malacca, the US and countries in the immediate region have demonstrated great concern for these shipping lanes.

The Malacca Straits¹¹⁹

The Straits are approximately 500 nautical miles in length and vary in width from 200 miles in the north to 11 miles at the southern extremity. The majority of the

¹¹⁸ Alastair Couper, ed., *The Times Atlas of the Ocean*, London: Times Books Ltd., 1983, p 150.

¹¹⁹ Although the Strait of Malacca (or the Malacca Strait) and the Strait of Singapore are two different straits, they have been referred to as the "the Malacca Straits" or "the Straits of Malacca". When used in plural form, the terms include not only the Strait of Malacca but also the Strait of Singapore. In this thesis, the term "the Straits of Malacca" or "the Straits" (i.e. with a Capital S) refers to the Straits of Malacca and Singapore. The term "straits" refers to other straits in general.

navigational channel goes through the territorial waters of Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore. The Straits provide the shortest passage between the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea. Since ancient times, the Malacca Strait has had enormous economic and strategic significance; thus the Chinese, Indians, Arabs, Portuguese, Dutch and British controlled it before the independence of Indonesia and Malaysia. In the fourth century, the Chin dynasty in China lost access to the Central Asian caravan route because of Central Asian upheaval, so the Chin traders began to develop sea passages.¹²⁰ China's efforts to increase seaborne trade had met with an immediate response from a number of Sunda Strait coastal centres that had already been trading directly with India.¹²¹ As the volume of trade between China and India increased, the Straits of Malacca emerged as a major sea route, instead of the Sunda Strait. By the beginning of the fourteenth century five commercial zones of maritime trade had emerged in Southeast Asia: the first zone comprised the Bay of Bengal; the second zone was the Straits of Malacca; the third zone included the eastern coast of Malay Peninsula, Thailand and the lower coast of Vietnam; the fourth zone was the western coast of the Philippines and the Brunei; and the fifth zone was the Java Sea.¹²²

The Strait of Malacca was used as an important waterway in the early fifteenth century, when the Ming dynasty conducted ambitious maritime expeditions as far as India, the Middle East and nations in Africa. During the period from 1511 to 1641, the Portuguese controlled the Straits. From 1641, the Dutch exercised sovereignty over the whole Straits, occasionally denying passage of ships through the Straits, until 1795 when Britain took over Malacca from the Dutch.¹²³ The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 marked a historic event for the Malacca Strait, making it a critical sea route between Europe and Asia. Even after the British took control over the Straits, during the period

¹²⁰ Kenneth R. Hall, *Maritime Trade and State Development in Early Southeast Asia*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1985, p. 39.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

¹²² *Ibid.*, pp. 225-27.

¹²³ K. E. Shaw and George G. Thomson, *The Straits of Malacca*, Singapore: University Education Press, 1973, pp. 16-17.

from 1795 to 1824, the struggle for the dominant position of the Straits between Britain and the Netherlands continued. The 1824 Anglo-Dutch Treaty was an international arrangement settling the colonial territorial dispute between Britain and the Netherlands in the Southeast Asian seas. The two parties concluded that the water-zone beyond three miles in the Straits remained high seas, that is, an area designated for international navigation zone. The treaty dealt with the dividing up the sphere of influence of the two powers in the Strait-area, with the recognition of Dutch sovereignty over the Riau Archipelago and British sovereignty over Singapore.¹²⁴

After the independence of Indonesia and Malaya, the Strait of Malacca was an important issue between the two nations. Indonesia's interest in controlling the Straits burgeoned as far back as 1945. At a Japanese sponsored 'Investigation Committee for the Preparation of Indonesia's Independence' meeting in that year, President Sukarno said "Indonesia will not become strong or secure unless the whole of the Straits of Malacca is in our hands".¹²⁵ At the conference in the Hague in 1949 which realised the *de jure* independence of Indonesia, the Netherlands and Indonesia signed an agreement that reads, "The Netherlands and Indonesia understand that the rights and obligations of the Netherlands shall be considered as the rights and obligations of Indonesia from the date of the independence of Indonesia".¹²⁶ On the basis of an agreement reached between Malaya and Britain in 1957, Malaya assumed all obligations and responsibilities of the Strait from Britain. After the agreements, Malaya and Indonesia resumed the rights and obligations that Britain and the Netherlands had practiced during their rule over the Strait.

On 13 December 1957, Indonesia declared itself the archipelago principal and renewed the assertion of its claim to a 12-mile territorial sea limit. The delegate from Indonesia pointed out at the first UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) in

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

¹²⁵ K. L. Koh, *Straits in International Navigation*, New York: Oceana Publications, Inc., 1982, p. 55.

¹²⁶ K. E. Shaw and George G. Thomson, *op. cit.*, pp. 36-42.

1958 (held in Geneva) that the extension of the three-mile territorial sea claim to twelve miles should not be viewed as an erosion of the freedom of the high seas.¹²⁷ In 1972, both Indonesia and Malaysia insisted that foreign warships attempting to pass through the Strait should seek authorisation and give notification to either Indonesia or Malaysia before entering the Strait.¹²⁸ Despite warnings from Malaysia and Indonesia, the US and the USSR sent their ships through the Strait as a show of force. At that time, Indonesia and Malaysia could not take any action against the two superpowers' naval activities along the Strait. During the Indo-Pakistani war, the naval forces of the two superpowers passed through the Strait to dispatch their units to the Indian Ocean. Both the US and the USSR, at the UN Seabed Committee discussions in 1972, had insisted on transit passage for warships through international straits, together with freedom of over-flight by military aircraft. Japan, on the other hand, had a different reason for wanting the Straits to be opened for international navigation; its economic interest. China supported the 12-mile territorial sea claims of Indonesia and Malaysia because China was concerned about the Soviet Union's naval ambitions over the Western Pacific and the Indian Ocean.¹²⁹

The dispatch of the Soviet and the US naval ships in the Indian Ocean during the Indo-Pakistani conflict, escalated the importance of the Malacca Straits as the fastest route from one ocean to the other for ships for war. At that time, the Soviet naval expansion into the Indian Ocean raised an immediate reaction from China. The New China News Agency (NCNA), on 13 March 1971, bitterly criticised Soviet naval involvement in the regional seas, by saying:

In recent years, the Soviet revisionist social-imperialism carried out frontier expansion activities in the sea trying its utmost to build up naval hegemony in the vast area from the Black Sea, the Indian Ocean, and the Western Pacific to the Sea of Japan. ... It is by no means accidental that the Soviet revisionist social-imperialism cherishes ambitions for the Straits of Malacca, the main passage between the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea.¹³⁰

¹²⁷ K. L. Koh, *Straits in International Navigation*, op. cit., P. 56.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 58-59.

¹²⁹ Michael Leifer, *International Straits of the World: Malacca, Singapore, and Indonesia*, Alphen aan den Rijn, the Netherlands: Sijthoff & Noordhoff, 1978, P. 177.

¹³⁰ *New China News Agency*, 13 March 1971, quoted by K.E. Shaw and George G. Thomson, op. cit., p.71.

As the economy of the East Asian countries has rapidly grown since the early 1970s, the Straits of Malacca have become a vital route for the transport of oil between the Middle East and the region. Malaysia and Singapore also came to recognise the strategic importance of the Straits for their commerce and defence. Japan, as a major user of the Strait of Malacca has conducted a number of hydrographic surveys to improve navigational safety from 1969 to 1974, and has been continuously concerned with keeping the Straits open for its super tankers.¹³¹ The Japanese Shipowners' Association (Koyo Maru) conducted a survey over 45 days from January to March 1969. In the course of the survey, the team discovered 21 areas of shallow waters less than 23 metres in depth, which were considered unsafe for navigation.

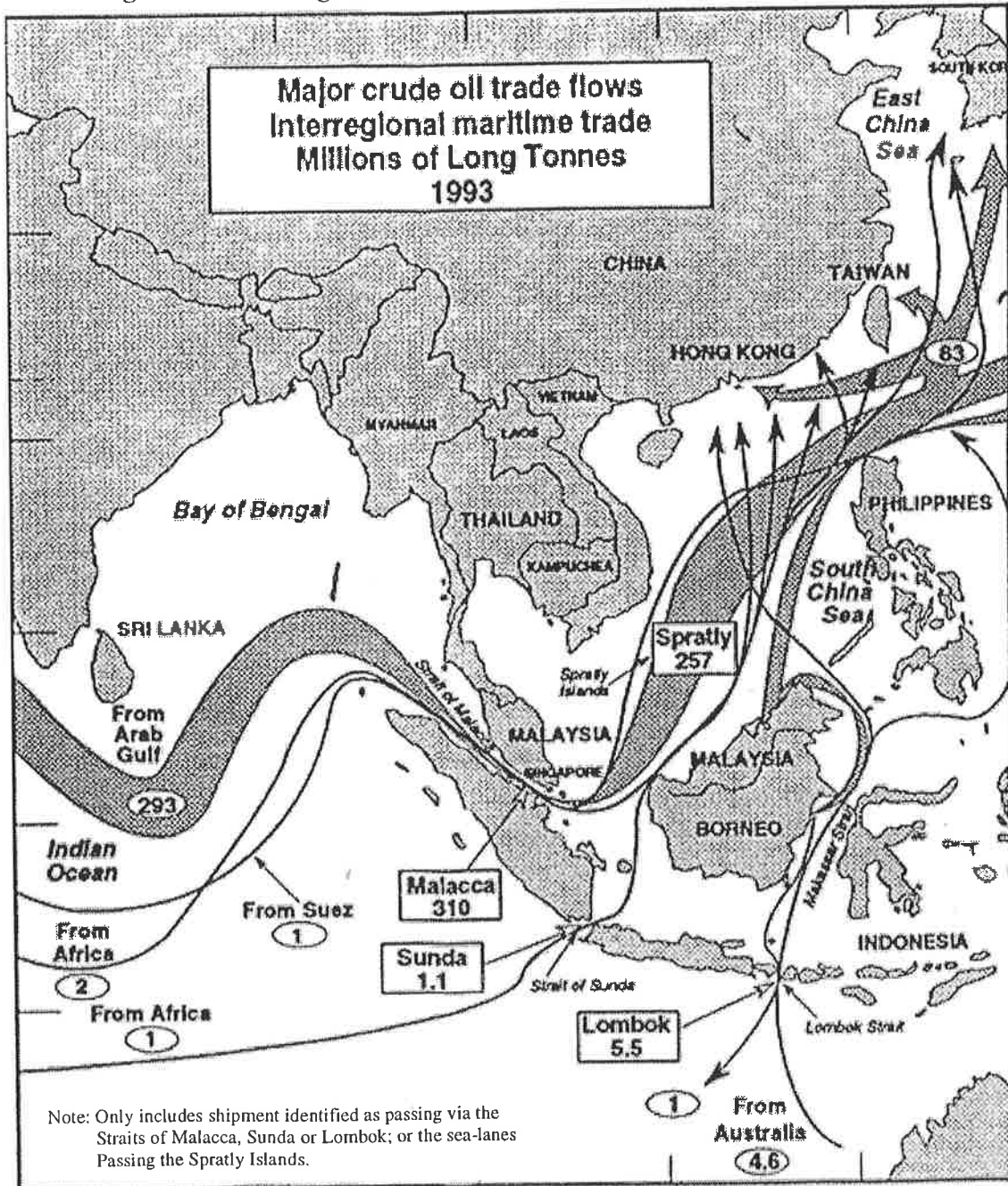
A safety agreement for the Straits was signed in Manila in February 1977, during a meeting of ASEAN. The agreement included the establishment of a traffic separation scheme in two deep channels. That same year three states reached an agreement limiting fully loaded tankers to 230,000 dwt (dead weight tons), by requiring an under-keel clearance (UKC) of at least 3.5 metres at all times. Both Malaysia and Indonesia have previously asserted that the Straits are part of their territorial waters, and that the Straits are not international waterways. The major maritime powers objected to this position as being too restrictive, and the 1982 Convention adopted the transit passage regime through international straits. Since then the three strait states have consented that the Straits are to be regarded as international straits.

In the past, The Malacca Straits was a contentious passageway not only for littoral states but also for major maritime powers, including Britain, the Netherlands, the US and the Soviet Union. In recent years, China has also concerned itself with the Straits for its increasing energy imports from the Middle East and for its maritime influence over the Straits. The Malacca Straits will remain the most critical seaway for China to expand its naval power into the Indian Ocean and beyond. The Strait of Malacca is the

¹³¹ Ahmad Hamzah, ed., *The Straits of Malacca*, *op. cit.*, p. 320.

second biggest oil passageway after the Strait of Hormuz in the world oil transit chokepoints.¹³² In 1993, 310 million tons of oil passed through the Malacca Strait (See Figure 4.2).

Figure 4.2 Interregional Maritime Crude Oil Shipments in 1993



Source: US Energy Information Administration, "South China Sea", March 2001.
<http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/schinatab.html> (Internet Accessed, on 12 July 2001).

¹³²US Energy Information Administration, "World Oil Transit Chokepoints", August 1999.
<http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/choke.html> (Internet Accessed, on 12 July 2000).

The oil flow of the Strait of Hormuz was 15.4 million bpd, the Suez Canal's was 3.1 million bpd, the Bab el-Mandeb's was 3.3 million bpd, and the Panama Canal's was 0.6 million bpd in the same year.

The Sunda Strait

The Sunda Strait is located between Sumatra and Java, and serves as a major sea link from the Indian Ocean to the Java Sea. Before the opening of the Suez Canal, it was a trade route between the European nations and the East Asian countries, and assisted in the Dutch penetration of the Indonesian archipelagos. Nowadays the Sunda Strait has not as much strategic significance as the Malacca Strait because the depth of the strait decreases sharply in the middle.¹³³ Therefore, the strait is considered not to be suitable for the passage of very large oil tankers and nuclear-missile carrying submarines.

The Lombok Strait

The Lombok Strait is located between the islands of Bali and Lombok. The strait is an important seaway for vessels proceeding between the Makassar Strait and the Indian Ocean. The navigational width of the strait is 11 miles, and the distance from the Makassar Strait to the Lombok Strait is 620 miles. The Lombok Strait is deeper than the Malacca and Sunda straits; and therefore provides the most suitable route for the deeper draught vessels.¹³⁴ The Japanese supertankers use this strait, despite the route being much longer than if they used the Malacca Straits.¹³⁵ For their submerged and untraceable activities, American nuclear missile-carrying submarines used this strait from their base in Guam into the Celebes Sea, and then through deep Makassar and Lombok straits into the Indian Ocean; an area from which to target the Soviet navy during the Cold War era.¹³⁶ The Lombok Strait is also the most important route for vessels moving between Australia and Singapore. Tankers over 230,000 dwt (dead weight tons) would have to use the deeper Lombok-Makassar route due to the limitation

¹³³ Michael Leifer, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

¹³⁴ Robert W. Smith and J. Ashley Roach, "Navigational Rights and Responsibilities in International Straits," *MIMA Issue Paper*, P. 15.

¹³⁵ Hamzah Ahmad, *op. cit.*, p. 322.

¹³⁶ Michael Leifer, *op. cit.*, pp. 80-81.

of the 3.5 metre under keel clearance (UKC) and the 23-metre depth of the Malacca Straits.¹³⁷

The Makassar Strait

The Makassar Strait is located between the islands of Kalimantan and Celebes. The southern part of the Makassar Strait is partly obstructed by numerous small islands. But as a whole, the strait is easy to navigate and presents no serious obstacles to ULCCs (ultra large crude carrier) traversing from the Lombok Strait into the Celebes Sea before leaving Southeast Asian waters south of Mindanao. There are a number of large offshore and coastal oilfields along the northern half of the Makassar Strait.¹³⁸ According to the *Strait Shipper*, the route through the Lombok-Makassar straits, a thousand-miles longer than the passage through the Malacca Straits, would mean an additional cost of between US\$84 billion and US\$250 billion for international navigation per year.¹³⁹

The Ombai-Wetar Straits

The Ombai Strait passes between the islands of Alor and Timor, and the Wetar Strait is located between the northern coast of Timor to the southern coast of Wetar. The Ombai-Wetar straits are used mainly by local shipping, including vessels proceeding between Australia and the Java Sea. However, the straits have a strategic significance because they offer a deep-water route for submerged American submarines proceeding from the US base in Guam through the Molucca Passage between Sulawesi and Halmahera to another US base in the Indian Ocean.¹⁴⁰ Although the Ombai-Wetar Straits provide a longer route for the US submarine voyages between Guam and the Indian Ocean than the Lombok-Makassar straits, they are widely used by the US Navy because

¹³⁷ Cha Lin Sien, "Alternative Route for Oil Tankers" in Ahmad Hamzah, ed., *The Straits of Malacca*, *op. cit.*, p. 107.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 110-11.

¹³⁹ *Straits Shipper*, 17-23, (October 1994), quoted by Chia Lin Sien, "Alternative Route for Oil Tankers", *op. cit.*, p. 114.

¹⁴⁰ Michael Leifer, *op. cit.*, p.83.

of the limited traffic in those straits.¹⁴¹ The *Christian Science Monitor* reports that “the Ombai-Wetar straits rank as the second-most-important strait after Gibraltar in the world for the US defence interests”.¹⁴² As noted earlier, the Sunda, Lombok-Makassar, and Ombai-Wetar straits have unique significance for international navigation, but these chokepoints are less important than the Malacca Straits for the China’s maritime future.

4.4.2 China’s Economic Interest in the Region

Since Deng Xiaoping’s reform policy was first introduced in 1978, China’s economy grew by almost 10 percent annually over the past two decades. According to the World Bank’s 1995 report, China’s GDP of US\$3,500 billion had exceeded Japan’s US\$2,750 billion on a Purchasing Power Parity (PPP).¹⁴³ According to the IMF, from 1995 to 2000 China’s GDP growth rate contracted from 10.5 percent to 8.0 percent, while that of the US increased from 2.7 percent to 5.0 percent (See Table 4.4).

Table 4.4 The Real GDP Growth Rate (%) of Selected Countries

Country	Average (1982-92)	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
China	9.6	13.5	12.6	10.5	9.6	8.8	7.8	7.1	8.0
U S	3.0	2.7	4.0	2.7	3.6	4.2	4.3	4.2	5.0
Germany	2.7	-1.1	2.3	1.7	0.8	1.5	2.2	1.6	3.0
Japan	4.1	0.3	0.6	1.5	5.0	1.6	-2.5	0.8	1.7

Source: IMF, “World Economic Outlook”, May 2001, pp. 21, 24.

China’s economy is expected to sustain about 7 percent growth rate during the period 2001-2002, while the USA’s GDP forecast (albeit from a much higher base point) to be around two percent in the same period.¹⁴⁴ During the period from 1978 to 1998, China’s foreign trade volume grew from US\$20.7 billion to US\$324.0 billion, and

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

¹⁴² Jell Jolliffe, “US Interests in Southeast Asian Straits”, *The Christian Science Monitor*, 29 April 1986.

¹⁴³ World Bank, *World Bank Atlas 2000*, Washington D. C., April 2000, p. 42.

PPP is one of the means of calculating comparative national economic outputs: the exchange rate method converts foreign currencies to US dollars using market exchange rates.

¹⁴⁴ International Monetary Fund, *World Economic Outlook*, May 2001, pp.21, 24.

foreign direct investment (FDI) in China increased from US\$1.8 billion to US\$45.6 billion.¹⁴⁵ The foreign direct investment in China rose 21.7 percent between January and July 2001 to US\$24.1 billion, mainly due to the investment from Japan and Taiwan.¹⁴⁶ More than 20 million ethnic Chinese living in the Southeast Asian region have also contributed to the development of the Chinese economy through active investment for their home country. Predictions are that China's economy is likely to continue to grow at a rate far in excess of other advanced economies. China has already emerged as one of the largest consumer markets in the world. US companies have been investing in about 20,000 projects worth US\$26 billion in China.¹⁴⁷ Will China's economy continue to grow at the same level it has achieved in the past two decades? Some experts on China's economy have stated that its economic growth will be likely to slow, but China's investment in housing, education and other infrastructure will be a driving force to further enhance its economy as well as its military build-up.¹⁴⁸

Economic growth and changing lifestyles have created a great demand for energy in the Asia-Pacific region over the past decade.¹⁴⁹ Growing oil consumption is the major source for China's energy requirements in recent years. Even though China is the world's second largest energy producer and the fifth largest oil producer,¹⁵⁰ it will nonetheless have to import substantial oil and gas in the years to come. It is imperative for China to produce more oil (both from in-land and offshore sources), or to import oil from other countries. According to the US Energy Information Administration, China's

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁶ David Murphy, "Asian Economic Outlook: China", *FEER*, September 6, 2001.

¹⁴⁷ Ezra F. Vogel, "How Can the United States and China pursue Common Interests and Manage Differences?", in Ezra F. Vogel, ed., *Living with China, op. cit.*, p. 46.

¹⁴⁸ In interviews with scholars in Southeast Asia and China, a variety of estimation has been suggested on China's future economic development. Dr Derek da Cunha in ISEAS commented that China's economy has begun recession in recent times, but its economy would play an increasing role over the Southeast Asian region. On the other hand, Dr Wang Yizhou in CASS elaborated that China's economy would remain healthy in the early twenty-first century, but he also designated some problematic areas China might encounter in the future, such as regional income disparity, chronic deficit of state-owned enterprises and the uncertainty of political leadership.

¹⁴⁹ US Pacific Command, "Asia-Pacific Economic Update", Asia-Pacific Centre for Security Studies, (April 1998), p. 29.

¹⁵⁰ Greg Austin, *op. cit.*, p. 255.

proven oil and gas reserves are estimated at approximately one billion barrels and 3.5 trillion cubic feet respectively (See Table 4.5).¹⁵¹

Table 4.5 Oil and Gas Reserves in the Regional Countries

Countries	Oil (Billion Barrels)	Gas (Trillion Cubic Feet)
Brunei	1.35	14.1
China	1.0	3.5
Indonesia	3.9	29.7
Malaysia	3.9	79.8
Philippines	0.2	2.7
Taiwan	0.01	2.7
Thailand	0.3	7.0
Vietnam	0.6	6.0
Total	7.5 (est.)	145.5

Source: The US Energy Information Administration, "South China Sea", August 1998.

Given its limited reserves and production of oil and gas, China has to resolve the question of its future oil requirements. Since the early 1990s, China has been carried out oil drilling and exploration in the Spratly Islands area, and has made efforts to conduct active oil diplomacy with many countries. According to the *Xinhua News Agency*, by the end of 1996, China was cooperating with 65 oil companies from 18 countries in developing its offshore oil in the region.¹⁵² In 1997, China established the third government-owned oil company, the China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC), for further oil exploration and development. In the same year, China opened a representative office of the China National Offshore Oil Company (CNOOC) in Jakarta, Indonesia, on the condition that China would purchase a 32.5 percent share of a US-owned oil production contract in a Malacca Strait field, which produced 8.24 million barrels in 1994.¹⁵³ The CNPC has also signed up 18 oil exploration and development projects with foreign countries, including Sudan's oil field construction project, Malaysia's oil refinery factory, Turkmenistan's pipelines, and Kuwait's oil refinery factory. Furthermore, China is actively negotiating oil-related projects with other countries, including India, Canada,

¹⁵¹ The US Energy Information Administration, "South China Sea", August 1998.

¹⁵² "Offshore Oil Construction Program Reviewed", *Xinhua*, 10 January 10, 1997, carried in FBIS-CHI-97-007, January 13, 1997, quoted by Greg Austin, *China's Ocean Frontier*, op. cit., p. 259.

¹⁵³ "Offshore Oil Corporation Opens Jakarta Office", *Xinhua*, (29 and 28 March 1995). Quoted by Greg Austin, *China's Ocean Frontier*, op. cit. P. 259.

Peru, Thailand, and Venezuela.¹⁵⁴ The CNPC's investment in Kuwait reached US\$3 billion in 1997.¹⁵⁵ All these efforts clearly demonstrate how eager China is in seeking energy resources from a variety of countries.

A study showed that during 1993 and 1994, Chinese oil tankers passing through the South China Sea totalled 567, which was one-third the number bound for Japan through the same shipping lane in the same year,¹⁵⁶ and 27 percent of China's total trade passed through the South China Sea in 1994.¹⁵⁷ The Southeast Asian straits, including the Straits of Malacca, are major maritime highways for the rapidly growing seaborne trade of the East Asian region and the broad Asia-Pacific region (See Table 4.6).

Table 4.6 Trade via the Southeast Asian Straits in 1994 (US\$ billion)

Countries	Export	Import	Total Trade
Japan	139.0	121.4	260.4
China	30.7	34.9	65.6
Republic of Korea	26.3	35.4	61.7
Hong Kong	38.3	37.3	75.6
Taiwan	25.3	29.3	54.6
ASEAN	204.1	227.5	431.6

Sources: Stanley B. Weeks, *Sea Lines of Communication Security and Access, Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation*, University of California, Policy Paper 33, 1998.

As shown in Table 4-6, China's 1994 trade via the Southeast Asian straits was not notable, but China, in the twenty-first century and beyond, may become heavily dependent upon these straits for both energy imports and trade. Any conflict in the Strait of Malacca will threaten not only the economies of East Asia but also the interests of the US and Southeast Asian states. During the 1980-88 "Tanker War" between Iran and Iraq, more than five hundred ships of various kinds were attacked, and approximately two hundred sailors were killed.¹⁵⁸ In fact, most ships and sailors were not involved with the conflict. More significantly, this war caused a rise in the oil price (from approximately

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 259-60.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 260.

¹⁵⁶ Sam Batesman, "The Shipment of Dangerous Cargoes", A Paper Presented at the MIMA in December 1994, quoted by Greg Austin, *China's Ocean Frontier, op. cit.*, p. 270.

¹⁵⁷ Henry J. Kenny, "An Analysis of Possible Threats to Shipping in Key Southeast Asian Sealanes", *Centre for Naval Analysis*, 1996, p. 117.

¹⁵⁸ Reynold B. Peele, "The Importance of Maritime Chokepoints", *Parameters*, (Summer 1997), pp. 61-74.

US\$13 to US\$31 per barrel), and incurred the increase of worldwide hull insurance premiums in the order of 200 percent.¹⁵⁹ Any future conflict in the Southeast Asian seas and in the Indian Ocean could therefore bring about substantial damage to the economies and security of the region. China's increasing oil imports make it potentially a far more assertive maritime nation, thus the PLAN will almost certainly eventually be called upon to protect its sea-lanes.

4.4.3 China's Political and Military Ambitions in the Straits of Malacca

The PLA strategic analysts have identified the controlling of the Malacca Strait as one of its most urgent tasks, so that no other power is capable of blocking the passage of the Chinese navy.¹⁶⁰ The author's interviews with China's military strategists underlined China's naval ambitions, and concern was expressed about the security of SLOCs in the region.¹⁶¹ China's political sway over the waterway would eventually invite the responses of regional countries and the US. A study warns that, "If the US fails to deter China's hegemonic ambitions in Southeast Asia, Americans, one Sunday morning, might hear the sound of air raid sirens signalling another Pearl Harbor attack on American interests somewhere in Asia".¹⁶² The three littoral nations of the Malacca Straits, namely Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore are regarded major players for the Straits. China's potential challenge towards the Straits will naturally bring about responses of the three strait states and major user states, including the US and East Asian countries.

Malaysia's relationship with China has improved from the early 1990s. In December 1989, the Malaysian Communist Party (MCP) surrendered to the Malaysian

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁰ Yosseff Bodansky, "China's Surge for the Straits of Malacca", *op. cit.*

¹⁶¹ Mr Bandarto Bandoro in CSIS argues that China will become a hegemonic sea power in the near future, while Dr Derek da Cunha in ISEAS points out that the geo-strategic environment in Southeast Asia will increasingly evolve in the direction of growing China's power in various dimensions, thus ASEAN nations have to form a Standing ASEAN Naval Forces (SANF) to counter not only China's challenge but also other outside maritime threat.

¹⁶² Richard Halloran, "China: Restoring the Middle Kingdom", *Parameters*, (Summer 1998), pp.56-58.

government and agreed to participate in an effort toward the national harmony.¹⁶³ The Voice of Malayan Democracy, one of China's last ties to the MCP, ceased its broadcasting in January 1990.¹⁶⁴ Since then Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir has often expressed his view of China as being a benign neighbour and close partner. He told *Asiaweek* in 1993 that "I do not see the threat from China being any worse than that from the US, China has not been going around waving the flag, telling people what to do and what not to do".¹⁶⁵ In 1994, Mahathir also stated that he could not see US military power as indispensable to the security of Asia because there is no real security threat in the region, even from China.¹⁶⁶ Although China and Malaysia have had overlapping territorial claims over islands in the Spratlys, both countries have been maintaining a good relationship.

The Indonesians believe that there is no immediate external threat to their country. Nevertheless, they view China as their primary threat, while the major regional powers including China, India and Japan have security concerns with regard to Indonesia's growing military power.¹⁶⁷ Should any dispute between China and Indonesia occur with regard to the latter's archipelagic straits, Indonesia will immediately respond. On this point, Indonesia on several occasions demonstrated its national power by closing its straits. Under the cover of naval exercises, Indonesia closed its archipelagic straits four times; in 1958, 1964, 1978 and 1988. On the last occasion, the Indonesian Armed Forces closed the Sunda and Lombok Straits for four 48 hour-periods for its naval exercises.¹⁶⁸ The closure of the international straits was protested against by Australia, Japan, Spain (in the name of European Community), and the Federal Republic of

¹⁶³ Robert S. Ross, "China and Southeast Asia", in David Wurfel and Bruce Burton, eds., *Southeast Asia in the New World Order*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996, p. 152.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁵ Melvin Gurtov, *China and Southeast Asia*, Baltimore, Maryland: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975, p. 45.

¹⁶⁶ William E. Berry, Jr., "Threat Perceptions in the Philippines, Malaysia and Singapore", *INSS Occasion Paper 16*, USA Air Force Academy, (September 1997).

¹⁶⁷ Bob Lowry, *Indonesian Defence Policy and Indonesian Armed Forces*, Canberra: ANU, 1993, p. 11.

¹⁶⁸ Robert W. Smith and J. Ashley Roach, "Navigational Rights and Responsibilities in International Straits", in Hamzah Ahmad, ed., *The Straits of Malacca, op. cit.*, p. 299.

Germany in 1989.¹⁶⁹ Any further closure of regional chokepoints would bring about regional countries' responses, including China. The ethnic Chinese issue in Indonesia, coupled with the Natuna dispute between the two countries, are believed to be factors in the deteriorating relations between the two nations. If these two states went into a crisis, a confrontation in the Strait of Malacca or in other Indonesian straits, would be unavoidable.

India is greatly concerned about China's military connection with Myanmar. India sees Beijing's Myanmar policy as an indication of a Chinese desire to control the Straits of Malacca and the Indian Ocean, and as a sign of the Chinese naval presence in Myanmar's territory in the future.¹⁷⁰ China's military activities on the strategically located Coco Islands, only 30 miles away from the Andaman chain of Islands, are of particular concern to India's maritime security.¹⁷¹ China has also become deeply involved in constructing roads and waterways from its southern Province Yunnan to Yangon for trade and naval vessel activities. China's intention to project its power down the Irrawady River to Yangon indicates that the Chinese armed craft as large as Huangfu-class missile boats could patrol Myanmar's waterways.¹⁷² Myanmar's role in China's force projection to the Strait of Malacca and the Indian Ocean might be one of the most significant concerns not only to India and the US but also to the countries of East and Southeast Asia. China has also provided India's immediate neighbours, including Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal, with military weapons and war materials. China's naval ambitions toward the Indian Ocean could trigger a harsh confrontation between Beijing and New Delhi.

The Japanese economy has benefited from the safe shipping of its goods and energy resources through the Malacca Straits for more than half a century, owing to not

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁰ J. Mohan Malik, "Sino-Indian Rivalry in Myanmar", *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, vol. 16, no. 2, (September 1994), pp. 136-50.

¹⁷¹ Rahul Roy-Chaudhury, "Maritime Security in the Indian Ocean Region", *Institute for Defence Studies and Analysis*, New Delhi, 1996.

¹⁷² *Stratfor*, "China's Opening Route through Myanmar", *Global Intelligence Update*, 8 August 1997.

only the political stability of littoral states, but also America's support to secure the SLOCs. However, the maritime environment in Southeast Asian seas is changing with the China's naval expansion into the region. Since the beginning of the post-Cold War era, China and Japan have emerged as two maritime giants in East Asia, which could influence the stability of the regional waterways. Takashi Oka asserts that, "How China and Japan define their relationships with each other and with the US will determine the long-term stability of the arc from Hokkaido to the Malacca Strait".¹⁷³ China's maritime sway over the regional SLOCs would eventually intimidate Japan's oil tankers, and invite Japanese response. Japan's current defence plans call for protecting sea-lanes 1,000 nautical miles from Tokyo, which covers only the SLOCs to Guam and Bashi Channel, but not the South China Sea and the Malacca Straits.¹⁷⁴

It is reported that PLAN's vessels have sometimes stopped, boarded, and searched Japanese, Russian, and Taiwanese vessels in the East and South China Sea on the pretext of contraband or challenging these vessels as the latter's constituting a threat to navigation.¹⁷⁵ If this kind of incident occurs more often in the Straits of Malacca, the Japanese shipping through the Malacca and Lombok-Makassar straits would be forced to navigate around Australia, and this could result in an increase in the order of 60 percent in the shipping costs.¹⁷⁶ The distance between Kuwait and Yokohama varies significantly based on the use of each strait: it is 6,755 nautical miles via Malacca Strait; 7,275 nautical miles via Sunda Strait; 7,635 nautical miles via Lombok Strait; and 11,800 nautical miles around Australia (See Figure 4.3).

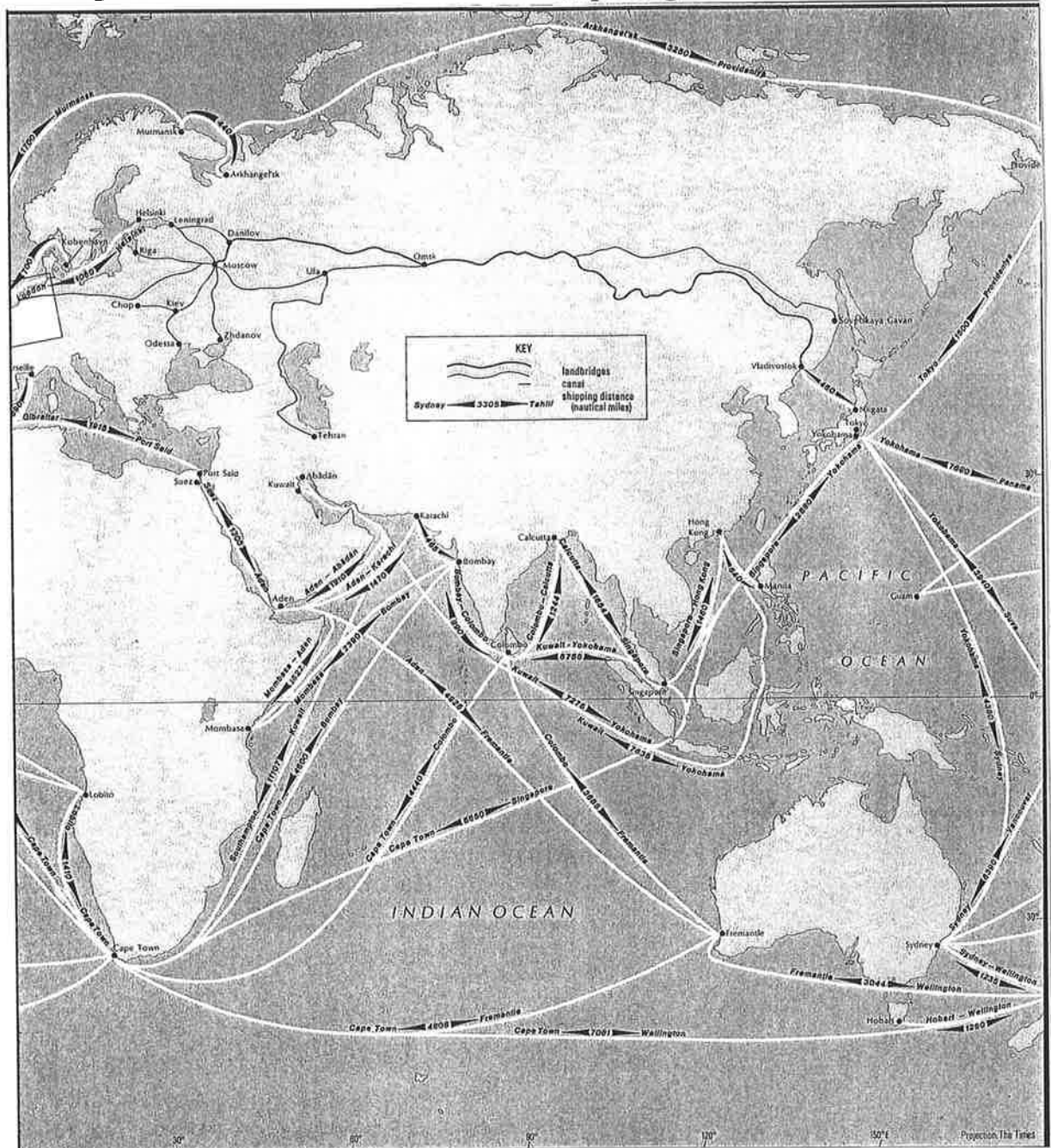
¹⁷³ Takashi Oka, "East Asia Seek US Partnerships", *The Christian Science Monitor*, 28 May, 1993.

¹⁷⁴ Sudo Sueo, *Southeast Asia in Japanese Security Policy*, Singapore: ISEAS, 1991, p. 37.

¹⁷⁵ A James Gregor, *Qualified Engagement*, *op. cit.*

¹⁷⁶ Tsuneo Akaha, *Japan in Global Ocean Politics*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1985, p. 19.

Figure 4.3 Distances from the Gulf to Oil Importing Countries



Source: Alastair Couper, ed., *The Times Atlas of the Oceans*, London: Times Books Ltd., 1983, p. 147.

The Japanese worry that the US influence in Asia, to some extent, will eventually fade, while China's maritime power will gradually rise. Thus, the Japanese believe that they have to develop a contingency plan for an unpredictable future. In a debate over the final approval of the 1997 Japan-US defence guidelines in May 1999, the Japanese government attempted to enhance the role of its Self-Defence Force (SDF), and to gain

more freedom from US control.¹⁷⁷ China is, in this connection, most concerned that the defence guidelines might involve Taiwan within the range of the expanded role for the JSDF.¹⁷⁸ Any naval conflict between China and Japan would deteriorate the stability of the Asia-Pacific and regional sea-lanes.

The US has also been deeply concerned about China's transfer of conventional weapons and nuclear technology to Middle East countries. This waterway also has been used for the flow of drug trafficking from heroin producing countries to the US.¹⁷⁹ Heroin in the US has been supplied by four source areas: Southeast Asia (principally Myanmar), Southwest Asia/Middle East (Turkey, Pakistan, Lebanon), Mexico, and South America (Colombia).¹⁸⁰ It is said that the US drug market has been dominated by highly pure Southeast Asian heroin, which is transported through the regional seas, and distributed by ethnic Chinese wholesalers in the US.¹⁸¹ These materials pass through the Indonesian straits, especially through the Malacca Strait. Therefore the US has had a great concern to the shipping lane for its national security and Middle East strategy. .

In the days of superpower rivalry between the US and the Soviet Union, it is believed that the Soviet navy had three major strategic goals; to dominate Middle Eastern oil, to control the mineral riches of southern Africa, and to control the chokepoints of the world such as the Panama Canal and the Straits of Malacca.¹⁸² Now, China, as a great power gradually replacing the position of the former Soviet Union, plans to control the SLOCs from the Persian Gulf to mainland China through the Indian Ocean, the Malacca Strait, and the South China Sea.

¹⁷⁷ Stratfor, "Chinese Embassy Bombing May Redefine Japan-US Relations", *Global Intelligence Update*, (11 May, 1999).

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁹ National Narcotics Intelligence Consumers Committee, "The Supply of Illicit Drug to the US", 1996. <http://www.mninter.net/~publish/deal.htm> (Internet Accessed, on 24 November 1999)

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸² John Dillin, "Robertson Tapes Carries his Message to Throngs", *The Christian Science Monitor*, 24 February, 1988.

Chapter Five

Southeast Asia: A Gateway to China's Maritime Expansion

5.1 Southeast Asian Nations and China

The relationship between China and the Southeast Asian states began in the time of the Han dynasty. According to the archaeological finding of Chinese artefacts in Malaysia, Sumatra, Java and Borneo, the earliest contact between China and the nations in Southeast Asia goes back to the third century BC.¹ Official relations between China and the Southeast Asian nations began in the mid-eighth century. Between 756 and 779, Java's envoys arrived in China bearing gifts.² Under other dynasties, the Ming court, for example, conducted active lines of diplomacy with its neighbouring states. During the Ming dynasty, emperor Yungle (who reigned from 1402 to 1424) launched an ambitious sea-going policy, and consequently sent 62 missions to the Southeast Asian states and received 95 missions from those countries during his 22-year rule (See Table 5.1).

Table 5.1 Missions between China and S.E. Asian Nations During 1402-24

Missions	Champa	Cambodia	Siam	Java	Brunei	Malacca	Samudra	Total
Missions from China	14	3	11	9	3	11	11	62
Missions to China	18	7	21	17	9	12	11	95
Total	32	10	32	26	12	23	22	157

Source: Wang Gungwu, "Early Ming Relations with Southeast Asia", in John King Fairbank, ed., *The Chinese World Order*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968, p. 58.

¹ Victor Simpao Limlingan, *The Overseas Chinese in ASEAN*, Manila: The De La Salle University Press, 1994, p. 23.

² *Ibid.*

During Yungle's rule, Zheng He led six great expeditions. He opened ties with visiting countries, and presented gifts to foreign rulers and accepted tribute from them, and eventually found commercial markets throughout the region.³ After Zheng He's trans-Asian sea voyages in the early 1400s, the Chinese began to move to Southeast Asian insular countries for their new life. Chinese migration to the Southeast Asian region began to increase in the early nineteenth century, when the Western powers competitively occupied the spice archipelagos and tropical lands of Southeast Asia. The British founded Penang in 1785, followed by the annexation of Malacca in 1795, and the colonisation of Singapore in 1819. In doing so, they allowed a large Chinese workforce to service the colonial industries such as rubber plantations and tin mines.⁴

The Dutch also encouraged Chinese immigration to the East Indies because the Chinese were diligent and actively engaged in any hard work.⁵ Population explosion, famines and rebellions in China were other sources of Chinese massive migration into the Southeast Asian countries during the mid-nineteenth century.⁶ More than two million Chinese died through famine in the mid-1800s, and another 60 million were estimated to have died in the two-decade-long rebellions throughout the country.⁷ This miserable situation was the direct result of massive Chinese emigration to the Southeast Asian nations. The Chinese wanted to go anywhere they could make money for their families. They moved by sea and settled in Thailand, the Malay Peninsula, Indonesia, Singapore, Indochina, the Philippines and Brunei, and some of them also went to California, Australia and Melanesia.⁸

³ George T. Haley et al., eds., *New Asian Emperors: The Overseas Chinese, Their Strategies and Competitive Advantages*, Oxford: Plant A Tree Publishers, 1998, p. 11.

⁴ Indira Ramanathan, *China and the Ethnic Chinese in Malaysia and Indonesia 1949-1992*, New Delhi: Radiant Publishers, 1994, p. 10.

⁵ Victor Simpao Limlingan, *The Overseas Chinese in ASEAN*, op. cit., p. 24.

⁶ Michael S. Dobbs-Higginson, *Asia-Pacific: Its Role in the New World Disorder*, Melbourne: William Heinemann Australia, 1993, p. 159

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*

It was only in the early twentieth century that the Qing government paid great attention to the overseas Chinese. In 1909, for example, a Chinese Citizenship Law was passed by the Qing dynasty, following which many overseas Chinese communal organizations came under the constant supervision of the government of China.⁹ In the early 1910s, Indonesian Nationalists sought to cooperate with the Chinese community for their national independence from the Dutch rule, and granted all Chinese who had resided continuously in Indonesia for more than five years Indonesian citizenship, if they wished to become Indonesians.¹⁰ By 1962, only 65 percent of 2.45 million ethnic Chinese in Indonesia opted for Indonesian citizenship, and this created doubt regarding the loyalty of the entire Chinese community.¹¹ Since then the Chinese minority in Indonesia continues to be a target for Indonesian nationalism whenever demonstrations erupt in the country. The ethnic Chinese gradually dominated the regional economy, and later became involved in the communist activities of the regional countries.

During the 1950s and 1960s, China's relationship with these regional states can be described as being made up of three key connections, namely long-term bilateral trade, the Chinese influx to those countries, and China's involvement with Communist insurgency in the region. The ethnic Chinese had contributed to the development of the local economy in the regional countries through their diligence and close cooperation with local government officials. At the same time, they were also challenged occasionally by the local inhabitants because of their domination of the local economy. Ethnic Chinese own a disproportionate share of market capital in almost every country in Southeast Asia: 60 percent of market capital is owned by two percent of population in the Philippines; 70 percent is owned by two percent in Cambodia; 69 percent is owned by 30

⁹ Indira Ramanathan, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Mely G. Tan, "The Ethnic Chinese in Indonesia", in Leo Suryadinata, ed., *Ethnic Chinese as Southeast Asians*, Singapore: ISEAS, 1997, p. 35.

percent in Malaysia; 81 percent is owned by 14 percent in Thailand; and 73 percent is owned by 2.5 percent in Indonesia (See Table 5.2).¹²

Table 5.2 Ethnic Chinese and Their Wealth in Southeast Asian Nations

Countries	Total /Ethnic Chinese Population in thousand(%)	Chinese Share of Market Capital (%)
Brunei	300 / 43 (15.0)	Unknown
Cambodia	11,164 / 250 (2.0)*	70
Indonesia	209,774 / 5,244 (2.5)	73
Laos	5,116 / 67 (1.3)	Unknown
Malaysia	20,491 / 6,147 (30.0)	69
Myanmar	46,822 / 8194 (17.5)*	Unknown
Philippine	76,104 / 1,522 (2.0)	60
Singapore	3,440 / 2,146 (77.6)	81
Thailand	59,451 / 8,323 (14.0)	81
Vietnam	75,124 / 1,051 (1.4)	45
Total	507,387/ 23,512	Unknown

Source: George T. Haley and others, eds., *New Asian Emperors*, Oxford: Plant A Tree Publications, 1998, pp. 12-13 (* These figures are rough estimation).

The disparity of wealth between the indigenous population and the ethnic Chinese has produced violence in most countries. National tensions and public demonstrations have led to large-scale anti-Chinese riots in Burma in 1967, Indonesia in 1960 and 1998, Malaysia in 1969, and Cambodia in the 1970s.¹³ Among these nations, Malaysia improved the economic condition of the Malays favourably against that of the ethnic Chinese in the early 1990s. The Malay share of corporate equity grew from only 2.4 percent in 1970 to 20.3 percent in 1990, and there was a dramatic growth in the Malay middle class, which over the same period grew from 12.9 percent to 27.0 percent of the Malay work force.¹⁴ However, other nations have not resolved the difficulties of

¹² David S. G. Goodman, "Are Asia's Ethnic Chinese a Regional Security Threat?", *Survival* 39/ 4, (Winter 1997-8), p. 143.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Bernie Bishop and Deborah McNamara, *The Asia-Australia Survey 1997-98*, Melbourne: Macmillan, 1997, p. 331.

improving the economic conditions of their indigenous people. Their prejudice towards the ethnic Chinese has led to friction between Southeast Asian nations and China, and this tension has seen deterioration in relations between both parties.

Another source of conflict between China and the ASEAN nations had been the string of Chinese communist connections with local communist parties. In many cases, the communist revolution of regional countries was equated with the subversive activity of the Chinese communities.¹⁵ During the Cold War, ethnic Chinese were sometimes regarded as possible agents of communist insurgency. Since its foundation, Southeast Asian countries viewed China as an expansionist power and as a supporter of the prevailing armed insurgencies in the region.¹⁶ As a result of this perception, local people feared communism, and doubted the loyalty of ethnic Chinese, who were closely watched by the local governments.

China's ties with the Partai Kommunis Indonesia (PKI) in the 1950s and the PKI's involvement in the 1965 coup attempt continued to raise the suspicion of Chinese intentions in Indonesia. During the period of 1954-60, anti-Chinese riots killed and injured thousands of the Chinese throughout Indonesia.¹⁷ At that time, the enraged Chinese government dispatched ships and moved approximately 100,000 ethnic Chinese to China, which resulted in a serious damage to the Indonesian economy and Sukarno's political status.¹⁸ After the suppression of the PKI's plot, Indonesia broke off diplomatic ties with China in 1967, and only resumed normal relations with China in 1990.¹⁹ During Suharto's prolonged period of one-man rule, many in the Indonesian military were bitter

¹⁵ C. P. Fitzgerald, *China and Southeast Asia Since 1945*, Hong Kong: Longman, 1973, p. 6.

¹⁶ Lee Kam Hing, "Malaysian Chinese", in Leo Suryadinata, ed., *Ethnic Chinese as Southeast Asians*, Singapore: ISEAS, 1997, p. 73.

¹⁷ Denny Roy, *China's Foreign Relations*, *op. cit.*, p. 183.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 175-183.

¹⁹ David B.H. Denoon and Wendy Frieman, "China's Security Strategy", *Asian Survey*, vol. 36, no. 4, (April 1996), p. 432.

about the Chinese businessmen who had been close to the president and his family.²⁰ The 1998 nation-wide demonstrations finally brought the resignation of Suharto and sparked anti-Chinese riots throughout the nation. Deep-seated prejudice against the ethnic Chinese prevails and occasionally brings about riots against them.²¹ However, the ethnic Chinese economic position is too strong in Indonesia to ostracise them completely (or, indeed, entirely effectively). After the 1998 anti-Chinese riots, about 30,000-40,000 ethnic Chinese in Indonesia left the country with substantial hard currency, further deepening the Indonesian financial crisis.²²

Beijing's relationship with the Malayan Communist Party (MCP) in the 1950s and 1960s continued to raise concern in Kuala Lumpur throughout the 1980s. As they did in Indonesia, after the surrender of the Japanese imperial army in Malaya, the ethnic Chinese there faced severe treatment by the Malays. The guerrillas who fought against the Japanese rule in the jungle were mainly Chinese communists.²³ In 1948, the "Malayan Emergency Decree" to crush the communist party was initiated. During the sweeping operation against the communist insurgents, many Chinese were killed because most of the communist party members were Chinese. Malaysia's desire for a peaceful sovereign state was accomplished when the MCP finally surrendered to the government of Malaysia in December 1989.²⁴ In November 1985, Prime Minister Mahathir led a large trade and investment delegation on an official state visit to Beijing. Since then, relations between China and Malaysia have continued to improve in regard to their mutual understanding and prosperity. In the 1990s, China and Malaysia expanded their bilateral

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 432.

²¹ Kusuma Snitwongse, "Internal Problems of the ASEAN States", in T. B. Miller, ed., *International Security in the Southeast Asia and Southwest Pacific Regions*, St. Lucia, Queensland: University of Queensland Press, 1983, pp. 152-53.

²² Jamie Mackie, "Tackling the Chinese Problem", in Geoff Forrester, ed., *Post-Suharto Indonesia*, Singapore: ISEAS, 1999, p. 189.

²³ C. P. Fitzgerald, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

²⁴ Roberts S. Ross, "China and Southeast Asia", in David Wurfel and Bruce Burton, eds., *Southeast Asia in the New World Order*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996, p. 152.

trade and economic cooperation by virtue of cooperative diplomacy between the two countries. This reconciliation effort has contributed to a close relationship between the two countries, and promoted the co-prosperity of ethnic-indigenous peoples.

Although China directly ruled Vietnam for over a thousand years from 111 BC to AD 939, Vietnam has maintained its sovereignty for about one thousand years since the Chinese rule. Vietnam again fell under the colonial rule of the French and the Japanese. With the Japanese surrender, Nationalist Chinese troops occupied North Vietnam and the British occupied South Vietnam to disarm the Japanese imperial army. Viet Minh, however, led by Ho Chi Minh seized the political initiative and proclaimed a national liberation committee.²⁵ In the 1920s, the senior Vietnamese communists, including Ho himself, Truong Chinh, Vo Nguyen Giap and Pham Van Dong, gained experience by engaging in communist activity and training in China.²⁶ In 1928, in Moscow, Ho became a Comintern agent for Southeast Asia and directed the organisational work of the communist party of Thailand, Malaya and Indonesia in the 1930s.²⁷ After the foundation of the PRC, China became deeply involved in the Vietnamese political arena. During the conflict with the French in the early 1950s, Vietnam received arms, war materials and logistic support from China. The Chinese military supplies to Vietnam made up about 10 to 20 tons in 1951, but increased to 400 tons monthly in 1952 and 750 tons monthly in 1953 to aid the Vietnamese effort to fight the French.²⁸ Vietnam finally crushed the French forces at the battle of Dien Vien Phu, and gained its independence in 1954. However, it was divided into two parts, South and North Vietnam.

²⁵ Jay Tayer, *Southeast Asia Peking's Relations with Revolutionary Movement*, 2nd Ed., New York: Praeger Publishers, 1976, pp. 1-2.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

The close relationship between China and Vietnam began to wither when the Soviet Union became involved in the Vietnam War. During the war, Cam Ranh Bay was a replenishment and fuel stop for the Soviet Navy, and facilitated the latter's reach into the Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf areas, and the base was presumed to be a potential forward position for the Soviet Union in the event it wished to launch a strike against China in a time of tension or conflict. The dissension between the two countries continued during the 1970s and 1980s. The Chinese attack on South Vietnamese troops in the Paracels in 1974, the invasion of Vietnam's northern border in 1979, and the attack on Vietnamese troops at Fiery Reef in the Spratlys in 1988 clearly demonstrated the uneasy relations between Beijing and Hanoi.²⁹ Another thorny issue between China and Vietnam was Vietnam's invasion of Cambodia. The issue was resolved through the Soviet's efforts in 1988, when the combination of Chinese policy and Soviet domestic difficulties compelled Moscow to persuade Hanoi to withdraw its force from Cambodia.³⁰ What do Chinese leaders think of Vietnam? For reasons noted above, peoples of the two countries still harbour resentment. Some academics even designate Vietnam as China's primary potential aggressor among the ASEAN nations.³¹

Although the Chinese migration to the Philippines had begun soon after Zheng He's expeditions, the major migration started when the Spaniards needed skilled workers to develop local industry in the sixteenth century.³² In the seventeenth century, a series of anti-ethnic Chinese riots erupted in the Philippines. There were three major massacres of the ethnic Chinese in 1603, 1639 and 1662 because of the Chinese declining to convert to Catholicism, and because of Spanish suspicion of ethnic Chinese economic

²⁹ David B.H. Denoon and Wendy Frieman, *op. cit.*, p. 433.

³⁰ Robert S. Ross, *China and Southeast Asia, op. cit.*, p. 143.

³¹ In interviews with Dr J.N. Mak and Dr Derek da Cunha in September 1999, they indicated that Vietnam would be China's major foe in the new century.

³² C.P. Fitzgerald, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

predominance.³³ The Spanish colonial regime occasionally persecuted and massacred non-Catholic Chinese; about 25,000 Chinese were massacred in the Manila-based Chinese community alone.³⁴ After the agitation for expulsion, the Spanish, realising that the Chinese deportation brought about the collapse of the local economy, thus allowed the Chinese to again engage in the Philippine economic activities.³⁵ Thereafter the Chinese in the Philippines gradually took the dominant position in the country's economy. Different from other countries of the region, the communist movements in the Philippines were not active and were less supported by the PRC Communist regime.

China and Burma, unlike most of the countries of Southeast Asia, have a common land border between the Burmese Shan State and the Chinese Province of Yunnan. During the period of the British rule in Burma, Chinese immigrants (about 320,000, mostly residing in Rangoon) were not a dominant economic power, and they only competed with the Indians (roughly 500,000 in Rangoon). Following the independence of Burma from the British in January 1948, the ethnic Chinese began to emerge as an economic force in Burma.³⁶ In the early years of Burmese independence, Burma and China maintained a good relationship. During the Cultural Revolution in China in 1966, the young ethnic Chinese in Rangoon were exposed to Mao Zedong Thought, and as a result the Burmese waged nation-wide anti-Chinese riots.³⁷ After the anti-Chinese uprising, the two countries confronted each other, and China's ambassador in Rangoon was deported under pressure from the Burmese government. At the end of the Cultural Revolution in 1969, Rangoon and Beijing restored normal diplomatic relations. China's close links with the military regime in Myanmar in the late 1980s have been of great concern to neighbouring countries, especially India. The Chinese government offered a

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ George T. Haley et al., *op. cit.*, p. 57.

³⁵ C.P. Fitzgerald, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

³⁶ Britain annexed Burma to the Indian empire in January 1886, and separated Burma from India in 1937.

³⁷ C. P. Fitzgerald, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

huge amount of economic and military assistance to the military junta in Rangoon. Myanmar's situation helped China to find new customers for its arms after the termination of the war between Iran and Iraq, a war in which Beijing had provided substantial weapons and equipment to both sides.³⁸ The Beijing-Yangon alliance is viewed with apprehension by the rest of the ASEAN countries because the alliance could help China's naval ambitions to control the Strait of Malacca and the Bay of Bengal.

Historically, Southeast Asian states have had a close relationship with China. During its century-long dominant position over the region, China preferred relations of suzerainty rather than pursue a colonial ambition. China today pursues a dominating position over the region rather than threatening the security of regional countries. However, China's ambition to control regional waterways is closely connected to its economic prosperity and international status in order to compete against Washington's hegemonism in the region. Accordingly, disputes concerning regional sea lines of communication between China and Southeast Asian nations could become more intensified.

5.2 Southeast Asian Nations' Interests in the Regional SLOCs

Most Southeast Asian nations are heavily dependent on sea-borne trade rather than inland trade. Asian countries are also reliant on Middle Eastern oil, 85 percent for the Philippines, 76 percent for Japan, 74 percent for South Korea, and 62 percent for Taiwan.³⁹ Furthermore, Asian countries own 34 percent and manufacture 72 percent of the world's merchant fleet tonnage, and they possess four of the world's five largest ports (Rotterdam: 315 million metric tonnes (MMT), Singapore: 241 MMT, Shanghai: 164 MMT, Nagoya: 134 MMT, Hong Kong: 128 MMT).⁴⁰ Therefore, the sea lines of

³⁸ Frank S. Jannuzi, "The New Burma Road", in Robert I. Rotberg, ed., *Burma*, Washington D.C.: The Brookings Institution Press, 1998, p. 199.

³⁹ US Pacific Command, "Asia-Pacific Economic Update", 1999, p. 80.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 84.

communication in the Southeast Asian waters are critical for the economies of most countries in the region. Although most of these countries use the seaways, Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore have immediate concerns over the major choke points, including the Straits of Malacca and Singapore, Sunda, Lombok and Makassar, because the straits are located in their territorial waters. The Straits of Malacca and Singapore are particularly important because 72 percent of eastbound tankers transit these narrow Straits.⁴¹

Most of the international straits are narrow and are characterised by dangerous conditions. The risk of marine accidents, such as collision, stranding and grounding, is much greater than on the high seas.⁴² Hamzah Ahmad points out that the major risks for navigation in the Malacca Straits are mainly caused by high density of traffic, narrow channels, strong tide stream, the presence of numerous wrecks and sand waves, low under-keel clearance, poor visibility during the frequent rain squalls and haze, numerous fishing vessels and traps, and poor navigational facilities.⁴³ According to the Marine Department of Malaysia, between 1975 and 1993 there were 75 shipping accidents in the Malacca Straits, three of which (The Showa Maru, The Diego Silang and The Nagasaki Spirit) were considered as major spills, with about 30,000 tons of oil spilled into the Straits.⁴⁴

Another problematic area for the safety of navigation is piracy. There were 435 pirate attacks on the world's seas during the three years from 1994 to 1996, nearly half of them occurring in Southeast Asia (See Table 5.3).⁴⁵ Among the Southeast Asian

⁴¹ M. J. Valencia and J. B. Marsh, "Access to Straits and Sealanes in Southeast Asia", *Journal of Maritime Law and Commerce*, quoted by Hamzah Ahmad, ed., *The Straits of Malacca, op. cit.*, p. 4.

⁴² Tullio Scovazzi, "Management Regimes and Responsibility for International Straits", in Hamzah Ahmad, ed., *The Straits of Malacca, op. cit.*, p. 332.

⁴³ Hamzah Ahmad, ed., *The Straits of Malacca*, Kuala Lumpur: Pelanduk Publications, 1997, p. 11.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ Stanley B. Weeks, "Sea Lines of Communication (SLOCs) Security and Access", *IGCC Policy Paper 33*, 1998, pp. 47-48.

waterways, Indonesian archipelagic waters (including the Malacca Straits) appeared as the most dangerous areas in the Southeast Asian region.

Table 5.3 Number of Pirate Attacks by the Regional Waters

Region	1994	1995	1996	Total
Southeast Asia	47	61	87	195
East Asia	23	40	14	77
Indian-Subcontinent	3	23	22	48
Americas	11	21	28	60
Africa	6	21	19	46
Rest of World	0	4	5	9
Total	90	170	175	435

Source: International Maritime Bureau quoted by Stanley B. Weeks, "Sea Lines of Communication Security and Access", pp. 47-48.

International organizations as well as the authorities of strait states have developed preventive measures against the piracy attacks. In October 1992 the International Maritime Bureau (IMB) established a 'Regional Piracy Centre' in Kuala Lumpur, which covers the seas from Sri Lanka to Southeast and East Asia.⁴⁶ Furthermore, in 1992 Indonesia and Singapore established direct communication links between the two navies, and Indonesia and Malaysia, in the same year, formed a 'Joint Maritime Operations Planning Team' to conduct coordinated patrols for the protection of shipping lanes against piracy.⁴⁷ Although most ASEAN states use the Malacca Straits for their sea-borne trade, Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore, in particular, have major stakes in the security and maintenance of the Straits.

Malaysia's Interests in the Strait of Malacca

According to the Malaysian Marine Department over 95 percent of the country's external trade is carried out by sea.⁴⁸ This figure demonstrates that Malaysia has, quite

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ Hamzah Ahmad, ed., *The Straits of Malacca*, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

rightly, a great concern about the sea lines of communication, particularly the Strait of Malacca. According to the 1992 Malaysian government statistics on population, more than 51 percent of the total population is concentrated along the strait, and approximately 60 percent of the total Malaysian GDP is related to the region of the strait.⁴⁹ With the fast-growing sea-borne trade through the Strait, Malaysia faces a number of problem areas such as congested traffic, oil pollution and damage to fisheries. With the increasing shipping, marine accidents have become a significant issue in the straits. Such accidents occur mainly in narrow and congested strait zones. It is estimated that the Malaysian government pays well over RM100 million a year to maintain various services to promote the safety of navigation in the Strait.⁵⁰ The Malaysian Marine Department has a total of 30 district offices for controlling piracy, conducting underwater surveying activities, and the purification of oil polluted water.⁵¹ For the amicable operation of the Malacca Strait, it is necessary to consider establishing an international funding organization to address the navigational safety of the strait.

The funding issue could be a controversial matter between strait states and other users of the strait, as no country has levied shipping costs to user states in the international straits. A proposal for a levy on ships passing through the Malacca Strait has been discussed on several occasions, but it remains unresolved between coastal states and strait user nations.⁵² The states bordering the Malacca Strait suggest that it is unfair for them to maintain the straits with their own resources, while user nations believe that a levy for transit vessels is groundless under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). According to Article 26 of the UNCLOS:

Transit regime cannot be impeded or suspended by coastal states; no charges are to be levied; to proceed without delay and refrain from any threat; respect applicable sea lanes

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ Hamzah Bin Ahmad, "Global Funding for Navigational Safety and Environment Protection", in Hamzah Ahmad, ed., *The Straits of Malacca, op. cit.*, p. 136.

⁵¹ Muhammad Razif Bin Ahmad, "The Financial Cost of Risk Management in the Strait of Malacca", in Hamzah Ahmad, ed., *The Malacca Straits, op. cit.*, p. 202.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 163.

and traffic separation scheme; must not engage in research activities without authorisation; and not required to notify the coastal states for passage through the straits used for international navigation.⁵³

Considering the fact that Malaysia has been a major party in preserving the strait, the levy option should be resolved in a reasonable manner. The International Maritime Organization (IMO) will be a useful forum for determining objectively which states should be involved in the funding regime.⁵⁴ Wan Yaacob suggested that there could be four kinds of funding schemes: total financing by the respective littoral states; funding through contributions by littoral states and user states; the creation of multinational enterprise responsible for providing the necessary services; and imposing the related charges on the users.⁵⁵ Of these options, a funding regime through contributions by coastal states and user states would be the most feasible resolution. However, the levy system should begin through broad discussions between the IMO and related countries.

Indonesia's Interests in the Malacca Strait

The Southeast Asian seas embrace thousands of islands. In this region, there are six groups of archipelagos, namely: the Mergui archipelago off the southern coast of Myanmar, the Hoang Sa archipelago in the Paracels, the Truong Sa archipelago in the Spratlys, the Andaman and Nicobar islands of India, the Philippines archipelago, and the Indonesian archipelago.⁵⁶ Of these, the Indonesian archipelago is the most important because it possesses five key strategic straits, including those of the Malacca and Singapore, Sunda, Lombok, Makassar, and Ombai-Wetar. As an archipelagic nation, Indonesia now has maritime zones three times as large as its land territory. Thus,

⁵³ Hamzah Ahmad, "Global Funding for Navigational Safety and Environment Protection", in Hamzah Ahmad, ed., *The Straits of Malacca, op. cit.*, p. 131.

⁵⁴ Gerard Peet, "Financing Straits Management: Policy Options", in Hamzah Ahmad, ed., *The Straits of Malacca, op. cit.*, p. 163.

⁵⁵ Wan Awang Bin Wan Yaacob, "Regional Cooperation and the Straits of Malacca", in Hamzah Ahmad, ed., *The Straits of Malacca, op. cit.*, p. 24.

⁵⁶ Kriangsak Kittichaisaree, *The Law of the Sea and Maritime Boundary Delimitation in Southeast Asia*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987, p. 151.

Indonesia has its own unique maritime challenges such as: the task of identifying and defining its maritime border; measures to protect its maritime border; the achievement of greater cooperation with its neighbours; and the task of utilising appropriate resources to meet these challenges.⁵⁷ To cope with these challenges, Indonesia maintains the most powerful navy among the ASEAN nations and has it in mind to control several important international straits in its territorial waters.

Singapore's Interests in the Straits of Malacca

Singapore is at the gateway between the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean. The Straits of Malacca and Singapore are important for the economy of the strait states as well as East Asian countries. The volume of Singapore's total trade is more than three times its GDP and most of its trade is carried by sea; hence it guarantees unimpeded access to the sea-lanes.⁵⁸ Singapore began to show concern regarding the strategic importance of the straits from the time when a treaty, delimiting the territorial sea boundary between Indonesia and Singapore, was signed on 25 May 1973.⁵⁹ Singapore shares common interests with Indonesia and Malaysia over the safety of navigation and the control of pollution along the Malacca Straits. Of the three strait countries, Singapore regards the freedom of navigation as critical for its national interest.

Singapore tried to improve the condition of navigational safety through the establishment of the Port of Singapore Authority (PSA), the leading agency in dealing with the maritime traffic control scheme.⁶⁰ Singapore also established the Vessel Traffic Information System (VTIS) and the Traffic Separation Scheme (TSS) in 1990 for the

⁵⁷ Hasjim Djalal, "Indonesia", in Sam Bateman and Stephen Bates, eds., *Regional Maritime Management and Security*, Canberra: ANU, 1998, p. 31.

⁵⁸ Kelvin Santa Maria, "Singapore", in Sam Bateman and Stephen Bates, eds., *Regional Maritime Management and Security*, Canberra: ANU, 1998, p. 69.

⁵⁹ Michael Leifer, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

⁶⁰ Lui Tuck Yew, "Regional Efforts in Handling Marine Emergencies", in Sam Bateman and Stephen Bates, *Calming the Waters*, Canberra: ANU, 1996, p. 111.

improvement of navigational safety through the Singapore Strait.⁶¹ The Port of Singapore Authority has another monitoring service, the Ship Reporting System, for the search and rescue operation of ships, which are in an emergency situation.⁶² Singapore further endorses other preventive measures, including the control of pollution, the protection of SLOCs from piracy attacks, and the checking of drug trafficking and illegal migration along the straits with other coastal states.⁶³ Such cooperative efforts of the three strait states are contributing to the freedom of passage and the preservation of the straits.

5.3 Southeast Asian Nations' Responses to China's Naval Challenge

The Chinese navy is still not an imminent threat to the security of the Southeast Asian waters, given its limited power projection and out-dated naval assets. The PLAN, however, has been enhancing the capability of maritime operation. With its force modernisation, the PLAN emerges as a source of threat over sea routes between Asia and the Middle East.⁶⁴ One of the clearest signs of China's rising naval force projection far from China's shores is its military assistance to strategic Indian Ocean states, Myanmar. China has reportedly acquired the concession of a naval presence on the Gulf of Martaban in Myanmar, only a few hundred miles northwest of the strategic Strait of Malacca, through which most of the rising oil imports for China and other East Asian countries must pass in coming decades.⁶⁵

China is also enhancing its defence posture through the importation of sophisticated weapons and equipment from Russia, as has been sketched earlier in this thesis. China has reportedly embarked on developing six new submarine-launched

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 112.

⁶³ Stanley B. Weeks, "Law and Order at Sea", in Sam Bateman and Stephen Bates, *Calming the Waters*, *op. cit.*, pp. 51-56.

⁶⁴ Kent E. Calder, *Asia's Deadly Triangle*, London: Nicholas Brealey Publishing, 1997, p. 143.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

ballistic missiles (SSBN: type 094), which would be equipped with the Julang-2 SLBM.⁶⁶ According to the Military Balance (2000-2001), China purchased 50 Su-30 fighters from Russia, and it has already contracted the license production of Su-27 fighters, with orders for up to 200.⁶⁷ China has acquired two Sovremenny-class destroyers in 2000, and it is negotiating the purchase of two more destroyers from Russia.⁶⁸

Following the South China Sea clashes with Vietnam in 1988, China constructed an air base at Woody Island in the Paracels, and installed another military airfield on Hainan Island, from which its Su-27 fighters are operating.⁶⁹ From the newly established Headquarters of the South Sea Fleet in Hong Kong, China could embark on naval force projection over strategic sea-lanes and offshore oil fields in the South China Sea and disputed territories that stretch a thousand miles south from China's shore.⁷⁰ China's military modernisation, particularly of its naval force, is instigating the build-up of Southeast Asian nations' navies as well as navies of the East Asian countries.⁷¹ Most countries in the region are investing in their force enhancement through the purchase of state-of-the-art naval vessels and long-range fighters, and obtaining Harpoon and/or Exocet anti-ship missiles. Malaysia, in June 1994, purchased 18 MIG 29s, marking Russia's first ever arms supply to a non-communist Southeast Asian country.⁷² Thailand is maintaining a 9,500-ton helicopter carrier built by the Spanish. Myanmar also has diversified its arms acquisitions by purchasing both China's F-6 and F-7 fighters and Yugoslavia's Super Galeb aircraft.

⁶⁶ Military Balance 2000-2001, p. 183.

According to the Military Balance 2000-2001, the Type 093 nuclear powered submarine is being built in China with Russian help.

⁶⁷ Military Balance 2000-2001, pp. 183, 187.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 183.

⁶⁹ Kent E. Calder, *Asia's Deadly Triangle*, *op. cit.*, p. 143.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 143-44.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 144.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 146.

The military build-up by China is becoming a great concern to countries within Southeast Asia. To effectively cope with China's growing challenge, ASEAN nations have to develop possible countermeasures. Three options could be possible, including the US military presence in the region, the enhancement of multinational training and exercises, and engaging China in ASEAN's organisational structure. During the Cold War, the US and the Soviet navies were the major sea powers in the region. The withdrawal of US forces from the Philippines and Russian naval forces from Vietnam has brought meaningful consequences. Since then, the US has eagerly been seeking an alternative position for its military presence; at the same time ASEAN countries have become anxious about the emergence of the Chinese sea power.

The US has tried to locate its military bases in countries in the Southeast Asian region.⁷³ After the withdrawal of US forces in the Philippines in the early 1990s, the US has been negotiating an alternative military base with Asian nations. When the Philippines rejected the extension of its former US bases, Singapore agreed to allow US naval vessels and aircraft to use its facilities, and also permitted the relocation of a US logistics facility in its territory.⁷⁴ In the mid-1990s, Indonesia and Malaysia also agreed to allow US naval vessels access to their ports. In 1999, the Philippines and the US signed a port visit agreement between the two governments. Currently 150 American troops (Navy: 90, Marine Corps: 20, Air Force: 40) are stationed in Singapore with 6 CH-47D helicopters and 12 F-16C/D fighters.⁷⁵ US military presence in Southeast Asia will help promote the stability of the region and countervail China's maritime challenge in the regional waterways. Given each ASEAN nation's diverse perception toward their overall security relations with China and the US, base talks between Southeast Asian littoral nations and the US are likely to be difficult in the near future. However, United

⁷³ Koro Bessho, "Identities and Security in East Asia", *IJSS*, Adelphi Paper 325, March 1999, p. 45.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ *Military Balance 2000-2001*, p. 213.

States' sustained military presence in East Asia and Washington's firm commitment continues to be a crucial factor for the security of Southeast Asia and its regional waterways.

5.4 Region's Institutional Responses to China's Naval Resurgence

ASEAN has contributed to regional stability and prosperity through various measures and establishments, including the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC). However, the expansion of ASEAN's membership to ten nations represents not only the reconciliation of the association but also the friction and discord among member states. The political environment and diverse interests of Southeast Asian states have hindered the solidarity of the association, and made it difficult to bind together to respond to China's challenge.

The inclusion of Vietnam and Myanmar into ASEAN, in particular, might bring about disharmony in the association. As Koro Bessho points out, Vietnam's membership may have been especially welcomed by Malaysia and Thailand as a balance to Indonesia, and Myanmar's joining may have been designed to curtail China's influence over the association.⁷⁶ Vietnam had been involved in conflicts with its neighbours, Cambodia, Laos and Thailand since its reunification in 1975. In the 1980s, Thailand improved its relations with China to counter Vietnam's escalation on the Thai border on the pretext of a Cambodia rescue operation. The Cambodian issue has also been a complicated one as the nation has different interests and perceptions toward China and Vietnam. During the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia, China channelled military weapons and equipment through Thailand to the Khmer Rouge in western Cambodia.⁷⁷ In 1980, Indonesia and Malaysia enunciated the recognition of Vietnam's legitimate security interest in Cambodia, and encouraged the normalisation of US-Vietnamese relations to enable

⁷⁶ Koro Bessho, "Identities and Security in East Asia" *op. cit.*, p. 47.

⁷⁷ D. R. SarDesai, *Southeast Asia: Past and Present*, 4th Ed., Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1997, p. 359.

Vietnam to become a strong and stable buffer state between China and Southeast Asia.⁷⁸

All the developments indicate that ASEAN has numerous different interests between member nations.

Since its foundation in 1967, ASEAN's principle of non-interference in member nations' internal affairs has been a fundamental rule for maintaining member's cohesion and for respecting every nation's sovereignty.⁷⁹ However, ethnic and religious tensions, separatist movements, and territorial dispute in one country sometimes links to other country's foreign policy. Separatist movements in Indonesia, Myanmar, Thailand, the Philippines and Cambodia are connected with other member countries, and even with China. For instance, the exodus of refugees from Aceh to Malaysia is a sensitive issue in Malaysia-Indonesia relations, the Philippines' claim that the Malaysians support Mindanao Muslim separatists, and Thailand is suspicious about Malaysia's alleged sympathy for Muslim separatists in Southern Thailand.⁸⁰ Unresolved territorial disputes are another matter of concern between claimants. Boundary demarcation, such as Sabah between Malaysia and the Philippines, Pedra Branca Island between Malaysia and Singapore, Sipadan and Ligitan Islands near the Sabah-Kalimantan border between Indonesia and Malaysia, and Limbang between Malaysia and Brunei have all been pending issues between those relevant countries.⁸¹ In addition to their internal boundary and ethnic issues, ASEAN nations face external challenges as well. The growth of China's naval power would be the most significant external threat to Southeast Asian countries. ASEAN has a vested interest in stable relations between the US and China, and it can contribute towards friendly relations between the two major powers by

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 359.

⁷⁹ ASEAN at 30, *op. cit.*

⁸⁰ Amitav Archarya, "A Regional Security Community in Southeast Asia?" in Desmond Ball, ed., *The Transformation of Security in the Asia/Pacific Region*, London: Frank Cass, 1996, p. 181.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 181-82.

strengthening regional institutions such as APEC and the ARF.⁸² Even though the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) was established in 1994 as a multilateral consultative forum aimed at building security and confidence among member nations, it cannot guarantee that China and the US will avoid a major conflict in the years ahead.⁸³

ASEAN has played a significant role for the economic and political cooperation of the Asia-Pacific region through its Post-Ministerial Conferences (PMCs) with the 'Dialogue Partners' in the ARF. The ARF initially designed supplementing the region's bilateral links, and acting as a mechanism through which its members could notify each other of developments in security relations.⁸⁴ Although the ARF has been transformed as a successful body, Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and Asia Europe Meeting (ASEM) have an uncertain future. APEC was established in 1989 to deal with increased conflicts over the Pacific trade, and to respond to other regional economic cooperation, including the European Economic Community (EEC) and a North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).⁸⁵ However, in the early 1990s, China and ASEAN nations had watchful eyes on APEC because of Washington's emphasis on liberalism in the economies of the Asia-Pacific. Thus, the US conceded that regional free and open trade would be achieved by the year 2010 for developed countries, and 2020 for developing economies.⁸⁶ ASEM, which was proposed by Singapore in October 1994, added a new dimension to relations between East and Southeast Asia, and the outside world. As Koro Bessho points out, ASEM has a particular meaning for ASEAN nations, many of which were former European colonies, because it provides a special opportunity for them to

⁸² Jusuf Wanandi, "Indonesian Perspective Regional Conflict Prevention", in Kao Kim Hourn and Din Merican, eds., *Peace and Cooperation in ASEAN*, London: ASEAN Academic Press, 1997, p. 492.

⁸³ Patrick M. Cronin and Emily T. Metzgar, "ASEAN and Regional Security" *Strategic Forum*, no. 85, (October 1996), p. 4.

⁸⁴ Koro Bessho, "Identities and Security in East Asia", *op. cit.*, p. 71.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 63.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 64.

treat Europeans as equals at the meeting of heads-of-state.⁸⁷ However, above institutions are not designed to resolve overall security matters in the region.

China has made gestures of cooperation toward ASEAN nations on several occasions. At the ARF meeting in Brunei in 1995, China as a dialogue partner made a conciliatory gesture toward ASEAN over the Spratly issue by acknowledging the Law of the Sea Convention as a basis for resolving the dispute.⁸⁸ At the sixth meeting of the ARF in Singapore in July 1999, all ministers participating in the forum recognised the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC) as a key instrument for strengthening security in the region, and welcomed the dialogue in the ASEAN-China Senior Officials Consultations.⁸⁹ ASEAN, as a regional player, has played a leading role in strengthening the solidarity among its member nations through the ARF, and its role continues to be important for the regional security and economies.

Another strategic task for a dynamic Southeast Asian equation is to balance the power of the US and Japan against the presence of China.⁹⁰ Since the end of the Cold War, many Asian nations have been anxious about a possible power vacuum in the region, and are thus eager to increase military spending for the uncertain future. During the ten-year period from 1990-2000, some ASEAN nations (Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore) significantly increased their military expenditures (See Table 5.4). China, in particular, increased its defence spending more than 240 percent during the same period. Most Asian nations had difficulties in increasing their defence spending due to the financial crisis of the late 1990s, but China has continuously increased its military expenditure. China's defence expenditure is still far behind the US, but its increasing rate

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 72.

⁸⁸ Donald K. Emmerson, "Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore" in Richard J. Ellings and Sheldon W. Simon, eds., *Southeast Asian Security in the New Millennium*, London: M. E. Sharpe, 1996, p. 81.

⁸⁹ The Chairman's Statement, "The 6th Meeting of the ARF", Singapore: 26 July 1999.

⁹⁰ David Wurfel, "The New Order in Southeast Asia," in David Wurfel and Bruce Burton, eds., *Southeast Asia and the New World Order*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996, p. 292.

is significant. Such a strategic environment has therefore forced ASEAN nations to increase their military spending from the year 2000 (See also Table 5.4).

Table 5.4 Military Expenditure of Selected Asia-Pacific Countries
(US\$ Million, in 1990 Constant)

Countries	1990	1995*	2000*
USA	306,170	273,600	291,200
China	6,024	7,600	14,500
Japan	29,702	50,200	45,600
ROK	9,603	14,400	12,800
Taiwan	7,782	13,100	12,800
Australia	6,617	8,500	7,100
Indonesia	1,380	2,800	2,771
Singapore	2,026	4,000	4,400
Malaysia	1,125	3,500	1,600
Thailand			

Source: J.N. Mak, "The Asia-Pacific Security Order", in Anthony McGrew and Christopher Brooks, eds., *Asia-Pacific in the New World Order*, London: Routledge, 1998, p. 93.

*: Military Balance 1995-1996 and 2000-2001

The changing relationship between China and the US is also a source of concern for ASEAN. The US was discomfited in seeing that its Asian allies decline to challenge the Chinese view openly, even though they privately insisted that their security matters were closely tied to a continued US military presence in the region.⁹¹ Most ASEAN nations favour either the US or China to protect their national security interests. Myanmar, Thailand and Malaysia are presently considered as pro-China nations. The Beijing-Yangon alliance helps China to bracket India between Myanmar and Pakistan, and the Thai wishes their country to become a bridge between China and ASEAN.⁹² Singapore is also drawing closer to China, and welcoming Chinese emigrants for their investment in the Chinese-dominated city-state.⁹³ On the other hand, Vietnam, the Philippines and Indonesia remain as neutral nations toward China. The Philippines recognises the growing Chinese dominance in the South China Sea, and might feel

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² Steven W. Mosher, *China's Plan to Dominate the World*, San Francisco: Encounter Books, 2000, p. 112.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

compelled to adjust to the Chinese challenge.⁹⁴ Indonesia too is accepting Chinese naval dominance in the regional seas. Other ASEAN nations might have to join the China-dominated bloc in the future.

Is the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) capable of guaranteeing Southeast Asian nations to secure their national security under all future circumstances? If it cannot, is ASEAN required to form a certain type of multilateral security regime among member nations? Even though the ARF is not sufficient as a guarantor for the security of the Asia-Pacific region, the establishment of a multilateral security regime seems to be difficult at this moment. The diversity of ASEAN nations' interests and the split in allegiance by regional countries towards the US and China, are likely to be a barrier in forming a multilateral security establishment.⁹⁵ To counter China's naval resurgence, ASEAN nations need to make concerted efforts. The ARF has been a useful tool for confidence building among its member nations, but it cannot guarantee the stability of the sea-lanes in the region, or curb China's naval ambitions towards the seas around its region. At the same time, the US and China argue that the function of the ARF should be enhanced. The US urges the forum to transfer from confidence-building measures to preventive diplomacy, from dialogue to the settlement problems, and from consultation to institutionalisation, while China does not want the forum to conduct coercive measures, or to interfere with other members' domestic matters.⁹⁶ Without a regional arms register and the exchange of defence information among member nations, the traditional web of overlapping bilateral relations would not be sufficient for guaranteeing the security of the association.⁹⁷ With the enhancement of the ARF, multinational naval

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 113.

⁹⁵ In interviews with ASEAN experts in September 1999, Dr B.H. Hamzah in MIMA points out that it is too early for ASEAN to form a new multilateral security regime because of the diversity of ASEAN about the security of the region. On the other hand, DR Derek da Cunha in ISEAS suggests that joint naval exercises among ASEAN navies prefer to the new multilateral defence links among its member nations.

⁹⁶ Chu Shulong, "Bilateral and Regional Strategic and Security Relationship Between China and the US after the Cold War", *CICIR*, vol. 10, no. 5, (May 2000), p. 7.

⁹⁷ Shawn W. Crispin, "Arms on their Marks", *FEER*, 5 October 2000.

exercises among ASEAN nations, the US, the countries of East Asia, India and Australia could be a feasible option for ASEAN nations when approaching a matter of regional maritime security. Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) exercises have contributed to the cooperation and maritime security of all participants.⁹⁸ Multinational naval exercises similar to RIMPAC will further increase regional stability if China joins such an exercise. Alternatively Southeast Asian nations can establish multinational peacekeeping forces (MNPKEF) in an event of crisis in the regional SLOCs.⁹⁹

Most Southeast Asian nations have gradually begun to shift their security focus from internal concerns to maritime interests, such as the securing of territorial waters, 200-mile EEZs and relevant sea-lanes.¹⁰⁰ In recent years, ASEAN nations have conducted joint exercises on land and on the seas. Indonesia has conducted a range of exercises with neighbouring defence forces and provided regional countries with permission to use its training fields and facilities.¹⁰¹ Malaysia, for instance, utilises the Ranai Air Base on the Indonesian Island of Natuna in the South China Sea. The recent combined exercises between Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore demonstrate that Indonesia's close cooperation with its immediate neighbours aims for the preservation of security for the archipelagic state.¹⁰²

Southeast Asian nations lie in a strategic staging point along the regional waterways. During the Cold-War period the region was an arena for the superpowers' rivalry, and in the post Cold-War era, regional waterways have attracted the interests of China and the US for their sea-borne trade and maritime sphere of influence. ASEAN nations have been eager to consolidate their effort in order to eliminate any outside interference in the region. However, regional institutions, such as the ARF and APEC,

⁹⁸ Rim of the Pacific: 1998 RIMPAC Exercises were conducted by the navies of Australia, Canada, Chile, Japan, the Republic of Korea, and the US between 6 July-6 August, 1998.

⁹⁹ This view was expressed by Dr. Derek da Cunha in ISEAS during the interview in December 1999.

¹⁰⁰ Shawn W. Crispin, "Arms on their Marks", *FEER*, 5 October 2000.

¹⁰¹ Bob Lowry, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 22.

remain too weak for them to guarantee the stability and security of Southeast Asian nations and regional SLOCs. China's long-term historical influence over the region and the US involvement in the regional security framework has placed ASEAN nations in a difficult position when deciding how to best deal with challenges posed by the two countries. The ideal solution for regional security and prosperity is to accommodate both China and the US in the current institutional framework through close economic cooperation and multinational naval exercises with the two great powers.

Chapter Six

Russia and India: China's Immediate Competitors

6.1 Overview of China's Relations with Russia and India

The land border disputes between China and its two largest neighbours (Russia and India) have been almost settled, but the sea challenges and diplomatic competition between the three are looming large. By the end of the Cold War, Sino-Soviet tensions were deeply felt throughout East and Southeast Asia, from Indochina to the Korean Peninsula. Since the demise of the Soviet Union, however, Russia's influence in the region has virtually collapsed, while China's influence has gradually emerged.¹ Russia's national strategy is considered to be to emphasise such tasks as controlling its nuclear arsenal, preventing foreign powers from attacking it, and containing the escalation of ethno-national wars with neighbours, including China, India and the Islamic countries.² The primary mission of the Russian navy is likely to be the protection of its Northern territories and to guard its bastions in the sea of Okhotsk for the safe launch of its SLBMs.³ However, Russia's more urgent task would be to feed its people and to restructure its near-collapsed economy.

Russia is now suffering economic hardship, but it has substantial potential with its advanced military technology and rich natural resources, and, more significantly, the second largest nuclear arsenal in the world. Derek da Cunha points out that some 350 Russian naval and intelligence personnel stationed in Cam Ranh Bay demonstrates Russia's tenacity

¹ Jennifer Anderson, "The Limits of Sino-Russian Strategic Partnership", Adelphi Paper 315, *IISS*, December 1997, p. 66.

² Charles W. Kegler, Jr. and Eugene R. Wittkopf, *World Politics*, 6th Ed., New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997, p. 407.

³ Jennifer Anderson, *op. cit.*, p. 82.

toward the Southeast Asian seaways and the Indian Ocean.⁴ The strategic partnership between China and Russia looks to be enhanced until the latter fully recovers from its current state of destitution. Russia needs a strategic alliance with China to cope with the US hegemony in the Western Pacific, while China needs Russia as a supplier of advanced technology and state-of-the-art weapons.⁵ In May 2001, American President Bush announced the US intention to build a system of national missile defence (NMD) while cutting America's nuclear stockpile unilaterally. His policy option turns on traditional thinking on arms control, and cast doubts over the future of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM) signed by Washington and Moscow in 1972.⁶ Since Bush's statement, China and Russia have fiercely objected the missile shield initiative, and the strategic partnership between Beijing and Moscow has therefore been further enhanced. However, it seems likely that at some point in the future, China and Russia will confront each other over their competing spheres of influence in the Western Pacific and the Indian Ocean.

India is the largest country in terms of population in the Indian Ocean region, and it too is emerging as something of a regional power. Up until the mid-twentieth century, the Indian Ocean had been under the influence of the British navy, while during the Cold-War era US-Soviet sea power dominated the region. Ironically, during the Cold War era, the Indian Ocean region had been comparatively calm because there was no substantial superpower rivalry there. However, in the post-Cold War era, the Chinese naval force has actively been intervening in the Indian Ocean region. The history of Sino-Indian relations has been highly sensitive and acrimonious. Although no serious fighting between the two

⁴ Derek da Cunha, "ASEAN Naval Power in the New Millennium", in Jack McCaffrie and Alan Hinge, eds., *Sea Power in the New Century*, Australian Defence Studies Centre, July 1997, p. 79.

⁵ Jennifer Anderson, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

⁶ The Economist Global Agenda, "Bush's Call to Arms", *The Economist*, 2 May 2001.

countries has taken place since the 1962 border war, there still exists a potential dispute because India's strategic frontiers extend to the South China Sea through the Malacca Strait, while those of China's extend into the Indian Ocean. Also, India is developing its naval and air facilities on the Andaman and Nicobar Islands to counter a potential Chinese naval expansion in the region. The Indian navy operates its ships and maritime reconnaissance aircraft as far south as Diego Garcia, as far west as the Strait of Hormuz, and as far east as the Strait of Malacca.⁷ The overlapping of both countries' zone of interests could bring about naval rivalry in the region.

The Indian Navy first visited the South China Sea and countries in the region, including China, South Korea, Japan, Singapore, Vietnam and Indonesia, in September-October 2000. At that time, Indian naval officers claimed that India's venture into the South China Sea was not an offensive but part of maritime diplomacy.⁸ However, India's voyage to China's disputed waters could be construed as a challenge toward the latter, which claims the whole sea as its territorial waters. During the visit, the Indian navy conducted a series of bilateral naval exercises with some of the countries in the region. The exercises clearly demonstrated that the Indian navy would like to expand its operational capability into the South China Sea. However, such a move would almost certainly increase naval rivalry, and tensions, between China and India. China's efforts to obtain an aircraft carrier from Russia and India's plan to increase its carrier force from two to three are enough to create sufficient alarm over the possibility of conflict either in the Strait of Malacca or in the Indian Ocean.

⁷ Gary I. Sojka, "The Mission of the Indian Navy", *Naval War College Review*, vol. XXXVI, no. 1, 1983, p.11, quoted by S. K. Wahyono, "Strategic Assessment of the Indian Ocean", in Robert H. Bruce, ed., *Indian Ocean Navies*, Perth: Curtin University of Technology, 1990, 129.

⁸ Josy Joseph, "Navy hails successful South China Sea visit", New Delhi: *Rediff* (17 October 2000).

For India, the security implications of China's arms supplies to Myanmar, coupled with insurgency movements in India's Northeast, and an increase in drug trafficking on the largely unguarded Indo-Myanmar border, have become too serious to ignore.⁹ India's policy option to counter China's naval advance in the Indian Ocean could include a number of measures, such as close cooperation with ASEAN nations and the US, as well as the conduct of multinational naval exercises with the US and other countries with interests in the Indian Ocean.

6.2 Russia: The Rise and Fall of a Superpower

6.2.1 The Sino-Russian Relationship

The Mongols' invasion of Asia and Europe in the thirteenth century resulted in Russia's involvement in the Asia-Pacific region. Mongol incursions, culminating in 1241, destroyed Kievan principalities and much of their culture, and since then Russian national identity has shifted from a European perspective to a Eurasian one.¹⁰ Genghis Khan, after taking control of the Mongol Empire in 1206, had driven his armies into China, conquering the latter by 1234. While the Russian state, unlike China's, was never fully deposed, only its component parts were forced to accept Mongol rule by 1240.¹¹ Mongol rule lasted 134 years in China, and its influence was felt for 188 years in Russia. By the fifteenth century, the Czardom of Muscovy overthrew the last remnants of Mongol domination and emerged as a powerful empire in its own right, re-uniting the Russian nation under single rule.¹² By

⁹ J. Mohan Malik, "Burma's Role in Regional Security--Pawn or Pivot?", in Robert I. Rotberg, ed., *Burma: Prospect for a Democratic Future*, Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1998, p. 119.

¹⁰ Cyril E. Black et al., *The Modernisation of Japan and Russia*, New York: The Free Press, 1975, p. 29.

¹¹ R.K.I. Quest, ed., *Sino-Russian Relations: A Short History*, Sydney: George Allen & Unwin, 1984, p. 21.

¹² George Alexander Lensen, ed., *Russia's Eastward Expansion*, Eaglewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1964, p. 13.

the seventeenth century this unification was completed, bringing 25 principalities and their princes under Muscovite sovereignty.¹³

After the unification, Russia boldly engaged in a series of eastward expeditions. From 1643 to 1645, V. D. Poiarkov led the first of these, reaching as far as the Amur River in a part of Siberia traditionally recognised as Chinese territory. This river was strategically significant because it was the only river in the region flowing into the Pacific rather than the Arctic Ocean.¹⁴ This river could provide any conquering nation with an outlet to the Pacific as well as with good port facilities. Poiarkov's mission was to seek out tribes and levy tribute on Siberian furs, precious metals and grain. However, the tribes of the Amur's southern bank had already established tributary relations with the Qing government, and thus the natives reported the Russian arrival to the Manchus.¹⁵ Russia's eastward expedition, coupled with the importance of the fur trade, led its officials and private traders to push for even more eastward expansion.¹⁶ Five years later, a major Russian government-funded expedition, led by Erofei Pavlovich Khabarov, a Cossack adventurer arrived in the Amur River region. In 1650 Khabarov captured villages near the river, and then proceeded downstream to establish modern Khabarovsk.¹⁷ Due to the Russian pressure, the tribes near the Amur region asked for the Manchus to either protect them, or allow them to accept Russian suzerainty.¹⁸ The Manchus ignored the Russian interference, and thus the latter's rule was imposed over the tribes until the mid-1850s.

¹³ Cyril E. Blank, et al., *op. cit.*, p. 30.

¹⁴ P.K.I. Quested., *op. cit.*, p. 29.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Andrew Malozemoff, *Russian Far Eastern Policy 1881-1904*, London: Cambridge University Press, 1958, p. 1.

¹⁷ P. K. I. Quested., *op. cit.*, p. 29.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

In 1857 Count Muraviev, the Governor General of Eastern Siberia, conscripted a regiment of Transbaikal (east of Lake Baikal) Cossacks to settle along the Amur river bank, guard the frontier, and expedite shipments of supplies down the river.¹⁹ On 28 May 1858, the governor of the northernmost Manchurian province and Count Muraviev signed the Treaty of Aigun.²⁰ Muraviev then ordered the Cossack peasantry to move and settle in the Ussuri valley. By November 1860, the Sino-Russian Treaty of Peking was concluded, recognising both the land regions from the Stanovoi Range to the Amur and the Maritime Province as Russian territory.²¹ As a result of these treaties Russia acquired 400,000 square miles of territory from China. After several frontier agreements and border skirmishes between 1860 and 1884, the present Sino-Russian boundaries in Manchuria and Xinjiang were delimited. Russia's Eurasian campaign also led to the present five Central Asian Republics coming under the control of Russia during the same period.²²

With the incorporation of these substantial territories, Russia became a great power in Asia.²³ This rising level of geostrategic power was further consolidated from East to West with the construction from 1891 of the 5,500-mile-long Trans-Siberian Railway linking European Russia with the Far East.²⁴ The railway was completed in 1903. Through the construction of this railway, Russia could accomplish two things: the exclusion of Japan

¹⁹ Andrew Malozemoff, *op. cit.*, p. 1.

²⁰ P. K. I. Quested, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

The Treaty of Aigun recognised the northern bank of the Amur as Russian territory, and created a Russo-Chinese condominium in the territory of the present-day Russian Maritime Province, between the Amur, Ussuri and Tumen rivers and sea (Aigun is a Chinese city on the Amur River bank). This treaty has been regarded as a Russo-Chinese unequal treaty.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 76.

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 76-79.

²³ Ivan III (1462-1505) of Muscovite Russia married a niece of the last Byzantine emperor and took the title of Czar (Caesar). He conquered Russian-inhabited territory of the Polish-Lithuanian state, and declared independence from the decadent Mongols in 1478.

²⁴ John Hunter Boyle, *Modern Japan*, Orlando, Florida: Harcourt Brace & Company Publishers, 1993, p. 131. See also A. Lobanov-Rostovsky, *Russia and Asia*, Ann Arbor, Michigan: The George Wahr Publishing Company, 1965, p. 219.

from the continent, and the extension of the Trans-Siberian Railway through Chinese territories.²⁵ After China's defeat in the Sino-Japanese War, European powers (including Russia) interfered with Chinese internal affairs. Russia demanded a lease of Port Arthur for 25 years and the rights to construct a branch of the Chinese Eastern Railway. Other powers also intervened significantly in China: Germany coerced special interest in Shandong, Japan in Fujian, and Britain in the valley of Yantz.²⁶ To make matters worse, in 1896, the Boxers were attacking foreign Christian missions and killing many priests in northern China including in Beijing. This uprising was originally aimed at bringing an end of the Manchu rule, but the Dowager Empress diverted them to attack foreigners.²⁷ After seizing foreign legations in Beijing for 55 days, the Boxers were ultimately crushed by European troops. The Boxers' destruction of part of the Chinese Eastern Railway brought about the Russian military occupation of Shenyang and Niuchang.²⁸ In 1900, China was forced to disband its forces in Manchuria, and transferred all military bases and arsenals to the Russians. As a result, Russia could establish a large naval base in Port Arthur.²⁹ In the early twentieth century, the Qing government was unable to control nation-wide revolts. Thus, China could not help but invite Russia's intervention on its soil to cope with threats from Japan and European powers. After their victory in the Russo-Japanese War in 1905, the Japanese captured Port Arthur and pushed the Russian army to northern Manchuria.³⁰ Although the

²⁵ A Lobanov-Rostovsky, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 228.

²⁷ John Robottom, *Twentieth Century China*, New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1971, pp. 28-29.

Though the Dowager Empress deeply involved in the Boxer Movement, the Western powers could not punish the empress because of fearing anti-foreign sentiment among the Chinese people.

²⁸ A. Lobanov-Rostovsky, *Russia and Asia*, Ann Arbor, Michigan: The George Wahr Publishing Company, 1965, p. 230.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 234.

³⁰ Nicholas V. Riasanovsky, *A History of Russia*, 6th Ed., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, P. 403.

Russian soldiers and sailors fought with utmost courage and tenacity, the Japanese navy destroyed the Russian navy in the Far East.³¹

The war substantially transformed the strategic environment in East Asia. After the Japanese navy annihilated Admiral Rozhdestvensky's fleet in the battle of Tsushima Strait, mediation of President Theodore Roosevelt in August 1905 produced a formal conclusion to the war, in the form of the signing of the Treaty of Portsmouth. By this treaty, Russia acknowledged Japan's exclusive interest in Korea, and ceded to Japan the lease of the Liaodong Peninsula, the southern part of railroad up to Changchun, and half of the Sakhalin Island.³² Following that war, Russia's eastward expansionism was temporarily halted, and the US appeared as a player of some influence with the situation in China and Manchuria, proposing, for example, the neutralisation of the Chinese Eastern Railway.³³

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Russia confronted liberal revolutionary movements. Nicholas II, who came to the throne in 1894, opposed the reform. However, with the rise in revolutionary activities, on 6 August 1905, the tsar announced the establishment of a new constitutional body, the State Duma, and Nicholas II allowed some political freedoms, such as those of speech, press, religion, assembly and association.³⁴ Russia's liberal movement was a continuation of Western reforms, including the Great French Revolution of 1789-1795, the European Revolution of 1847-1849, and the Paris Commune of 1871.³⁵ The revolutionary mood spread widely in Russian society, even to the

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *Ibid.*

³³ A. Lobanov-Rostrovsky, *Russia and Asia, op. cit.*, p. 236.

³⁴ Alexander A. Danilov, et al., *The History of Russia*, Translated by Galina Ustinova, Heron Press, 1996, p. 8.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

troops on the naval battle ships as well as to the garrison forces at St Petersburg, and eventually the Bolshevik Revolution was successful in November 1917.³⁶

The Soviet government was established on 9 November 1917, under the name of the Council of People's Commissars, and was headed by Lenin as Chairman.³⁷ In 1924, China (the Nationalists) recognised the Soviet Union. Stalin chose to support the KMT, sending hundreds of military advisers to help the Nationalists to follow a 'united front' tactic.³⁸ In 1927, Chiang Kai-shek thought that he could unify China without the help of the Communists, and expelled the Soviet advisers. Chiang believed that the collaboration with the Communists would not be beneficial for the Nationalist government, and, more importantly, he felt the pressure from the Communists, who he thought were plotting to betray him. The 1930s were a very difficult period for the Soviet Union. In 1935 the Soviet Union sold its interest in the Chinese Eastern Railway outright to Japan's puppet state of Manchukuo, and between 1938 and 1939 Soviet and Japanese troops fought on the Manchurian and Mongolian borders.³⁹ From the early 1930s to the end of World War II, the relationship between China and Russia was one of status quo, because the Japanese and the Germans were harassing both nations.

With the end of the Pacific War, China and the Soviet Union began to open bilateral relations. The Republic of China (under the KMT) - Soviet Pact was signed on August 14, 1945, one day before the Japanese surrender. At that time, the Soviet armies had almost completely occupied northeastern China, and the Red Army remained in Manchuria as an

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 16, 21.

The Bolsheviks (people of the majority) relied on the traditions of Russian revolutionary movement and concentrated on the revolutionary and political aspects of Marxism, while the Mensheviks (people of the minority) chose western democracy as their model, and adhered to the reformist and economic side of Marxism (p. 16).

³⁷ Nicholas V. Riasanovsky, *op. cit.*, p. 475.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 512.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 515.

occupational force.⁴⁰ Accordingly, the KMT government was forced to reluctantly grant concessions to the Soviet Union, such as the independence of Outer Mongolia, the 30-year joint operation of the Changchun Railway, the joint use of Port Arthur, and the declaration of Dalian as a free port.⁴¹ Seeing the KMT's humiliating diplomacy, the Chinese Communists had bitterly complained the results of the pact for a number of reasons: (1) the treaty recognised the Kuomintang government as the legal central government of China; (2) Outer Mongolia was left out of a federated China; (3) it legitimised Soviet control over many Japanese industrial plants and materials in Manchuria; (4) its presence gave no support for Mao's plan to launch an immediate revolution in 1945; (5) Stalin and V.M. Molotov reportedly denounced the Chinese Communists as being "related to Communism in no way at all".⁴² However, the CCP's victory in 1949 made these complaints moot.

By 14 February 1950, less than a year after the proclamation of the PRC, a new Sino-Soviet treaty was signed. By this treaty, the Changchun Railway was to be returned to China by the end of 1952. Furthermore, Soviet troops were to be withdrawn from Manchuria and the Port Arthur facilities were to be returned, either after the conclusion of peace negotiations with Japan, or before the end of 1952.⁴³ Recognising the importance of this treaty, Mao Zedong stayed in Moscow for nearly four months from December 1949 to March 1950 to persuade Stalin to accept China's assertion of above treaty agreements. Soon after the signing of the treaty, China became involved in the Korean War. During the war, the Soviet Union provided China with a large number of military advisers and substantial weaponry and equipment. Stalin's attempt to sway China through military

⁴⁰ The Red Army of Workers and Peasants (RKKA) was established on 23 February 1918, after the disintegration of Imperial Army in Russia.

⁴¹ Nakajima Mineo, "The Sino-Soviet Confrontation in Historical Perception", in Yonosuke Nagai and Akira Iriye, eds., *The Origins of the Cold War in Asia*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1977, p. 208.

⁴² Okabe Tatsumi, "The Cold War and China", in Yonosuke Nagai and Akira Iriye, eds., *The Origins of the Cold War in Asia*, *op. cit.*, pp. 228-29.

⁴³ Nakajima Mineo, *op. cit.*, pp. 212.

assistance faced increasing resistance from Beijing. After the war Mao denounced Stalin by saying that, “he suspected that after we won the revolution, China would become like Yugoslavia, and I would be another Tito”.⁴⁴

In the mid-1950s, the relationship between China and Russia was never on firm ground and a serious rift developed as a result of both ideological and strategic differences between the two countries. As China’s economic and political confidence grew, its independent position in international affairs became increasingly at odds with the Moscow line. The PRC, after performing as a signing party in the truce of the Korean War in 1953, also mediated in the Indochina truce at Geneva in April 1954. The Geneva conference was China’s first attempt to become a player at the international negotiating table.⁴⁵ In his visit to New Delhi in June 1954, Zhou En-lai appealed to Nehru to exclude the United States and the Soviet Union from Asian affairs, and China also successfully blocked Soviet participation in the Bandung Afro-Asian Conference of April 1955.⁴⁶ As a result, the role of the Soviet Union in the Third World was weakened. However, the Soviet Union with its overwhelming power put less emphasis on socialist cooperation and more on the hegemonic leadership of the communist bloc.⁴⁷ These series of feuds caused Chinese leaders to urge a more assertive foreign policy against Moscow. As a result, by 1960, the last 150 Soviet advisers were forced to leave China.⁴⁸

By the mid-1960s the Sino-Soviet split had grown to such a degree that China felt it appropriate to reclaim its former territory in the Far East and Central Asia. China demanded

⁴⁴ Mao Zedong, *Wan-sui*, August 1969, quoted by Nakagima Mineo, *op. cit.*, pp. 220.

⁴⁵ Lowell Dittmer, *Sino-Soviet Normalisation and Its International Implications, 1945-1990*, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1992, p. 123.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 124.

⁴⁷ R.K.I. Quested, *op. cit.*, p. 121.

The Soviet Union already exploded its first hydrogen bomb in 1953 and launched its ICBM in 1955, and became the first country to put an earth satellite into orbit in 1957.

⁴⁸ David G. Muller, Jr., *China as a Maritime Power*, *op. cit.*, p.90.

in 1963 and 1964 that the Soviet Union should return some 35,000 square kilometres of former Chinese territory.⁴⁹ In response, Leonid Brezhnev increased the number of Soviet border troops from 17 divisions to more than 40 and deployed a substantial number of strategic weapons against Beijing.⁵⁰ China's anti-Sovietism and radicalism during the Cultural Revolution triggered a border clash on 2 March 1969, the Chinese troops killing tens of Soviet patrol troops on Damansky Island.⁵¹ Two weeks after the incident, Soviet troops followed suit, killing hundreds of Chinese troops on the island. China's concern over its territorial integrity was heightened as a result of the growing asymmetry of naval power between the two countries. While the Soviet Pacific Fleet in the 1960s was the smallest (in terms of ships and weaponry) of the four Soviet naval fleets, the Sino-Soviet border clashes along the Ussuri River in March 1969 prompted rapid levels of growth in the Pacific Fleet.⁵² The Soviet Navy therefore emerged as a substantial threat to China. This perception of tension was further heightened by the Soviet Union's increased involvement in regional security matters, such as the occupation of Afghanistan, and active support for Vietnam's invasion of Cambodia in the late 1970s. During the late 1970s and mid-1980s, the Soviet Union deployed roughly two fifths of its ICBMs and ballistic-missile-firing submarines, one quarter of its tactical fighter aircraft, and more than one third of its strategic bombers in its eastern territories against China's border.⁵³

After the emergence of Mikhail Gorbachev as leader of the Soviet Union, border disputes between the two countries returned to a level of relative normalcy. As a result,

⁴⁹ Gerald Segal, *The Soviet Union and the Pacific*, Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1990, p. 87.

⁵⁰ Robert A. Manning, *Asian Policy: The New Soviet Challenge in the Pacific*, New York: Priority Press Publications, 1988, p. 42.

⁵¹ Gerald Segal, *op. cit.*, pp. 87-88

⁵² David G. Muller, Jr., *op. cit.*, p. 114.

⁵³ Young Whan Kihl and Lawrence E. Grinter, *Insecurity, Strategy, and Policy Responses in the Pacific Rim*, London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1989, p. 4.

China removed many of its troops from the frontier, and cut its armed forces by a million men between 1985 and 1987.⁵⁴ In December 1988, Gorbachev announced that 200,000 Soviet troops would be removed from the Far Eastern theatre and troops in Mongolia would be reduced to fewer than 10,000 men. In May 1989, Gorbachev visited Beijing, re-established ties, and concluded border and delimitation negotiations, agreeing that the official border could run along the main shipping channel of the Amur River instead of maintaining earlier claims to portions of the Chinese bank of the river.⁵⁵ The series of Soviet conciliation efforts significantly eased the tension between Beijing and Moscow. However, it cannot be said that border issues between them are even now totally resolved.

After the re-birth of Russia in 1991, many Russians reacted favourably to the idea of a market economy and eagerly undertook their own businesses, but they eventually encountered unexpected barriers, including the lack of government support, mafia interference and the prevailing corruption of government officials.⁵⁶ Food shortages amongst the 146 million Russians have also represented a major crisis, jeopardising Russia's economic development and making it more difficult to pay foreign debt.⁵⁷ Accordingly, budgetary limitations have naturally curbed military spending; and as Felix K. Chang suggests, Russia's Pacific Fleet faces serious problems:

Many surface ships now have only 65-70 percent of their standard crew levels, and just 10 percent of ships needing repairs actually receive them. --- More than six hundred naval officers resigned in 1996 because they and their families could no longer bear the poverty. --- Under these conditions, training is so rare that most Pacific Fleet sailors and many officers have never been to sea. --- Many Admirals and officers were involved in corruption scandal, and illegal weapons deals are also rampant.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ Gerald Segal, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

⁵⁵ Robert A. Manning, *op. cit.*, p. 111.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 83.

⁵⁷ Stratfor, 'Russia in Crisis', *Global Intelligence Update*, 23 March 2000

⁵⁸ Felix K. Chang, "The Unravelling of Russia's Far Eastern Power", *Orbis*, Vol. 43. No. 2., (Spring 1999), pp. 97-99.

On the other hand, thanks to its economic growth, China has accelerated its naval force capability through the acquisition of state-of-the-art weapons and equipment from abroad, as well as through the renovation of its defence industry.⁵⁹ China's political position is also growing in the Asia-Pacific region, while Russia's is declining. In 1994, Russia attempted to influence Asian agenda, by proposing an eight-power conference involving the UN, IAEA, North and South Korea, Japan, China, and the US. The proposal was rejected because it was seriously at odds with the interests of the US, the ROK, and Japan.⁶⁰ China does not want to see Russia's involvement in regional security issues, and particularly not in the multilateral manner that Moscow has proposed.⁶¹ Instead, China preferred bilateral negotiations about regional issues, including the territorial claims in the South China Sea and joint exploration of natural resources in those regions. China also actively participated in the ASEAN+3 Meeting apparently in the motivation of Russia's involvement in the regional framework.⁶²

With the decline of its political influence, Russia has been excluded from the key regional establishments such as the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO), the Four-party Talks over the Korean issue, and the ASEM meeting.⁶³ Recognising its isolated position, Russian leaders view China as their strategic ally in order to raise their role as a regional player to a level similar to that of China's. Yeltsin's summit meeting with Jiang Zemin in Beijing in December 1999 cemented Beijing and Moscow's position against growing US military and political dominance in the region.⁶⁴ The two

⁵⁹ The Military Balance 2000-2001, p. 183.

⁶⁰ Stephen J. Blank, "Russo-Chinese Military Relations and Asian Security", *Issues and Studies*, vol. 33, no.11, (November, 1997), p. 88.

⁶¹ Jennifer Anderson, "The Limit of Sino-Russian Strategic Partnership", *op. cit.*, p. 68.

⁶² The Republic of Korea, China and Japan were formally invited to ASEAN Secretary Meeting as observers.

⁶³ Jennifer Anderson, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

⁶⁴ Xia Yishen, "China, Russia Lay Basis for the 21st Century Partnership", *Inside China Today*, 10 December 1999.

leaders also criticised Washington's notable involvement in sovereign countries' domestic affairs, such as the bombing in Serbia and human rights issues in China. In a similar manner, China has been backing Moscow's attack against Chechen rebels, and in return, Russia has been supporting the 'One China policy'. Recent Russian overtures to China suggest that it needs to maintain a close relationship with China to balance NATO and US hegemonic initiatives, while at the same time China needs a close relationship with Russia to continue its acquisition of advanced military technology and sophisticated weapons.

The survival of the Russian military industrial base is largely dependent on foreign arms sales. Russian arms sale in 1999 amounted to US\$4.0 billion; half of its arms trade went to China and India, while Iran remained one of Russia's largest customers.⁶⁵ Given China's significant role as a customer of the Russian arms market, the Russians are ready to sell sophisticated weapons and equipment to China. On the other hand, many Russian officers regard its arms sale to China as dangerous because Beijing then becomes a possible future military threat to Moscow.⁶⁶ In addition, China's offer of military cooperation with Turkmenistan is a matter of great concern to Russia, with China's national petroleum company helping to rebuild over 100 wells in Turkmenistan.⁶⁷ Furthermore, China has, for the next ten years, also agreed to import gas from the Central Asian Republics.⁶⁸ China's ambitions towards the Central Asian Republics also loom large in the eyes of Russian strategists.

6.2.2 Arms Sales and Military Cooperation

⁶⁵ The Military Balance 2000-2001, p. 118.

⁶⁶ Stephen J. Blank, "Russo-Chinese Military Relations and Asian Security", *op. cit.*, pp. 60-61.

⁶⁷ Stratfor, "China-Russia Power Sharing in Central Asia", *Global Intelligence Update*, 17 September, 1999

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

During the Cold War, Soviet arms exports were mainly structured on the basis of increasing political influence over its customers rather than a desire to gain economic benefits.⁶⁹ However, after the rebirth of the Russian state, its arms sales became critical to its defence industry and planners because the military industry cannot survive on the basis of domestic procurements alone.⁷⁰ Russian military production has found itself in a difficult situation since the disintegration of the former Soviet Union. Due to its limited defence budget, Russia cannot subsidise its defence industry as before, and as a result sectors of this industry either face collapse or are forced to request that the government give them as much freedom and control as possible in selling arms abroad.⁷¹ To exacerbate matters, hundreds of thousands of defence industry workers were forced to leave their jobs without compensation after the disintegration of the former Soviet Union.⁷² Because of low levels of investment in defence industries during the final years of communist rule, Russia's arms sales dropped sharply from US\$14 billion in 1990, to a mere US\$1.7 billion in 1994, threatening the regular operation of its defence industries.⁷³ China, as the largest buyer of Russian-made military assets, is a key contributor to the salvation of the Russian military industry, purchasing some US\$6.84 billion worth of military supplies in 1996 and US\$6.12 billion in 1997.⁷⁴ Likewise, in December 1999, eight Russian carrier-borne anti-submarine helicopters (three Ka-27s and five Ka-28s) were delivered to China to fit two Russian made Sovremenny-class destroyers, each armed with Russian SS-N-22 Sunburn supersonic anti-

⁶⁹ Jennifer Anderson, *op. cit.*, p. 157.

⁷⁰ Stephen J. Blank, "The Dynamics of Russian Weapons Sales to China", *Strategic Studies Institute*, March 1997. <http://www.milnet.com/milnet/rusmil97/ruswepp1.html> (Internet Accessed: 3 September 1999).

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² Alexander Lukin, "Russia's Image of China and Russian-Chinese Relations", *East Asia An International Quarterly*, Vol. 17, No. 1, (Spring 1999), p. 32.

⁷³ East Asian Strategic Review 1997-98, *op. cit.*, p. 158.

⁷⁴ Mary Kwang, "China Rejects Reunification Conditions", *The Strait Times*, October 23, 1998.

ship cruise missiles.⁷⁵ In 2000, the US, Britain and Russia ranked as the three countries with the largest arms sales, amounting US\$ 14,187 million, 5,100 million, and 3,500 million respectively.⁷⁶ China accounted for 50 percent of Russia's arms sales, US\$ 1,750 million in that year.

As a result of Russia's economic crisis and the concomitant weakening of its strategic position, the country is selling major new weapon systems to China as well as China's military rivals, including India, Vietnam and South Korea. More alarmingly, Russia is transferring conventional and nuclear weapons technological information to China, information that could later be used against it.⁷⁷ Despite the different interests regarding arms deals between the two countries, Russian arms sales to China continue to be a driving force for the former's defence industry and the latter's military modernisation.

In the post-Cold War period, military cooperation between Beijing and Moscow has been closely related to Washington's unilateral hegemonic power in the international community. This cooperation has been further enhanced after the Kosovo crisis in 1999 and America's ambitious plans for the Theatre Missile Defence (TMD) and National Missile Defence (NMD). With regard to the US planned shield against ballistic missiles, China and Russia are working on an Amity Pact proclaiming friendship, the strongest sign yet of their shared jealousy of the supremacy of the US.⁷⁸ In October 1999, Russian ships joined the Chinese East Sea Fleet for the first joint exercise between the two navies since 1949. Furthermore since 2000, both commanders of the PLAN and their Russian counterparts have agreed on naval arms and technology transfers, joint naval exercises, and training of

⁷⁵ Yu Bin, "China-Russia Relations: Back to the Future", in Ralph A. Cossa and Rebecca Goodgame Ebinger, eds., *Comparative Connections*, Pacific Forum CSIS, Vol. 1, No. 3., (January 2000), p. 81.

⁷⁶ *The Military Balance 2001-2002*, IISS, October 2001, p. 296.

⁷⁷ Stephen J. Blank, "The Dynamics of Russian Weapons Sales to China", *op. cit.*

⁷⁸ Erik Eckholm, "Power of US Draw China and Russia to Amity Pact", *The New York Times*, 14 January 2001.

Chinese naval personnel in Russian military academies.⁷⁹ Russia has also conducted a series of combined exercises with other neighbouring countries. With Japan, it conducted 'Keen Sword 96' in November 1996 and a command-post exercise in March 1997; with the US, 'Cooperation from the Sea' in August 1996; with US and Canada, 'Arctic Sarex' in September 1996; and with South Korea, 'Communication and Manoeuvring Exercise' in 1996 and 1997.⁸⁰ Since October 1999, China and Russia have accelerated their cooperation in space science and technology. As a step toward this partnership, Russia's Space Agency Chief Yuri Koptev announced that Russia would assist with China's first manned satellite program, and train a group of 20 Chinese astronauts in its Yuri Gagarin Cosmonaut Centre.⁸¹

In the area of cooperation in science and technology, both countries have eagerly expanded mutually beneficial interests. In early 1999, when Chinese Premier Zhu Rongzhi visited Moscow, the two nations signed technological trade contracts for over US\$1.5 billion, and by the year's end, a US\$3.2 billion nuclear-power project was launched in China's Jiangsu Province.⁸² Military cooperation between the two countries has somewhat different implications for each party. For China, cooperation with Russia is crucial to narrow the technological gap in its military science for the time being, and for Russia, partnership is an urgent task to recover from its economic nadir. China's ultimate military strategy is possibly to be a true competitor against America's primacy, thus China will continue to import Russia's technology and military hardware. On the other hand, Russia's strategic objective could be the regaining of its former status of superpower, thus Russia's technological assistance toward China will be restricted to curb China from surpassing the level of Russia's current technological edge.

⁷⁹ Yu Bin, "China-Russia Relations", *op. cit.*, p. 80.

⁸⁰ East Asian Strategic Review 1997-98, *op. cit.*, pp. 261-63.

⁸¹ Yu Bin, "China-Russia Relations", *op. cit.*, p. 76.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 77.

6.2.3 Sino-Russian Sea Challenges: Rivals or Partners?

Immediately after its defeat in the Russo-Japanese War in 1905, the activities of the Russian navy in the Far East became insignificant. With the outbreak of the October Revolution, Lenin renamed the Russian fleet on 12 February 1918, and it became the Socialist Worker Peasant Fleet.⁸³ From 1926 to 1938, the Soviets launched their naval modernisation plan. During that period, three battleships were modernised, and the Black Sea cruiser *Krasni Kavkaz* was redesigned to carry a new main armament, four 7.1-inch guns in one-gun turrets.⁸⁴ During the Second World War, the Russian Navy conducted limited mine-laying operations with the British navy in the Baltic Sea.

Russian naval activities in the Indian and Pacific Oceans are a relatively recent phenomenon. For more than two centuries, the Indian Ocean was under the predominant influence of Great Britain, which had been Russia's maritime ally from the time of Peter the Great until the October Revolution in 1917.⁸⁵ Russia's interest in the Indian Ocean began with a naval link with Indonesia in the late 1950s, and the Vietnam War of the 1960s.⁸⁶ After the Vietnam War, the Soviet Pacific Fleet emerged as a substantial naval power in the Southeast Asian region. The primary mission of the Soviet Pacific Fleet was to counterbalance American attack submarines and aircraft carrier battle groups, which could strike at Soviet territory, and to protect the Sea of Okhotsk.⁸⁷ It was not until 1959 that the Soviet Pacific Fleet began to move out into the open seas. In that year, Soviet warships visited Jakarta and established a new maritime link with the Indonesian navy, providing

⁸³ Eric Morris, *The Russian Navy*, New York: Stein and Day Publishers, 1977, p. 18.

⁸⁴ J. N. Westwood, *Russian Naval Construction 1905-45*, London: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1994, p. 138.

⁸⁵ Eric Morris, *op. cit.*, p. 103.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 118.

⁸⁷ Vladimir Ivanov, "Soviet Policy in the Asia-Pacific Region and Economic Reform", in Peter Drysdale, ed., *The Soviets and the Pacific Challenge*, Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1991, p. 131.

various types of ships, including one cruiser, eight destroyers, eight frigates and a dozen whisky-class submarines.⁸⁸ The link, however, was suspended with the fall of Sukarno's regime, which had maintained close relations with the Soviets. In 1961, the Soviet Naval Chief of Staff visited Indian naval bases in Bombay and Visakhapatnam, and discussed common interests regarding the Indian Ocean with his Indian counterpart.⁸⁹ The Soviet naval policy at that time was to contain Chinese ambitions in South Asia and to isolate China politically through a policy of encirclement.⁹⁰ The majority of ships visiting from Vladivostok entered the Indian Ocean before the beginning of the Russian winter, and conducted exercises and port calls to the countries in the region before returning to their home base in June.⁹¹ For these friendly visits and winter training exercises, the Soviet Navy laid some anchorages and mooring buoys in such areas as 250 nautical miles (NM) east of Durban and 150 NM southwest of Malagasy, off the Seychelles, Socotra, the Maldives Islands, and the Chagos archipelagos.⁹²

Since the early 1970s, the Soviet Navy has actively advanced into the Pacific Ocean, as well as into the Indian Ocean. Soviet naval exercises were conducted in the Philippine Sea in 1970, and near the Hawaiian Islands in 1971.⁹³ In December 1971, during the Indo-Pakistani war, Washington sent a fleet *Task Force 74*, led by the aircraft carrier *Enterprise*, to the Bay of Bengal to encourage Pakistani forces.⁹⁴ Following that war, the British and Americans imposed an arms embargo on India that helped East Pakistan and the foundation

⁸⁸ Eric Morris, *op. cit.*, p. 118.

⁸⁹ S. K. Wahyono, "Strategic Assessment of the Indian Ocean", in Robert H. Bruce, ed., *Indian Ocean Navies*. Canberra: ANU, 1990, p. 127.

⁹⁰ Eric Morris, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 108.

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 119.

⁹⁴ Derek da Cunha, "Soviet Naval Capabilities in the Pacific in the 1990s", in Ross Babbage, ed., *The Soviets in the Pacific in the 1990s*, Rushcutters Bay, NSW: Brassey's Australia, 1989, p. 67.

of Bangladesh.⁹⁵ The Soviet Union seized a golden opportunity, and chose India as its strategic partner and helped India's naval build-up. In turn, India leased the Visakhapatnam port facilities to the Soviet Navy, and the Soviet Navy frequently visited the Indian ports of Bombay and Madras.⁹⁶ This relationship led to the signing of the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation between the two countries in 1971.

The Chinese offensive into Vietnam's northern territory in February-March 1979 presented another opportunity to the Soviet Union, by enabling it to possess an important naval base in the Southeast Asian region.⁹⁷ When the tension between China and Vietnam was at its peak, a group of six Soviet warships, about to return to Vladivostok after a lengthy Indian Ocean deployment, were ordered to redeploy off the Vietnamese coast to support Hanoi.⁹⁸ As a result of its support for Hanoi, the Soviet navy obtained its naval base in Cam Ranh Bay that could be used as a 'beachhead' to project its power in both the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean. Hanoi also provided the Soviet Navy with a centre for intelligence gathering, and a forward outpost for the supply and maintenance of its fleet.⁹⁹ The Soviet Union's intention of controlling of SLOCs in some choke points in the region, including the Straits of Malacca, has often been cited as a major mission for Soviet forces operating out of Cam Ranh Bay.¹⁰⁰ However, the Soviet Navy never waged such an interdiction because it believed that its fleet capability in the bay would not be on a par with that of the US, and such an interruption would seriously undermine relations with Southeast Asian nations. In the 1980s, Cam Ranh Bay harboured 15-20 ships on average, and

⁹⁵ Eric Morris, *The Russian Navy, op. cit.*, p. 105.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 105.

⁹⁷ Derek da Cunha, *Soviet Naval Power in the Pacific*, Singapore: ISEAS, 1990, p. 155.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 156.

⁹⁹ Leszek Buszynski, "Gorbachev and Southeast Asia: Prospects for the 1990s" in Ross Babbage, ed., *The Soviet in the Pacific in the 1990s*, New York: Pergamon Press, 1989, p. 98.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

provided a vital strategic link for Russia between the Pacific Ocean and some ports in the Indian Ocean, including Dahlak Island near Ethiopia and Socotra Island, off the coast of South Yemen.¹⁰¹ The Bay was believed to provide Moscow with a reasonable Soviet strike base if conflict flared with China, or with a means of placing pressure on the Chinese prior to any conflict occurring.¹⁰² Russia's lease of Cam Ranh Bay is to expire in 2004, but the Russian government has been negotiating the extension of the lease of the bay with Vietnam.¹⁰³ In the early 1990s, most Russian vessels were withdrawn from Vietnam, but some 30 Russian signal intelligence personnel are still stationed there for occasional calls by Russian naval vessels and for tracking ships in the South China Sea.¹⁰⁴ The Bay, in fact, played a major part in supporting Russia's Indian Ocean squadron activities until the late 1980s.¹⁰⁵ With its naval presence in Vietnam, the Soviet Union can monitor China's naval activities in the South China Sea, as well as check US naval activities in the Southeast Asian seas.

Although Russia is now experiencing severe hardship, it nonetheless has tremendous potential. It possesses advanced technology and rich natural resources. It produces 33 percent of the world's gas, 22 percent of its oil, 22 percent of its non-ferrous metals, and 40 percent of its timber.¹⁰⁶ If Russia were to overcome current economic difficulties prudently, there could be some hope that Russia's navy will re-emerge as a great sea power in the Asia-Pacific region. In spite of its severe economic crisis, Russia continues to maintain substantial military expenditure. In 1995, Russia's defence budget was only US\$15

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 97.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ Stratfor, "Washington, Moscow and Beijing covet Vietnam's Ports", *Global Intelligence Update*, 16 March 2000.

¹⁰⁴ Nayan Chanda, "Cam Ranh Bay Manoeuvres", *FEER*, 28 December 2000.

¹⁰⁵ Derek da Cunha, *Soviet Naval Power in the Pacific, op., cit.*, p.179.

¹⁰⁶ Felix N. Yurlov, "Russia: A Lost Decade" *World Affairs*, vol. 3, no. 3, (July-September 1999), p. 95.

billion, or less than 10 percent of America's, but the defence expenditure in 1998 accounted for US\$35.0 billion, or about 13 percent of America's.¹⁰⁷ Until the end of the Cold War, the US and Soviet navies were major actors in the Western Pacific, but in the twenty-first century, the most likely conflict is likely to occur between China and Russia.¹⁰⁸ The Sino-Russian strategic partnership will be a national policy for a fixed period for Russia, until there is full-scale economic recovery throughout the nation. Equally, China seems likely to terminate the partnership with Russia when its military technology is on a par with, or moves ahead of, Russia's. The partnership will eventually be replaced by naval rivalry between the two countries in the Western Pacific and in the Indian Ocean.

6.3 India: China's Everlasting Contestant

6.3.1 The Sino-Indian Relationship

India's relationship with China dates to the first century AD, when Indian embassies were first established in the Han court. Because of high mountains stretched along the border between the two countries, China and India were rarely in contact in ancient times. Their relationship was simple and remained limited, involving on the most part, spiritual and cultural links between Chinese monks, who travelled to India to pay homage to the relics of Buddha from about the third century, and Indian scholars who likewise took the journey to China to help translate Buddhist Scriptures into the Chinese language form.¹⁰⁹

A level of mutual understanding and sympathy between India and China was formed as India struggled against British colonialism, at the same time as China was striving to maintain its political identity against both Western and Japanese imperialism in the early

¹⁰⁷ Military Balance 2000-2001, pp. 25, 120.

¹⁰⁸ Gerald Segal, *The Soviet Union and the Pacific, op. cit.*, p. 85.

¹⁰⁹ P. C. Chakravarti, *India's China Policy*, Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1962, p. 2.

twentieth century.¹¹⁰ When Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru visited China in August 1939, he presented a warm address to the Chinese people, stressing that Sino-India cooperation was very important if either was to secure freedom for 'our dearly-loved countries'.¹¹¹ This short period of friendship between India and the Republic of China (under the Kuomintang Government) waned after the communist regime's unexpected victory on mainland China. The rift with the PRC became far deeper when Mao Zedong insulted India, calling it an agent of Western imperialism, advising the Indians that they could only be liberated through the establishment of a communist regime.¹¹²

The Tibet issue has also continued to be a matter of concern in the relations of China and India. In October 1950, the PLA troops invaded and annexed Tibet, and the new government in Beijing dispatched officials to Lhasa to establish a provisional government.¹¹³ At the time, most of the Western powers were deeply involved in the Korean War, and did not respond to the Chinese incorporation of Tibet. When Chinese Prime Minister Zhou En-lai dissolved the Tibetans' autonomy in 1959, their spiritual and political leader, the Dalai Lama, crossed the border into India where he was granted political asylum.¹¹⁴ Since then India has tried to attract world attention against China's oppressive treatment of the Tibetans.¹¹⁵ From India's point of view, Tibet has strategic significance because the removal of a Chinese threat from Tibet could alleviate the potential threat from Pakistan.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, p. 11.

¹¹³ Michael Oksenberg, "Taiwan, Tibet, and Hong Kong in Sino-American Relations", in Ezra F. Vogel, ed., *Living with China*, New York: Norton, 1997, p. 80.

¹¹⁴ William R. Keylor, *The Twentieth Century World*, 3rd Ed., New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997, p. 490.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

India insists that China holds 40,000 square kilometres of its territory in Kashmir, while China claims a large part of territory in Arunachal Pradesh, an eastern Indian State.¹¹⁶ Since 1959, China and India have been in dispute over their land borders, and finally a border war broke out in 1962. Issues over land boundaries continued to plague the Sino-Indian relationship until a border dispute in Tawang turned to a military conflict in 1962. India claimed this eastern border area of Tawang as its own territory on the basis of the McMahon Line,¹¹⁷ while China insisted that the result of the Simla Conference was illegal.¹¹⁸ China therefore invaded and secured Indian-occupied Tawang, inflicting a humiliating loss on the Indian Army. By Indian calculations, China occupied approximately 12,000 square miles of their claimed territory in the Aksai-chin area of the Ladakh sector before the 1962 border war, and extended another 2,500 square miles in the same sector as a result of the war.¹¹⁹

On the other hand, India also claimed that China seized some 14,500 square miles of the Aksai-chin area in Kashmir.¹²⁰ Kashmir was one of the largest princely states of India, and was primarily populated by Muslims during the time of British rule. Although the Maharajah (a Hindu Prince) of Kashmir initially refused to sign the 'Instrument of Accession',¹²¹ a full-scale attack by Pakistani forces within a month prompted the Maharajah to join India as a pre-condition for military assistance.¹²² The Kashmir issue has

¹¹⁶ "India Calls on China for a Settlement of Border Dispute", *Agence France Presse*, 1 April 2000.

¹¹⁷ McMahon was the chief British delegate to the Simla Conference of 1913-14. The Conference was held to confirm the border delimitation signed by British India and Tibet in March 1914. But the Chinese regard the line as invalid, illegal, and the trickery of imperialism.

¹¹⁸ Alastair Lamb, *The China-India Border*, London: Oxford University Press, 1964, p. 11.

¹¹⁹ Mohan Ram, *Politics of Sino-Indian Confrontation*, London: Vikas Publishing House Pvt Ltd, 1973, p.1.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

¹²¹ 'Instrument of Accession of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) State' is an act signed by Governor-General of India and ruler of J&K State to accede the Dominion of India on 26 October, 1947.

¹²² Nancy Anderson, "1998 Strategic Assessment, Chapter Three Asia", US National Defence University, 1999.

been a point of dispute between the two countries, and this has been the case for more than five decades. Since their independence in 1947, India and Pakistan have fought three wars, conducted hundreds of skirmishes and artillery fire exchanges, and have both supported separatist movements in each other's territory.¹²³ Pakistan occupied over 32,000 square kilometres of Jammu-Kashmir territory after the 1947-48 war with India.¹²⁴ India has claimed that Pakistan presented China with about 2,600 square kilometres of India's territory in Kashmir in the 1960s, and this dispute made China a third party to the Kashmir issue.¹²⁵

China has continuously pressed on India with increased border forces, the positioning of nuclear tipped ballistic missiles in Tibet, and its ongoing security relationships with most of India's neighbouring countries.¹²⁶ China has reportedly provided Pakistan with weaponry and nuclear technology, supplied Bangladesh with naval vessels and combat aircraft, and supplied arms to the neutral Kingdom of Nepal. China also maintains a close relationship with Sri Lanka and Myanmar. On the other hand, India has maintained its policy on Tibet, aspiring to a peaceful settlement and Tibetan autonomy within the framework of Chinese rule.¹²⁷ However, the exiled Tibetan administration in Dharamsala, India, and the approximately 100,000 Tibetan refugees living in India continue to be a burdensome issue for India, increasing the risk of confrontation with China.¹²⁸ In the

¹²³ 1998 Strategic Assessment, Chapter Four, "From India to North Africa".

<http://www.fas.org/spp/starwars/advocate/ifpa/repor691-ch4-ind.html> (Internet Accessed: on 1 may2000)

¹²⁴ Mohan Ram, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

¹²⁵ Devarajan Sundaravaradan, "India-China Relationship", *SAPRA*, June 1998.

http://home1.gte.net/devaalx2/china_analysis_web.htm (Internet Accessed: on 25 June 1999).

Also see Mohan Ram, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

Mohan asserts that India argues that China occupies 14,500 square miles of the Aksai-chin area in Kashmir.

¹²⁶ "The China Poser", *SAPRA, India*, Monthly Bulletin, April-May 1996

<http://www.subcontinent.com/sapra/96apr-may/si960501.html> (Internet Accessed, on 23 May 1999).

¹²⁷ Mohan Ram, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

¹²⁸ Barry Sautman, "The Tibet Issue in Post-Summit Sino-American Relations", *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 72, No. 1, (Spring 1999), p. 12.

1990s, China increased its troops in Tibet from 100,000 to 400,000, and has extended their airfield runways to accommodate Su-27 fighters in an attempt to reduce India's air superiority in the region.¹²⁹

The regional rivalry between China and India, combined with their pride as centres of ancient civilisation, has prevented both nations from becoming close friends. While both India and China signed an agreement in September 1993, agreeing to respect the present Line of Control (LOC) along the disputed Himalayan border, there still lies a deep-rooted disagreement on the border issue. However, the geographical conditions of most of the 3,500-kilometre border along the Himalayan Mountains, between the two countries make it difficult for them to conduct large-scale conventional warfare against each other. Thus, for India, its missile and naval forces represent key elements of its future security strategy against China.¹³⁰ A more important point for India in becoming a nuclear power could be India's perception on its role in the international community. With its nuclear capability, the Indians are confident that any future negotiation must start from a clear understanding that their country is a nuclear power.¹³¹

6.3.2 India's Nuclear Option and Its Implications for China

After the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991, India reformulated its national security strategy. Becoming a nuclear power in its own right had always been an option, but was not considered urgent during the period of close alliance with the Soviets. Indian leaders realised that the Soviet nuclear umbrella would no longer protect their country, thus they chose their own nuclear option as a national survival strategy.¹³² Since 1968, India

¹²⁹ J. Mohan Malik, "India Goes Nuclear", *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, Vol. 20, No. 2, (August 1998), p. 196.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

¹³¹ M. V. Rappai, "India-China Relations and the Nuclear Realpolitik", *IDS*, vol. XXIII, no. 1 (April 1999).

¹³² J. Mohan Malik, "India Goes Nuclear", *op. cit.*, p. 193.

had steadfastly refused to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), arguing that the five nuclear powers have failed to reduce nuclear weapons, and have instead merely divided the world permanently into nuclear haves and have-nots.¹³³ As one of the have-nots, India kept its nuclear test plan secret. New Delhi's nuclear development plan was only revealed in 1995, when a covertly prepared underground nuclear test at the Pokhran test site in the Rajasthan Desert was detected by US spy satellite snapping pictures.¹³⁴ The US government leaked this news to the press, and then sent a diplomatic team to New Delhi with the satellite photos, and Indian Prime Minister Narasimha Rao was forced to abort the test. However, on 11 and 13 May 1998, India test fired five nuclear devices, and shifted its position from a suspected nuclear weapons state to a potential nuclear capable state.¹³⁵

As Mohan Malik has noted, "India's defence policy has always been based on keeping one step ahead of Pakistan and on a par with China".¹³⁶ From New Delhi's point of view, India's nuclear test was a natural choice for it to become a regional player on level similar with China, and for it to have its own voice in the international community. India's current security strategy therefore includes: the ongoing containment of Pakistan; strategically balancing China's military growth; remaining a dominant force in the Indian Ocean; gaining further access to and expanding its influence in Central Asia; and in the long-term, becoming a superpower in its own right.¹³⁷ India has demonstrated its military strength with its nuclear weapons development, and has revealed clear ambitions to dominate and control the Indian Ocean.¹³⁸ However, India's proliferation effort has brought

¹³³ *Ibid.*, p. 192. India argues that five nuclear powers (America, Russia, Britain, France and China), though they already signed the NPT, are continuously conducting nuclear tests, and arrogant towards other countries.

¹³⁴ Johanna McGeary, "Nukes... They're Back", *Time*, Vol. 151, No. 20, (25 May 1998).

¹³⁵ J. Mohan Malik, "India Goes Nuclear", *op. cit.*, p. 191.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

¹³⁸ LTG A. I. Akram, "South Asian Relations and their Impact on the Indian Ocean", *Second International Conference on Indian Ocean Studies*, Perth: 1984, p. 7.

about Pakistan's nuclear tests soon after India's, and the Indo-Pakistani nuclear rivalry stimulates regional arms build-up as well as raising anxiety of regional countries about security.

6.3.3 Naval Rivalry between China and India

The Indian Ocean is considered a trans-oceanic trade zone, which connects Europe and Asia through the Suez Canal and the Southeast Asian straits of Malacca, Sunda, and Lombok; or around the Cape of Good Hope.¹³⁹ The Indian Ocean provides a major shipping route for Persian Gulf oil, either to Asia, or to Europe and America. Most of this oil must pass through strategic choke points, including the Straits of Hormuz and the Straits of Malacca. Any closure of these straits would cause serious problems to the nations that are heavily dependent on Middle Eastern oil. From India's point of view, the Indian Ocean is crucial for its economic prosperity. India's seaborne trade accounted for as much as 97 percent of its total foreign trade in 1997, and by 2002, 70 percent of India's energy requirement is likely to pass through the Indian Ocean.¹⁴⁰ As such, the Indian Ocean would remain crucial as a commercial shipping lane, an invaluable source of energy and fishing industry, and as a naval power projection for New Delhi.

Since the end of the fifteenth century, the Indian Ocean has been dominated by the western powers. The Treaty of Tordesillas, signed by Spain and Portugal in 1494, divided the world's oceans between the two maritime powers, and the Indian Ocean became part of the Portuguese sphere of influence.¹⁴¹ In 1815, the British secured political hegemony over the Indian Ocean, and this lasted until January 1968, when the British government

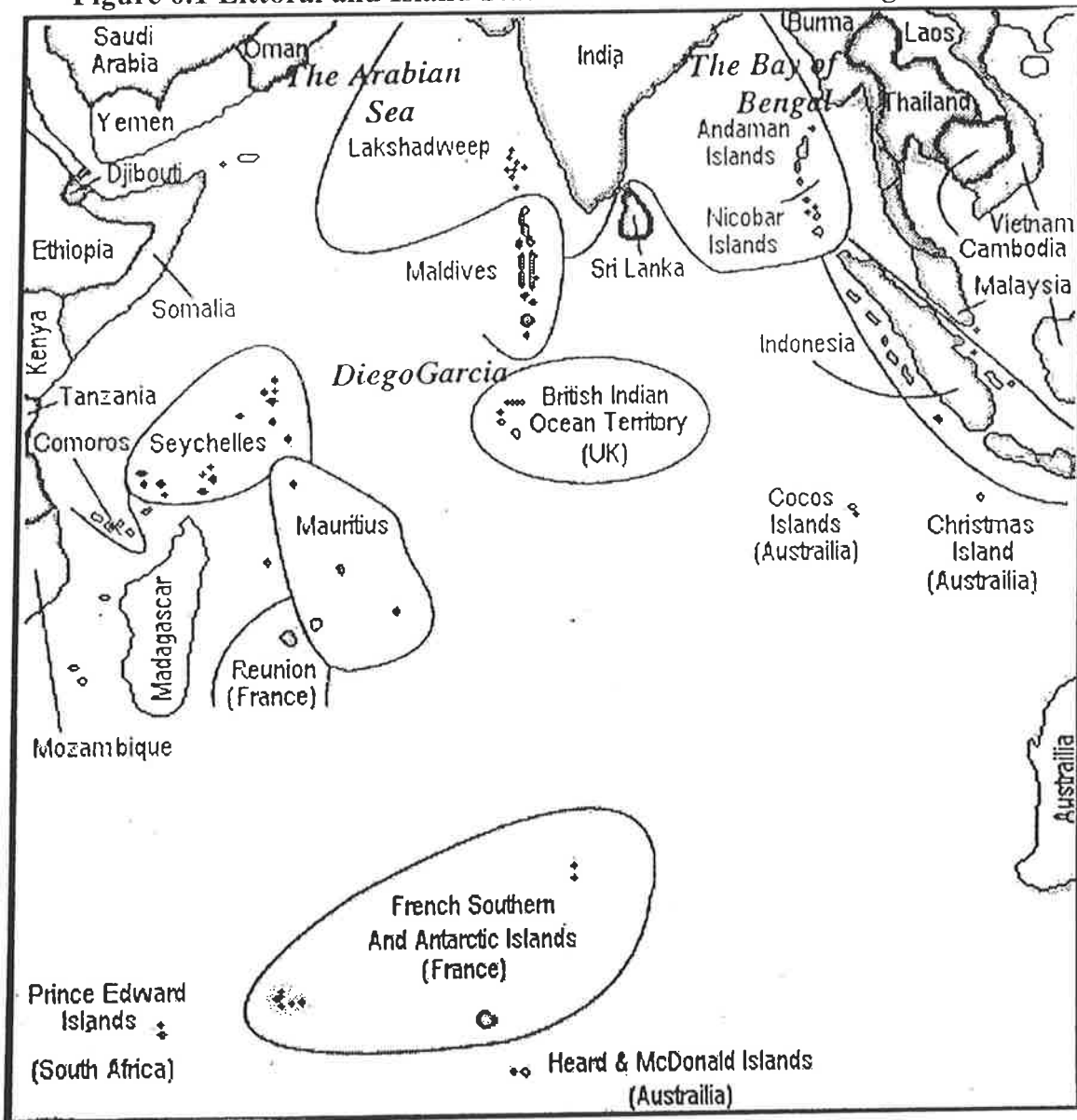
¹³⁹ Sandy Gordon, et al., *Security and Security Building in the Indian Ocean Region*, Canberra: ANU, 1996, p. 19.

¹⁴⁰ Dean Mathew, "Aircraft Carriers", *IDS*, vol. 23, no. 12, (March 2000).

¹⁴¹ S. K. Wahyono, "Strategic Assessment of the Indian Ocean", in Robert H. Bruce, ed., *Indian Ocean Navies*, Perth: Curtin University of Technology, 1990, p. 126.

announced to withdraw its military forces from the region East of Suez.¹⁴² In 1965, the British created a new British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT) and leased part of the BIOT, Diego to the US for fifty years (See Figure 6.1).¹⁴³

Figure 6.1 Littoral and Island States of the Indian Ocean Region



Source: http://www.rimaweb.com/reservations/oceano_indiano/map.htm

From the mid-1950s, the Soviet Navy emerged as a sea power in the Indian Ocean, and successfully challenged the long-held dominance of western naval power. However, the

¹⁴² LTG A. I. Akram, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

Soviet Union was unable to secure anything more than an ability to freely navigate the sea-lanes. The US Navy also stretched its fleet into the Indian Ocean. From the early 1960s, the US maintained a small force presence in Bahrain, and demonstrated its naval power periodically throughout the Indian Ocean. As a result of the oil shock in 1973-74, the US established the Middle East Forces (MIDEASTFOR), which consisted of several frigates operating out of Bahrain and a supporting vessel to protect oil tankers in the Gulf.¹⁴⁴ The US Navy does not maintain a separate fleet command for the Indian Ocean operation in peacetime. If a military operation is needed, a Fifth Fleet can be formed and made operational using warships from both the Pacific Fleet Command (the Seventh Fleet), and the US Naval Forces-Europe (the Sixth Fleet).¹⁴⁵ However, the US maintains considerable military and naval assets in a number of Gulf States, including Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates for the security of hydrocarbon resources and trade.¹⁴⁶

India's goal of becoming a regional sea power was formulated just after it gained independence from the British. India's decision to acquire an aircraft carrier was made ten days after the declaration of its independence on 15 August 1947. India's first aircraft carrier *INS Vikrant*, the first of its kind in South Asia, was commissioned in 1961.¹⁴⁷ Its second carrier, the *INS Viraat*, was commissioned in 1987, and equipped with Sea Harrier Vertical /Short Take Off and Landing (VSTOL) aircraft and Sea King helicopters. The *INS Vikrant* was retired from service in 1997, and the Indian navy has plans to build a domestic carrier and acquire the re-fit Russian Kiev-class *Admiral Gorshkov* to replace the *Vikrant*.¹⁴⁸ This carrier capability has made India a force to be reckoned with in the region. China also

¹⁴⁴ Sandy Gordon, et al., *op. cit.*, p. 30.

¹⁴⁵ Rahul Roy-Chaudhury, "US Naval Policy in the Indian Ocean", *IDS*, vol. 22, no. 9, (December, 1998).

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

interested in possessing aircraft carrier. Diplomatic sources in Beijing have revealed that China intends to buy a second batch of 40 Su-30 MKK fighters to supplement its initial order of 40 aircraft in August 1999.¹⁴⁹ China's efforts to acquire such sophisticated aircraft demonstrate that Su-30 fighters are likely to be part of the future carrier-borne wing.¹⁵⁰ Carrier dominance in the region will remain a key strategic concern for both parties.

The contest between China and India over control and domination of South, Southeast and Central Asia, and the northern Indian Ocean (Malacca Straits) is therefore likely to be the dominant feature of Asian geopolitics in the twenty-first century.¹⁵¹ China has taken advantage of Myanmar's isolation since 1990 to satisfy its own great power ambitions, especially its desire to counter India in the Indian Ocean, and to take control over vital sea-lanes by drawing Myanmar into its sphere of influence.¹⁵² In addition to Myanmar, the Chinese are hopeful of securing permission from Pakistan and Iran to establish naval bases in the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf.¹⁵³ The Chinese have forged important defence ties with Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Myanmar,¹⁵⁴ while China's continuing sales of sophisticated military technology, along with the possibility of acquiring naval bases in these countries, are of a serious concern for India's security.¹⁵⁵ Beijing also has loose relationships with Sri Lanka, Mauritius, and the Seychelles.¹⁵⁶ India must

¹⁴⁸ Stratfor, "India Challenges China in the South China Sea", *Global Intelligence Update*, 26 April 2000.

¹⁴⁹ "China Moves to Buy More Russian Aircraft, Warships and Submarines", *Jane's Defence Weekly*, Vol.32, Issue. 25, 22 (December 1999), quoted by Dean Mathew, "Aircraft Carriers", *op. cit.*

¹⁵⁰ Dean Mathew, *op. cit.*

¹⁵¹ J. Mohan Malik, "India Goes Nuclear", *op. cit.*, p. 211.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 196.

¹⁵³ J. Mohan Malik "Burma Sides under China's Shadow", *Jane's Intelligence Review*, Vol. 9, No. 6, (July 1997), pp. 320-325.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁵ Gurmeet Kanwal, "China's Long March to World Power Status", *IDS*, Vol. XXII, No. 11, (February 1999), pp. 1713-1728

¹⁵⁶ Swaran Singh, "Continuity and Change in China's Maritime Strategy", *Strategic Analysis*, Vol. 23, No. 9, (December 1999), pp. 1493-1508.

therefore be mindful of China's increasing involvement in the countries around the Indian Ocean.

As a regional trouble-solving broker, India's military has taken part in several regional conflicts. India dispatched its peacekeeping forces to Sri Lanka in 1987, and the Indian Army disarmed an attempted coup in the Maldives in 1988.¹⁵⁷ However, China's maritime emergence in the region would obviously limit India's ability to maintain dominant position in the Indian Ocean. Indian naval officers have spoken openly of their intent to check the expansion of Chinese naval power in the Indian Ocean through the control of the Straits of Malacca, their permanent naval presence in the Andaman Islands, and the securing of vital trade routes between the Suez Canal and Singapore.¹⁵⁸

China's naval build-up in the 1980s has forced India's strategists to extend its power projection capability rather than remain a defensive maritime power.¹⁵⁹ Given India's current naval assets and level of military spending, it is unlikely that the Indian navy alone can protect its interests in the region. Cooperation with the US is therefore needed to maintain peace and stability in the region. Since an Indo-US Naval Steering Committee took place in New Delhi in March 1992, the Indian navy has carried out a number of bilateral naval exercises with the US Navy, but after the May 1998 India's nuclear test, defence and naval cooperation between the two countries has been suspended.¹⁶⁰ India has also been a significant contributor to UN peacekeeping missions since 1950.¹⁶¹ In addition, it is also a dialogue partner of ASEAN and has sought APEC membership as well. India supported China's bid for membership of the World Trade Organization (WTO). In turn, China backed India's membership into APEC. These efforts have been viewed as a

¹⁵⁷ Ramesh Thakur, *The Government and Politics of India*, London: MacMillan, 1995, p. 201.

¹⁵⁸ J. Mohan Malik, "India Copes with the Kremlin's Fall", *Orbis*, (Winter 1993), p. 87.

¹⁵⁹ Sandy Gordon et al., *op. cit.*, p. 67.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

constructive foreign policy towards the international community. Other Asian Nations are hopeful that China and India, Asia's twin giants, will seek a constructive engagement policy for the peace and prosperity of the Asia-Pacific and the Indian Ocean regions.

¹⁶¹ Gupta Shekhar, "India Redefines Its Role", Adelphi Paper 293, *IJSS*, 1995, p. 68.

Chapter Seven

Japan and the Republic of Korea (ROK): China's Competitive Neighbours

7.1 Overview of China's Relations with Japan and the ROK

Through its more than two thousand-year long history, Japan has been closely linked with its neighbouring countries, notably China and Korea. China, in particular, greatly influenced the cultural and political tradition of Japan. No Japanese would deny that Japan has been the subject of enormous influence from the Chinese civilisation, including religion, the written language, art, forms of government, and that many other features of cultural heritage were introduced to Japan from China, often through Korean intermediaries.¹ Until the mid-nineteenth century, the regional power structure in East Asia was notably Sino-centric, and Tokugawa Japan's response to the Qing's dominance was only to close its ports.² Although the Japanese have frequently attempted to harass the coastal areas of China and Korea through pirate attacks, they have not been a sea-faring people. The Japanese government banned their people from going abroad, and from 1637 prohibited the construction of ships longer than 25 feet due to the government's policy of isolation.³

Before the Sino-Japanese war of 1895, Japan had rarely contacted China except for the Japanese pirate attacks on Chinese seaside villages. Japan, like most countries in East Asia was isolated from the Western world until the Portuguese arrived in the country in the 16th century. When American Navy Commodore Perry arrived in Japan with his squadron in July 1853, the Shogun ruled the state, leaving the Emperor as the

¹ Wolf Mendl, *Japan's Asia Policy*, London: Routledge, 1995, p. 16.

² Takashi Shiraishi, "Japan and Southeast Asia", in Peter J. Katzenstein and Takashi Shiraishi, eds., *Network Power Japan and Asia*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997, pp. 170-71.

³ Anthony J. Watts and Brian G. Gordon, *The Imperial Japanese Navy*, London: Macdonald, 1971, p. ix.

spiritual head of the country.⁴ After Perry's maritime diplomacy, Japan realised the importance of the navy and the Shogun therefore took steps to establish his navy, also allowed other lords to construct their own navies.⁵ When the Shogun signed trading treaties with foreign powers, the lords objected to the policy and civil war erupted in Japan. In this conflict, the Emperor restored his mandate and proclaimed the Meiji Restoration in 1868. This political transformation encouraged the development of a unified Japanese navy. The Japanese leaders enhanced their naval power, and secured the victory in the Sino-Japanese war, through which Japan pressed China until the end of WWII.

After the surrender of Japan in the Pacific War, China and Japan maintained minimal contact, but since Deng Xiaoping's reform policy the two countries established ties for the purpose of economic cooperation. Japan has provided China with substantial loans and advanced technologies, while China has been an important market for Japanese products. Since the late 1990s, however, China has emerged as a keen competitor to Japan, both economically and diplomatically. China's foreign policy is influenced by several factors, including its internal stability and the US-Japan strategic alliance.⁶ Thus, the possibility of a collision between China and Japan is largely related to the US-Japan security ties. Chinese leaders believe that the US-Japan alliance is anachronistic and should have been removed with the end of the Cold War.⁷ The Chinese also argue that the Theatre Missile Defence (TMD), in particular, would endanger the stability of East Asia, and that the plan should be abrogated.⁸ China feels that the security alliances of the ROK-US and US-Japan continue to remain as a major obstacle for China's ambitions to dominate in the East Asian political framework.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Akio Watanabe, "The PRC-Japan Relationship" in Hung-mao Tien and Tun-jen Cheng, eds., *The Security Environment in the Asia-Pacific*, London: M.E. Sharpe, 2000, p. 64.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ Patrick M. O'Donogue, *Theatre Missile Defence in Japan*, Carlisle, Pennsylvania: US Army War College, September 2000, p.9.

From the invasion of Manchuria in 1931 to the end of World War II in 1945, the Chinese suffered severe hardship imposed by Japanese acts of brutality. The 21 October 1996 issue of the *China Daily* pointed out that Japan had provoked fourteen wars towards neighbouring countries since the Meiji Restoration of 1868.⁹ The tragedy of twenty million Chinese deaths caused by Japanese invading forces continues to loom large.¹⁰ Furthermore, Japan's imperial past, as well as Tokyo's consistent denial of its armed forces' barbarous acts, cast dark clouds over the friendly relationship between the two countries. From the late 1980s to the early 1990s, many Japanese officials, including Japanese Education Minister Masayuki Fujio, Transportation Minister Shintaro Ishihara, and Justice Minister Shigeto Nagano, denied the Nanjing Massacre and even declared the Rape of Nanjing as a fabrication.¹¹ Although, in 1993, Japanese Prime Minister Hosokawa admitted that Japan had engaged in a war of aggression, most Japanese conservatives argued that Japan had conducted a war of self-defence on behalf of Asian people against Western imperialism.¹² The Japanese denial of their war crimes and the falsification of imperial history in their high school textbooks have occasionally offended the Chinese and Koreans as well as other Asian peoples. If the Japanese continues to justify their wartime atrocities, Asian people, and the Chinese in particular, would regard Japan as the most likely aggressor state in the future.¹³

Since the signing of the peace treaty between Beijing and Tokyo in 1978, the two countries have maintained close economic cooperation. China has rich resources and a huge market that Japan needs for its economic development, whereas Japan has the capital and technology that China needs for its modernisation program.¹⁴ This mutual understanding has accelerated the economic ties of both countries. By the mid-1990s,

⁹ Sharif M Shuja, "China after Deng Xiaoping", *East Asia An International Quarterly*, Vol. 17, No.1, (Spring 1999), p. 85.

¹⁰ Kent E. Calder, *Asia's Deadly Triangle*, *op. cit.*, p. 101.

¹¹ Mayumi Itoh, *Globalisation of Japan*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998, p. 33.

¹² Suisheng Zhao, *Power Competition in East Asia*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998, p. 140.

¹³ This view can be found in interviews with B.H. Hamzah and J.N. Mak in Kuala Lumpur in September 1999.

Japan's aid package to China totalled nearly US\$5.5 billion a year in grants and soft loans. Japan's loans to China have been considered useful because of their low interest rates and long repayment periods. There has also been close economic cooperation between China and Japan in terms of bilateral trade and investment. Japan has provided China with more than 722 billion yen loans since 1996, when the yen loan package began.¹⁵

In addition to economic cooperation, Japan has sought political conciliation with China. In August 1991, Japanese Prime Minister Kaifu visited Beijing, as the first head of state among industrialised nations to visit China after the Tiananmen Incident. His visit paved the way for the Japanese Emperor's official visit to China in October 1992, and Chinese President Jiang Zemin's visit to Japan in the same year.¹⁶ Japan's close political partnership with China would not only facilitate Japan's thrust for political influence in Asia, but would also enhance its bargaining leverage over the US and Europe.¹⁷ Japan has expressed its interest in becoming a permanent member of the UN Security Council in order to upgrade its international status to a level compatible with its economic achievement.¹⁸ Japan also supported China's effort to join the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 1999 in an attempt to accommodate the world's seventh largest economy for the international economic community and for the expanding opportunities for Japanese businesses.¹⁹ For their economic development China and Japan need a close relationship, but their national interests regarding the nature of each nation's influence over the Asia-Pacific region are quite different.

Korea has been geographically one of the closest countries to China, and it has inherited much of China's cultural heritage and religious tradition. Throughout its

¹⁴ Suisheng Zhao, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

¹⁵ "Japan Decides on Fourth Yen Loan to PRC This Year", *The Asahi Shimbun* (a Japanese newspaper), 28 March 2000.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

¹⁷ Sharif M. Shuja, 'China after Deng Xiaoping', *East Asia An International Quarterly*, no. 17, no. 1 (Spring 1999), p. 89.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 90.

history, China has wanted to take the side of Korea, with the intention of counterbalancing Japan's influence over the Korean Peninsula. China's support for Korea in the Japanese invasion in 1592 was successful, driving out the invaders.²⁰ However, Sino-Japanese rivalry over their respective influence upon Korea in 1894 ignited the Sino-Japanese war. Since its defeat in the war, China lagged far behind Japan in the power politics of East Asia. During the first half of the twentieth century, China and Korea had no official contact because of ideological reasons. Since the Korean War, the PRC remained a close ally of the North Korean communist regime. Accordingly, the ROK regarded China a potential aggressor until their diplomatic ties were established in 1992. The official contact between China and the ROK began after the Tiananmen Massacre, at a time when Western military and economic embargoes had been imposed on China.²¹ Since the opening of its diplomatic relations with China, the ROK has maintained a comparatively warm relationship with China. China has participated in Korean issues, such as Four-Party Talks and the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO). The ROK-PRC defence ministers visited Beijing and Seoul in August 1999 and in January 2000 respectively, and they agreed to exchange the port calls of both nations' naval ships.²² In October 2001, a number of Korean naval vessels visited Shanghai, and the PLAN plans to conduct port calls to South Korea in 2002. Although there has been a minor dispute over the Yellow Sea between China and the ROK, it is unlikely that any major conflict between the two countries would occur over the issue. The major maritime concern for South Korea will come from the contingency that China's naval ambitions towards the Southeast Asian seas and the Indian Ocean

¹⁹ James J. Przystup, "Japan-China Relations", in Ralph A. Cossa and Rebecca Goodgame Ebinger, eds., *Comparative Connections*, Honolulu: January 2000, p. 63.

²⁰ Roger Tennant, *A History of Korea*, London: Kegan Paul International, 1996, p. 173.

²¹ Kang Choi and Tae-ho Kim, "Sino-ROK Relations and the Future of Asian Security" in Hung-mao Tien and Tung-jen Cheng, eds., *The Security Environment in the Asia-Pacific*, London: M.E. Sharpe, 2000, p. 220.

²² Hyun-soo Kim, "The ROK-PRC Military Cooperation", *The Hankyoreh Sinmun* (A Korean newspaper), 19 January 2000.

would eventually collide with the US and thereby deteriorate the alliance between the ROK and the US.

7.2 Japan and China

7.2.1 Japan's Maritime Interest in the Regional SLOCs

Relations between Japan and Southeast Asian countries have only a short history. Japan had its earliest maritime interests in Southeast Asia through the activities of its seamen, merchants and adventures.²³ In the 1930s European colonial powers in Asia and the US raised tariff barriers to protect their industries, thus Japan had difficulties in finding outlets for its products and importing raw materials.²⁴ To break through these economic constraints, Japan penetrated the Southeast Asian markets by avoiding friction with colonial regimes in the region. During the 1930s, Japan could obtain its material requirements mainly from Southeast Asian countries, and it dispatched a sizeable migration to Indonesia and the Philippines.²⁵ Japan was involved in the economies of the regional states at that time. In 1933, for instance, Indonesia's exports to Japan reached 31 percent of its total exports, compared with those to the Netherlands of only 12 percent.²⁶

However, the greatest growth in Japanese relations with the countries of Southeast Asia stemmed from the Pacific War, which began with the occupation of French Indochina in July 1941. The Japanese invasion of Southeast Asian nations was undertaken under the pretext of the 'Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere'.²⁷ Through this Japanese advance, the countries of the region experienced another colonial authority,

²³ Wolf Mendl, *Japan's Asia Policy*, London: Routledge, 1995, p. 95.

²⁴ Jan Pluvier, *Southeast Asia from Colonialism to Independence*, London: Oxford University Press, 1977, p. 92.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 99.

In 1935, Japan imported one-quarter of its oil from the Netherlands East Indies and one-eighth from British Borneo.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ A Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere aimed at a self-sustaining regional bloc consisting of Japan, Manchukuo and China as industrial nucleus, and the Philippines, Siam, Malaya, the Netherlands East Indies, Indochina, British Borneo as a agricultural and new material producing outer territories (Jan Pluvier, p. 108) The Japanese war cabinet adopted the 'Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere' policy in the summer of 1940 to set its designs on the resource-rich and strategically important European colonies of Southeast Asia (Hatano Sumio and Asada Sadao, "From the Sino-Japanese War", in Sadao Asada, ed., *Japan and the World 1853-1952*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1989, p. 311).

moving from a long period of European domination to a short period of colonisation by an Asian neighbour.²⁸ On July 26-27, 1941 when Japan was moving into southern Indochina, the US, Britain and Holland began to freeze Japanese assets in their respective colonies, and the US subsequently imposed an embargo on oil exports to Japan.²⁹ This western embargo led Japan to wage a fatal war against Southeast Asia to secure its war materials and the navigational freedom for its forces. The Japanese attack on the Southeast Asian states was too successful, and the victory of the imperial army incited the Japanese to further enlarge their sphere of territorial ambitions. Germany's overwhelming victory in Western Europe in the initial stages of World War II further encouraged Japan's impulse to occupy Southeast Asian countries.

The Japanese worried that if they were to attack the Philippines and other Asian nations, the US would engage in a war against Japan.³⁰ Thus the US Pacific Fleet was considered the most urgent threat to the Japanese thrust into the Southeast Asian region. With this calculation, Japan boldly attacked Pearl Harbor in December 1941 in order to cripple the American defence of far-flung Pacific sea-lanes.³¹ However, Japan's attack on America invited a coordinated attack consisting of the US, China and the USSR, and Japan's ambitions to dominate Asia totally collapsed with its defeat in the Pacific War.

Since its defeat in the Pacific War, Japan has adhered to the guidelines of the Yoshida Doctrine, which represented Japan's security policy of avoidance of international disputes, of a position of a low profile in regard to divisive global issues, and of concentration upon economic development.³² The post-war policies of West Germany and Japan differed in terms of their respective approaches to an apology for their war crimes and economic cooperation with their former aggressors. Between 1939-

²⁸ Milton Osborne, *Southeast Asia*, Sydney: George Allen & Unwin, 1983, p. 125.

²⁹ P.W. Preston, *Pacific Asia in the Global System*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1998, p. 132.

³⁰ Jan Pluvier, *op. cit.*, p. 154.

³¹ Kent E. Calder, *Asia's Deadly Triangle*, *op. cit.*, p. 46. Also see Jan Pluvier, *Southeast Asia from Colonialism to Independence*, *op. cit.*, p. 99.

³² Charles W. Kegley, Jr. and Eugene R. Wittkopf, *World Politics*, 6th Ed., New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997, p. 410.

Shigeru Yoshida served as Japanese Prime Minister during most of the post-war decade (1946-54).

45 Nazi Germany slaughtered approximately 11 million people, including the so-called 'inferior group' (which, according to Nazi ideology, included Jews, Poles, homosexuals, and handicapped people), but after the war the German government compensated for survivors and made sincere public apologies.³³ On the other hand, Japanese leaders did not respond to the Asian victims of their war crimes, and more importantly, they have not educated accurately their post-war generation about Japan's wartime role and atrocities committed upon the Chinese, Koreans and other Asian peoples.³⁴ The Yoshida government also resisted war reparations unless they seemed to help Japan's economy and markets.³⁵ The Japanese also denied their war guilt, by arguing that there was nothing fundamentally wrong with the Japanese war effort toward the Asia-Pacific region.³⁶ As a result of Yoshida's policy, many contemporary Japanese leaders have occasionally denied Japan's wartime atrocities toward Asian people, and in this way have offended neighbouring peoples.

Japan has been actively involved in the economies of Southeast Asia since the 1960s. In April 1966, the Japanese government convened a Ministerial Conference for the Economic Development of Southeast Asia (MEDSEA) in Tokyo.³⁷ Through its financial and technical assistance, Japan could participate in various projects in the region, such as agricultural development, the promotion of tourism, the marketing of new products, and the development of transport and communications.³⁸

During the period between the late 1960s and early 1970s, Japan conducted a number of hydrographic surveying activities in the Straits of Malacca and Singapore with three coastal states, namely Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore. The series of

³³ Paul Gordon Schalow, "Japan's War Responsibility and the Pan-Asian Movement for Redress and Compensation", *East Asia An International Quarterly*, vol. 18, no. 3 (Fall 2000), p. 9.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 7-9.

³⁵ Kenneth B Pyle, "Japan's Emerging Strategy in Asia", in Richard J Ellings and Sheldon W Simon, eds., *Southeast Asian Security in the New Millennium*, New York: M E Sharpe, 1996, p. 126.

³⁶ *Ibid.* See also Mayumi Itoh, *Globalisation of Japan*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998, p. 73.

³⁷ J. Victor Koshmann, "Asianism's Ambivalent Legacy", in Peter J. Katzenstein and Takashi Shiraishi, eds., *Network Power, op. cit.*, p. 180.

³⁸ Wolf Mendl, *op. cit.*, p. 105.

Japanese activities is believed to reflect a Japanese desire to secure the safety of its shipping through the strait. Why is this waterway so important for Japan? As the *Christian Science Monitor* reports, "If Indonesia and Malaysia were to shift allegiance, and the lifeline were cut off, this might be sufficient to strangle Japan without any bullets being fired".³⁹ By the mid-1990s Japan sent over 40 percent of its trade volume through the Southeast Asian straits.⁴⁰ Therefore, the safe navigation of Japanese ships along the Southeast Asian straits is critical for Japanese economic prosperity.

The economic relationship between Japan and Southeast Asia was not significant until the mid-1970s. In 1977, Prime Minister Takeo Fukuda enunciated Japan's three diplomatic principles toward Southeast Asia: to include committing Japan to reject the role of a military power; to build mutual confidence based on heartfelt understanding; and to be an equal partner of ASEAN.⁴¹ This policy initiative paved the way for bilateral economic cooperation between Japan and Southeast Asian nations. Many Japanese manufacturers have since made investment overtures with Asian countries where the wages were low and real estate comparatively cheap. As a result, from 1986 to 1993 Japan's trade surplus with Southeast Asian nations rose from US\$16.4 billion to US\$55.6 billion, exceeding its trade surplus with the US.⁴²

Petroleum is Japan's most crucial energy resource, and one that Japan cannot obtain from domestic sources.⁴³ When Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990, Japanese leaders were reluctant to support a swift military response against the Iraqi invasion for fear of any interruption in obtaining their required oil imports from the Gulf States.⁴⁴ In the 1999 East Timor issue, Japan also adopted a lukewarm attitude toward East Timor through the worry that Indonesia might restrict mineral energy exports to Japan. At that

³⁹ *Christian Science Monitor*, 24 December 1980.

⁴⁰ John H. Noer, "Southeast Asian Chokepoints", *Strategic Forum*, no. 98, (December 1996), p. 7.

⁴¹ Mayumi Itoh, "Globalisation of Japan", *op. cit.*, p. 95.

⁴² Kenneth B Pyle, "Japan's Emerging Strategy in Asia", *op. cit.*, p. 129.

⁴³ Karasawa Kei, "Japan and Petroleum", in Warren S. Hunsberger, ed., *Japan's Quest*, London: M. E. Sharpe, 1997, p. 59.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 64.

time, Japan declined to dispatch any peacekeeping forces to East Timor, but instead provided US\$200 million for the UN efforts to stabilise the turmoil on that island. This policy option demonstrates that Japan did not want to be involved in controversial international disputes for fear of possible impediments to its energy security.

Japan also watches cautiously China's courses of action toward the Western Pacific waterways. The Japanese worry that the tension between Southeast Asian nations and China over the Spratly Islands could threaten their sea-lanes.⁴⁵ In 2000, the Japanese consumed 5.6 million barrels per day (bbl/d) of oil, about 75 percent of which originated in OPEC countries, including the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar and Iran.⁴⁶ Japan needs unimpeded passage through all the major SLOCs in the Asia Pacific region. As Toshiyuki Shikata points out, if there were to arise a regional conflict anywhere along the SLOCs connecting Japan to the Middle East through the Malacca Straits, the South China Sea, and the East China Sea, Japan would face serious hardship since its needed oil must pass through these waterways.⁴⁷

Since the mid-1980s, Southeast Asia has emerged as Japan's largest investment and export destination, while Japan has been the largest buyer of raw materials such as oil, natural gas, and timber from regional countries.⁴⁸ The development of the Japanese economy has owed much to its profound involvement in Southeast Asian economic structures. Japan's GNP has increased from under one percent of the global total in 1955 to 15 percent in 1995.⁴⁹ Japan's GNP, one-third of Britain's and a mere one-twentieth of that of the US in 1951, was, by the early 1990s, about three times Britain's GNP and close to two-thirds of the American total.⁵⁰ This fast-growing energy need has increased

⁴⁵ Mike M. Mochizuki, "Japan and Strategic Quadrangle", in Michael Mandelbaum, ed., *The Strategic Quadrangle*, New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1995, p. 135.

⁴⁶ US Energy Information Administration, Japan, April 2001.

<http://www.eia.doe.gov/cmcu/cabs/japan2.html> (Internet Accessed, on 12 June 2001).

⁴⁷ Toshiyuki Shikata, "Japan's Response to the Situations in Areas Surrounding Japan", Paper Presented at the War Gaming Conference in Washington, D.C.: October 1997.

⁴⁸ Takashi Shiraishi, "Japan and Southeast Asia", in Peter J. Katzenstein and Takashi Shiraishi, eds., *Network Power*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997, p. 169.

⁴⁹ Kent E. Calder, *Asia's Deadly Triangle*, *op. cit.*, p. 84.

⁵⁰ Paul Kennedy, *Preparing for the Twenty-first Century*, London: Fontana Press, 1993, p. 142.

the importance of stable sea-lanes. There is no immediate threat to the Japanese shipping through the Southeast Asian SLOCs so far, but China's naval expansion in the Southeast Asian waters could pose a substantial challenge to the Japanese lifelines in the future.

7.2.2 Japan's Options to the Chinese Naval Challenge in the Region

After the Meiji Restoration movement in 1868, the Japanese navy grew rapidly through the purchase of warships from abroad and the dispatch of naval officers to European and American shipyards to study advanced technology for shipbuilding. In 1872, the Japanese Navy Department was established, and from 1873 to 1877 six wooden hulled warships were constructed at the Yokosuka shipyard.⁵¹ Captain Yamamoto Gomei, with the strong support of Naval Minister Saigo Tsugumichi, had greatly influenced the rise of Japan as a great naval power through his bold actions, such as the stripping of the navy's deadwood, battling the army for public attention and government budgetary support.⁵² The Japanese victory in the Sino-Japanese War of 1895 and in the Russo-Japanese war of 1905 was thus the turning point for East Asia's traditional power equation. After the wars, Japan emerged as a great sea power in East Asia. During the wars the Japanese navy was deployed close to battle areas five days before the war was declared – a naval attack preceding an actual declaration of war became the pattern for the onset of the Japanese attack, and this also applied to the Pearl Harbor attack.⁵³

Since the early 1990s, the Japanese security focus has shifted from the former Soviet Union and Russia to North Korea and China.⁵⁴ The Japanese government also announced on 9 December 2000 that it would construct two helicopter carriers, and import four air tankers and two Aegis destroyers (Japan currently has four helicopter

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² David C. Evans and Mark R. Peattie, *Kaigun*, Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1997, p. 21. Yamamoto Gomei was similar to Jackie Fisher, the great reformer of the British Navy, and he later became navy minister and served twice as prime minister of Japan (p. 21).

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

⁵⁴ Naotoshi Sakonjo, "Japan's Naval Strategy", in The Sejong Institute, ed., *Korea's Seapower and National Development in the Era of Globalisation*, *op. cit.*, pp. 189-90.

carriers and four Aegis destroyers).⁵⁵ It is not too difficult to imagine the potential conflicts between the two countries along the sea lines of communication (SLOCs) in the Southeast Asian seaways, particularly in the Straits of Malacca. During Indonesia's turmoil in 1998, Japan deployed two MSDF vessels to Singapore to prepare against potential interference with its SLOCs.⁵⁶ Considering the fact that 67 seafarers died in pirate raids in 1998, and the ever-growing Chinese naval expansion in the region's seas, the Japanese government is considering the construction of Kra Canal in Thailand. The Kra canal project is designed to link the Gulf of Thailand with the Andaman Sea. It is estimated that if the project was to be successful, sailing time required would be cut by three days, or 3,000 km, compared with the journey through the Straits of Malacca.⁵⁷ Although the Japanese government already funded a US\$6.12 million preliminary report on the Kra project, they believe that the costs and benefits of the project are unlikely to meet the objective of the canal because the overall cost could reach over US\$30 billion.⁵⁸ The Thai government also is very keen about the canal project, because if the canal were dug, its economy would benefit tremendously.

China's attempt to dominate the Southeast Asian waterways and Japan's will to defend its sea-lanes will eventually lead to a clash. As Paul Kennedy indicates, nuclear proliferation in Asia, China's emergence as a sea power, the instability of regimes suffering from ethnic and religious unrest, confrontations on the Korean Peninsula, or in the South China Sea - any of those would influence Japan's strategic vulnerability.⁵⁹ China's economic success and military modernisation, and its assertive position in the South China Sea have all raised apprehensions about its potential power game in East

⁵⁵ Lee Hui-jong, "Japan's Militarism Worries Neighbouring Countries (in Korean)", *The Donga Ilbo* (a Korean newspaper), 9 December 2000.

⁵⁶ Stratfor, "Japan Proposes to Patrol the Malacca Strait", *Global Intelligence Update*, 9 May 2000.

⁵⁷ Satya Sivaraman, "Thailand: Asia's Suez Canal Project Fires Recovery Hopes", *Inter Press Service*, 6 September 1999.

⁵⁸ "Japan Digs up Dream for Asian Suez Canal", *The Australian*, 10 June 1999.

⁵⁹ Paul Kennedy, *Preparing for the Twenty-first Century*, *op. cit.*, p. 160.

Asia.⁶⁰ The Chinese naval activities in the South China Sea in the 1990s and its military clashes with Vietnam and the Philippines over the Spratly Islands, in particular, have further fuelled Japanese anxieties over their energy shipping lanes. Moreover, Japan's response to China's naval power in the Western Pacific would, to a large extent, be dependent upon the US-Japan security alliance.

The US military presence in East Asia has been considered to be a core factor for the stability of the region. Many Asian states regard the Japan-US Security Treaty as a policy for containing China, as well as a leverage for Japan to shift toward a rapid remilitarisation.⁶¹ From Beijing's point of view, the US-Japan alliance contributed to the containment of Moscow during the Cold War, but now it targets China for its effort in reclaiming the island of Taiwan. As long as the US provides Japan with its national defence, the Chinese believe that Japan would not seek to build its armed forces sufficiently enough to defend itself, and its sea-lanes.⁶² However, if a significant reduction of US forces in Japan were to be made, or if the US-Japan Security Treaty were to abrogate in the future, Japan would eventually re-arm. In such a strategic environment, the military rivalry between China and Japan could intensify markedly.

China, Taiwan and Japan have overlapping claims to the Senkaku Islands (or in Chinese the Diaoyutai Islands), five coral islands about 90 nautical miles Northeast of Taiwan, which could provide any sovereign country with more than 11,700 square nautical miles of continental shelf with sizeable petroleum potential.⁶³ The sovereignty dispute between Japan and China over the Senkaku Islands involves 500-year-old claims to the territory, as well as more pragmatic reasons linked to future offshore oil

⁶⁰ Stuart Harris, "US-Japan Relations in the New Asia-Pacific Order", in Chan Heng Chee, ed., *The New Asia-Pacific Order*, Singapore: ISEAS, 1997, p. 174.

⁶¹ Donald W. Klein, "Japan and Europe in Chinese Foreign Relations", in Samuel S. Kim, ed., *China and the World*, Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1998, p. 148.

⁶² Richard Bernstein and Ross H. Munro, *The Coming Conflict with China*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997, p. 175.

⁶³ Mark J. Valencia, "Troubled Waters", *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, Vol. 53, No.1, (January/February 1997).

development.⁶⁴ In 1995, Japan revealed that China had been conducting oil exploration in the area around Senkaku Islands.⁶⁵

The Chinese have criticised Japan for placing the Diaoyutai Islands under the trusteeship of the US during the signing of the 1951 San Francisco Treaty; and have also criticised the US for handing over the islands back to Japan through the 1971 Okinawa Treaty.⁶⁶ In October 1995, Japan's Maritime Safety Agency (MSA) claimed that China had increased its ocean-bed surveying activity in the region around the Senkaku Islands. Japan had itself been surveying the area in preparation for its ratification of the UNCLOS in 1996.⁶⁷ The island dispute is a deep-rooted controversial issue, and continues to be a diplomatic concern between the two countries. This dispute, together with the South China Sea issue, will affect potential naval rivalry between the two countries.

Given its SLOC dependence on the South China Sea and the Malacca Straits, Japan could not ignore any disruption to the freedom of navigation along the waterways. Because of Japan's constitutional limitations, it is not likely to take a direct role in any conflict in the area, but if its ocean-shipping were to be intimidated through these sea-lanes, Tokyo would act according to the US-Japan Guidelines.⁶⁸ In the event of conflict in those waters, Japan could provide logistical or financial support (or both) to any US military operation in the region. In any case, Japan's military involvement in the troubled areas could inevitably lead to deterioration in the relationship between China and Japan.⁶⁹ If China's naval ambitions were to threaten Japan's economic lifelines, there could be three options for Japan against China's challenge: the first option is to maintain

⁶⁴ Daniel Dzurek, "The Senkaku/Diaoyu Island Dispute", *International Boundaries Research Unit*, (18 October 1996).

⁶⁵ June Teufel Dreyer, "China's Strategic View", *op. cit.*

⁶⁶ Russel C. M. Ong, "Japan and China", *East Asia An International Quarterly*, no 1/2 (Spring/Summer 1997), p. 52.

⁶⁷ East Asia Analytical Unit, *op. cit.*, p. 98.

⁶⁸ US-Japan Guidelines allow Japan Self-Defence Forces to give the US military greater logistic support and participate in search and rescue operations for the US military personnel in areas surrounding Japan.

⁶⁹ Ralph A. Cossa, *Security Implications of Conflict in the South China Sea*, University of Hawaii Pacific Forum CSIS, March 1998, p. C-9.

a close relationship with the US by allowing substantial American military presence on its soil and maintaining mutual security treaty; the second option is rearmament through the amendment of the Article 9 of Japan's Constitution; and the third option is to support peacekeeping forces in the conflicting area. As long as US forces are stationed in Japan, the second option will not be considered as a desirable solution. The first and third option would be deemed to be more reasonable choices at any time in the future.

The US commitment to the security of Japan has been one of the most important factors in Japan's political and economic stability. Japan's security strategy relates to the retention of the US-Japan Security Treaty, the promotion of economic independence to create a strong incentive for peace, and participation in security dialogue at all levels to build a cooperative security structure, especially in Asia.⁷⁰ It is hard to imagine how Japan's national defence would have been constituted without the assistance and commitment of the US. The US has been Japan's protector, sponsor, and for the most part, friend since WWII.⁷¹ Two elements in the relationship act as 'anchors': the Japanese Constitution (instituted in May 1947) and the 1952 peace treaty between the US and Japan. Of these, the former has predominated over the latter.⁷² When Japan regained its independence in 1952 from the seven-year rule of the US occupational force, it acted as a US protégé under the leadership of conservative Japanese politicians, who, formed the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP); the dominant political force in post-war Japanese politics.⁷³

It was the Korean War of 1950 that motivated Japan's first step to rearmament. Just after the outbreak of the war, most of the US occupational forces stationed in Japan were sent to the ROK. For internal security reasons, General MacArthur ordered the

⁷⁰ David Arase, "A Militarised Japan?", in Desmond Ball, eds., *The Transformation of Security in the Asia-Pacific Region*, London: Frank Cass and Co. Ltd., 1996, p. 88.

⁷¹ Warren S. Hunsberger, "Japan's International Role, Past, Present, and Prospective", in Warren S. Hunsberger, ed., *Japan's Quest*, London: M. E. Sharpe, 1997, p. 213.

⁷² P. W. Preston, *Pacific Asia in the Global System*, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

⁷³ Takashi Shiraiishi, "Japan and Southeast Asia", *op. cit.*, p. 175.

Japanese government to set up a 75,000-man 'national police reserve'.⁷⁴ This police reserve has been the backbone of contemporary Japan's Self Defence Force (SDF). Even after the establishment of the SDF, the US-Japan alliance has been a critical element in the defence of Japan. Bernstein and Munro point out that "Japan alone cannot handle China, a unified Korea, and its own sea-lanes - so for all reasons, Japan needs the US alliance".⁷⁵ However, the Japanese persist in the worry that the future of the current US-Japan security alliance will remain uncomfortably uncertain in the rapidly changing world situation. Therefore, Japan attempts to build up its navy as a blue-water force to prepare for unstable contingencies (notably, regional instability), including China's naval ambitions toward the Western Pacific and America's reduction of its force level in the Asia-Pacific.⁷⁶ Given its shipbuilding and overall defence industry capabilities, coupled with its national wealth, Japan could achieve its blue-water navy ambitions whenever the strategic environment requires it to.

The US-Japanese security alliance is challenged by the Okinawa issue. US forces in Okinawa have played a significant role in the US Western Pacific strategy since the end of World War II. Today, two-thirds of 47,000 US military personnel stationed in Japan and three-quarters of the total US military facilities based in Japan are in Okinawa.⁷⁷ With the outbreak of occasional crimes perpetrated by the US personnel on the island, the Japanese public continues to ask for the reduction of US bases on the island. In 1995, the rape of a young Okinawan schoolgirl by three American servicemen provoked public outrage. Furthermore, from 1972 to 1996, the US personnel in Japan committed about 4,850 crimes.⁷⁸ Since the 1995 rape incident, the US military presence in Okinawa has become a thorny issue between Japan and the US. To resolve the Okinawa issue, there is no option but to conduct the realignment, consolidation, and

⁷⁴ Warren S. Hunsberger and Richard B. Finn, "Japan's Historical Record", in Warren S. Hunsberger, ed., *Japan's Quest*, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

⁷⁵ Richard Bernstein and Ross H. Munro, *op. cit.*, p. 179.

⁷⁶ Kent E. Calder, *Asia's Deadly Triangle*, *op. cit.*, p. 141.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 122.

⁷⁸ Captain Kaisutoshi Kawano, "Japan's Military Role", *US Naval War College Review*, (Autumn 1999).

reduction of bases in Okinawa, and to do so within the framework of the mutual security treaty.⁷⁹

Japan's rearmament question has been a source of considerable contention. The issue seems to invoke, in some respects, an appearance of Japanese naval involvement in East and Southeast Asian waterways, potentially achieved through amendments to its constitution. The revision of the constitution would be one of the most sensitive issues for the Asian peoples because it could lead to Japan's eventual universal rearmament. Japanese emotion with regard to such an amendment of the constitution is also rising. Japanese leaders are deliberating the revision of their peace constitution for the strengthening of self-defence forces. Japan has gradually expanded its sphere of foreign policy and military intervention under the guise of peacekeeping or anti-terrorism.⁸⁰ In January 2000, the Japanese Parliament announced that it would begin a formal review of its constitution.⁸¹ According to the March 1997 *Yomiuri* poll, 45 percent of the respondents favoured the amendment of the constitution, while only 37 percent of the respondents did not desire amendments.⁸² When will the Japanese want to amend their constitution? The loosening of US commitment to Japanese security will be one of the most important factors in relation to this. Seyom Brown has indicated that there could be two considerations in Japan's rearmament: the Japanese fear of America's negligence in protecting their oil tankers all along the distance of the routes to and from their Persian Gulf suppliers; and China's military build-up as a front-ranking superpower.⁸³

Japan's position on nuclear weaponry is somewhat ambiguous; despite its denial of possessing nuclear weapons in accordance with its constitution, there are some indications that Japan would go to a nuclear option. Japan has a plutonium-producing

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ Stratfor, "Japan enlists Another Political Heavyweight", *Global Intelligence Update*, 10 October 2000.

⁸¹ Dayyoung Oh, "Japan's Move toward Militarisation (in Korean)," *The Joongang Ilbo* (a Korean newspaper), 18 August 2001.

⁸² Stratfor, "Japan Rising from Its Pacifism", *Global Intelligence Update*, 25 January 2000.

⁸³ Seyom Brown, *New Forces and Old Forces and the Future of World Politics*, Brandeis: Harper Collins College Publishers, 1995, p. 148.

facility at Rokkasho, which could be used as a plutonium-based energy program.⁸⁴ The Japanese military modernisation, together with its nuclear potential, worries the Asian people, who experienced harsh treatment at the hands of the Japanese during the war of aggression. Although Japan's defence spending is fixed at one percent of its GNP, in 2000, Japan's defence expenditure of US\$45.6 billion was the second largest in the world after the US of \$292.1 billion.⁸⁵

In response to profound concerns about the increasing presence of Chinese warships in Japan's territorial waters and the North Korean incursion into South Korean waters in 1999, Japan formed its first naval special-operations unit in order to improve maritime surveillance.⁸⁶ Despite the substantial enhancement of its MSDF, Japan has no capability at present to fully defend its shipping lanes by itself. In this context, to respond to increasing challenges from Chinese naval activities in Southeast Asian waters, Japan has to develop policy options, including participation in UN peacekeeping efforts and active involvement in the regional multinational maritime exercises. Japan has participated in a variety of PKO missions since 1992. Although Japan contributed US\$13 billion to the Gulf War, it had to nonetheless face international criticism because it failed to provide military personnel to the campaign. Internally, the new generation of assertive political leadership in the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) has demanded a reinterpretation of the constitution. Following intense debate, the Japanese Diet passed the UNPKO Cooperation Bill on 15 January 1992, which ended the ban on dispatching SDF troops abroad.⁸⁷ Japan's security policy has dramatically changed with the participation of UNPKO in Cambodia in 1992 - the first dispatch of its armed forces abroad since World War II.⁸⁸ Japan will continue to support UNPKO missions and to dispatch its SDF troops as long as it relates to its national interest, and will also

⁸⁴ David Arase, "A Militarised Japan?", *op. cit.*, p. 90.

⁸⁵ Military Balance 2000-2001, p. 25.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 183.

⁸⁷ Kenneth B. Pyle, "Japan's Emerging Strategy in Asia", *op. cit.*, p. 135.

⁸⁸ Charles W. Kegley, Jr. and Eugene R. Wittkopf, *World Politics*, 6th Ed., New York: Oxford University Press, 1996, pp. 410-11.

anticipate UN peacekeeping initiatives if its lifelines were to be intimidated by any external naval challenge, notably by China's navy.

Japan too has to take part in multinational naval exercises with the US and other nations in the Asia-Pacific region in order to preserve its economic lifelines along the Western Pacific and Indian Oceans. The August 1998 North Korea ballistic missile test was a direct cause of the Theatre Missile Defence (TMD) project (in which Japan has a part), but China's missile development program has been another stimulus for Japan to actively involve itself in the program. As Dawson points out, "The TMD would enable Japan to become a powerful deterrent or a bargaining chip in the future arms-reduction talks with China".⁸⁹ During the US war with the Taliban in Afghanistan, Japan dispatched its naval vessels to the Indian Ocean in November 2001, three ships for scouting sea-lanes, and three others for transporting supplies to and from Diego Garcia.⁹⁰ Recent MSDF's active participation in US war on terrorism, however, would become a concern towards the people of other Asian nations.

7.3 Korea and China

7.3.1 Korea's Maritime Interest in the Regional SLOCs

The ROK's maritime policy was first formulated after its independence in 1948. President Rhee Syng-man promulgated "The Presidential Proclamation of Sovereignty over the Adjacent Seas" on 18 January 1952, which was dubbed as the 'Peace Line' or the 'Rhee Line'.⁹¹ This proclamation maintained Korea's maritime policy until 1965, in which year the ROK and Japan established diplomatic relations. Thanks to its fast-growing economy, the ROK's maritime industry has also been developing at a significant pace. Given the ROK's geographical environment as a peninsular state and

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ Young-sik Hwang, "Japanese Naval Ships Sail to the Indian Ocean (in Korean)", *The Hankook Ilbo* (a Korean newspaper), 22 November 2001.

⁹¹ Hong Seoung-Yong, "A Framework for Emerging New Marine Policy", *Maritime Institute of Malaysia (MIMA)*, Issue Paper, 1995, p. 8.

the division of North and South Korea for more than half a century, most of South Korean exports have to be moved by sea. Korea's commercial fleet was ranked fourteenth in the world in 1993, accounting for 2.0 percent of the world's total tonnage.⁹² This geopolitical environment fostered the ROK to become a maritime nation. As a country of scarce natural resources, the ROK needs substantial energy imports from foreign countries for its fast-growing economy. The ROK is also important to the world energy market, since it is the fourth largest oil importer and the second largest importer of liquefied natural gas (LNG) in the world.⁹³ South Korea consumes 2.0 million barrels of oil per day making it the sixth largest oil consumer and fourth largest crude oil importer in the world.⁹⁴ Seoul's export-oriented trade policy has also increased the importance of the shipping lanes through the Southeast Asian seas and the Indian Ocean. Thus, the regional SLOCs are considered vital passageways for the Korean economy.

7.3.2 Korea's Option to the Chinese Naval Challenge in the Region

The sea lines of communication of the ROK almost overlap with those of Japan. However, the relationship between the ROK and China is quite different from the relations between Japan and China. China has on several occasions supported Korea's effort to repel outside aggressions, notably the Japanese attempts to invade Korea in the late-sixteenth and early-twentieth centuries. However, after the birth of the two Koreas in 1945, China unilaterally supported North Korea for ideological reasons until the normalisation of relations between Seoul and Beijing in 1992. There have also been some contentious issues between Korea and China. The China-North Korea border dispute along the Chonji Lake and the flow of refugees from North Korea into the northern China have been a matter of concern between the two countries.⁹⁵ In addition,

⁹² The Korea Development Bank, *Korean Industry in the World*, Seoul: 1994, p. 247.

⁹³ US Energy Information Administration, South Korea, September 2000
<http://www.cia.doe.gov/emcu/cabs/skorea/html> (Internet Access, on 6 December 2000)

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ Scott Snyder, "China-ROK Relations", in Ralph A. Cossa, ed., *Comparative Connections*, CSIS, Vol. 1, No.3, (January 2000), p. 55.

Seoul and Beijing have other minor challenging issues, which have not yet been resolved by both sides. Since the early 1990s, Seoul and Beijing have confronted each other over the question of the dividing line in the Yellow Sea. Kim Tae-ho indicates that:

With regard to the dividing line in the Yellow Sea, the Chinese side insists that the continental shelf should be the natural extension of its territory, whereas Seoul maintains that the median, which is recognised by many international organizations, including the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), should be the international boundary.⁹⁶

The Yellow Sea disagreement has triggered disputes, including Chinese fishing in the ROK's claimed waters and Seoul's oil exploration and drilling activities in the seas claimed by China.⁹⁷ In addition to China's challenge, North Korea's frequent intrusion into the ROK territorial waters has increased the ROK navy's readiness posture.

The importance of Korean naval forces is growing steadily. Due to its strategic environment, the ROK navy has been maintained at relatively low levels compared to other services, particularly its colossal army. North Korea's land border threat is still a major concern for the ROK defence strategy, but the importance of defending its territorial waters and EEZs is of significance. Moreover, with an increasing demand for the security of vital SLOCs, the Korean navy is now shifting from a sea denial mission to a blue water force.⁹⁸ As the world's 10th largest trading nation, South Korea is transporting 99 percent of its trade volume via the sea.⁹⁹ To cope with the potential sea challenge, the ROK navy believes that it has to build-up its capability and to expand cooperative naval diplomacy.¹⁰⁰ The army-dominated defence strategy will continue to be a core doctrine for the ROK as long as the threat from North Korea exists. However,

⁹⁶ Tae-ho Kim, "Korean Perspective on PLA Modernisation and the Future East Asian Security Environment", in Jonathan Pollack and Richard H. Yang, eds., *In China's Shadow*, Santa Monica: RAND, 1998, p. 54.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ Charles A. Meconis, "The Navy as a Tool of Diplomacy and Security", in The Sejong Institute, ed., *Korea's Seapower and National Development in the Era of Globalisation*, *op. cit.*, p. 112.

⁹⁹ Choon Kun Lee, "Korea's Maritime Strategy and National Development", in The Sejong Institute, ed., *Korea's Seapower and National Development in the Era of Globalisation*, *op. cit.*, p. 137.

¹⁰⁰ Seo-Hang Lee, "Naval Power as Instrument of Foreign Policy", in The Sejong Institute, ed., *Korea's Seapower and National Development in the Era of Globalisation*, *op. cit.*, p. 271.

through its export-oriented economy and the general trend of naval force modernisation in the Asia-Pacific region, South Korea's maritime interests and naval expansion would eventually be enhanced as a national survival strategy. As noted in its Defence White Paper, in the event of war, the ROK navy exercises control over the sea and the SLOCs to ensure the safety of maritime activities, preventing the enemy from exercising its own maritime operations, and carrying out surprise landing operations on the enemy's flanks and in the rear areas.¹⁰¹ Furthermore, in peacetime, the navy conducts such operations as the protection of its territorial seas, commercial shipping and ocean resources as well as fisheries. To meet its mission, the ROK navy has begun to improve its naval force capability through the domestic construction of destroyers and submarines. It is also enhancing its anti-submarine weapons (ASW) capability through the acquisition of eight German Type 209 submarines, eight Lockheed P-3C maritime patrol aircraft as well as 12 Super Lynx ASW helicopters from the UK.¹⁰²

South Korea has been pursuing a long-term naval expansion program toward a blue water naval capability since the early 1990s. The ROK naval force is in the midst of developing 10,000-ton cargo ships, and building 4,200-ton destroyers, submarines, and minesweepers.¹⁰³ As Kent E. Calder states, "Over the next decade the ROK plans to acquire up to 17 new destroyers, 20 frigates, 50 corvettes, and 68 fast patrol boats, with some possibility of a small aircraft carrier".¹⁰⁴ The ROK Navy has almost completed its naval modernisation by commissioning the eighth of nine *Chang Bogo* diesel submarines and the third and last Okapi destroyer.¹⁰⁵ The ROK Navy also enhances its combat capability by conducting various types of naval training and exercises such as anti-

¹⁰¹ Ministry of National Defence, "The ROK Defence White Paper 1999", Seoul: 1999
http://www.mnd.go.kr/mnden/sub_menu/w_book/1999.html (Internet Access: on 4 April 2000)

¹⁰² Sumihiko Kawamura, "Trilateral Cooperation for Assistance Projection", Tokyo: A Paper presented to 1998 Japan-Korea-US Trilateral Naval Cooperation Workshop, 14-15 May 1999.

¹⁰³ Ministry of National Defence, "The ROK Defence White Paper 1999, *op. cit.*

¹⁰⁴ Kent. E. Calder, *Asia's Deadly Triangle, op. cit.*, p. 148.

¹⁰⁵ Military Balance 2000-2001, p. 184.

submarine, anti-surface operation, as well as combined exercises with the US and other allies.

The ROK, as in the case of Japan, has had no substantial difficulties thus far with regard to its sea lines of communication along the Southeast Asian seaways and the Indian Ocean. The US has provided both the ROK and Japan with a nuclear umbrella, as well as navigational safety through seas around the region.¹⁰⁶ Will America continue to provide the protection of sea-lanes for its friends and allies in the Asia-Pacific region? For Korea and Japan, this question has strategic significance because their economic prosperity and national security are heavily dependent upon the role of the US. The ROK and the US have maintained close relations both militarily and economically for more than five decades. The mutual relationship has also played an important role in promoting the security and development of the ROK as well as expanding America's interests in East Asia. The ROK-US relationship represented America's unilateral support for South Korea in its initial stage, but now the relations reflect cooperative efforts between the two countries. The US had initially assumed overall responsibilities for maintaining security in East Asia as well as regional SLOCs, but it has since the early 1980s begun to apportion greater responsibility for regional security with its friends and allies.¹⁰⁷ As part of this tendency, the ROK has shared the base budget for the US Forces in Korea. According to the 1995 Special Measures Agreement, South Korea contributed US\$314 million to the US non-personnel costs in 1998.¹⁰⁸ According to a poll of Korean people, 16 percent of them prefer the total withdrawal of US forces in Korea, 42 percent of them prefer maintenance of the current level, while a further 42 percent of them expresses a desire for the down-sizing of US personnel.¹⁰⁹ The US believes that its security relationship with the ROK will retain its value and importance as a key

¹⁰⁶ Ministry of National Defence, "The ROK Defence White Paper 1999, *op. cit.*

¹⁰⁷ US Defence Technical Information Centre, "1997 Annual Defence Report".

¹⁰⁸ Lary M. Wortzel, "Issues 2000, Part I Asia, Chapter 18 Regional Strategies", *The Heritage Foundation*, 1999.

¹⁰⁹ The Donga Ilbo and Asahi Shimbun jointly conducted the poll on 4 December 2000.

component of a new post-Cold War security environment in East Asia, even after North Korea no longer poses a threat to the region.¹¹⁰

In addition to US assistance, the ROK has to secure its sea-lanes through close cooperation with Japan and ASEAN nations. Akihisa Nagashima elaborates that the maritime coalition between the ROK and Japan would be able to deal with China's rising sphere of influence in the region because the two countries' maritime interests are basically similar.¹¹¹ Both countries have also been seeking a series of moves to reconciliation. In 1998, a ROK-Japan Security Policy Committee Meeting was held for the first time since their diplomatic ties were established in 1965 and the Joint Declaration on the New ROK-Japan Partnership for the 21st Century between President Kim Dae-jung and Prime Minister Obuchi Keizo was declared.¹¹² As a follow-up action, a search and rescue exercise was conducted between the ROK navy and the Japanese Maritime Self-Defence Force in August 1999. In spite of these recent developments, the ROK-Japan security alliance has not been easily concluded, given their historic antagonism toward each other. If Korea were to have a security arrangement with Japan, China would have to confront triangular threats from the three countries' web of alliances, namely the ROK-US, the US-Japan, and the ROK-Japan ties. Any form of US-ROK-Japan trilateral alliance would inevitably provoke a combative Chinese response.¹¹³ The ROK-Japan alliance is perceived differently by each country: Japan's desire is to improve relations with the ROK because of uncertainties about China; while the ROK does not share the same level of unease about China's influence.¹¹⁴ Therefore,

¹¹⁰ Joseph S. Nye, Jr., Assistant Secretary of Defence, International Security Affairs, "A Statement before the House International Relations Committee", 27 June 1995, p. 8.

¹¹¹ Akihisa Nagashima, "Searching for A Korean-Japanese Strategic Partnership", A Paper Prepared for the 6th Korea-Japan Shuttle for Maritime Cooperation, Etajima, Japan, *The Okazaki Institute*, 13-17 June 1998.

<http://www.glocomnet.or.jp/okazaki-inst/korea-pro-jap/kj6paper.nagashima.html> (Internet Access: on 29 April 2000)

¹¹² "The ROK Defence White Paper 1999", *op. cit.*

¹¹³ Michael J. Green, *Japan-ROK Security Relations*, Stanford: Stanford University The Asia-Pacific Research Centre, March 1999, p. 7.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

it seems that any type of Seoul-Tokyo security alliance that irritates Beijing is undesirable.

Seoul has endeavoured with some energy to become involved in the ASEAN framework of regional cooperation. The relationship between the ROK and ASEAN has become closer since the late 1980s. The ASEAN-ROK relations were formalised in November 1989, following an exchange of letters between Foreign Ministers of the ROK and Indonesia. Since then, the ROK has participated in a series of consultative meetings with ASEAN, which includes the ARF, the Post Ministerial Conference (PMC), and the Joint Management Committee for the ASEAN-ROK Special Cooperation Fund.¹¹⁵ Bilateral trade between the ROK and ASEAN has also increased by 22 percent per annum since the early 1990s. As a result, by 1999 the ROK has emerged as the fourth largest trading partner of ASEAN, while ASEAN is the fifth largest trading partner of the ROK.¹¹⁶ Southeast Asian countries are very important for the ROK because the former are suppliers of the essential raw materials for the economy of the latter, and the sea-lanes of the region are vital for Korea's economy. It is expected that South Korea's foreign direct investment (FDI) in ASEAN nations will be increased continuously owing to the steady increase of wages and land prices in South Korea.¹¹⁷ The importance of regional shipping lanes is gradually increasing because South Korea's booming economy requires more mineral fuels from the Gulf States, and its products must pass through the regional SLOCs.

Any Chinese naval threat toward the sea lines of communication in the region will impede the sustained economic development of the ROK. The ROK, therefore, must develop measures to cope with China's naval challenge by preserving security ties with Washington and through active participation in multinational maritime exercises.

¹¹⁵ ASEAN Secretarial, "ASEAN-Republic of Korea Dialogue".
<http://www.aseansec.org/asc/r9900/ar99001.htm> (Internet Access: on 28 April 2000)

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ Yen Kyun Wang, "Overview of ASEAN-South Korea Economic Relations", in Daljit Singh and Reza Y. Sirengar, eds., *ASEAN and Korea*, Singapore: ISEAS, 1995, p. 20.

Through combined arms training and exercises, the ROK Armed Forces have been reinforcing their defence readiness. These combined exercises include Tandem Thrust Training (ROK-US-Australian Naval Combined Exercise conducted by the US 7th Fleet), and the RIMPAC Exercise. Additionally, it is desirable for the ROK and China to actively engage in regional security dialogue and to conduct joint maritime exercises and military exchanges, including training program in their respective institutions and port calls.

Chapter Eight

The United States: China's Strategic Competitor

8.1 History of the Sino-US Relationship

8.1.1 Overview

Sino-US relations began with commercial trade just after the birth of the United States of America. From 1784, when the first American ship, the *Empress of China*, arrived in Guangzhou, American merchants imported Chinese silk, cotton cloth, porcelain and tea, and sold them in the United States and Europe.¹ Unlike the European powers, the US was not itself involved in the partition of China, due to its foreign policy of non-involvement in China's political affairs and its limited naval power. However, in 1844, American President John Tyler sent Caleb Cushing to China as a commercial envoy, the latter signed the Treaty of Wanghsia, which then gave America the same trading rights as the British.² After the conclusion of this treaty, the US actively engaged in expanding its economic interest in China. The annexation of California and Oregon in 1848, and the purchase of Alaska in 1867 made the US a Pacific country.³ This historic expansion of the US territorial boundary toward the Pacific Ocean enabled the US Navy to engage in ambitious expeditions to the Spanish colony, the Philippines. Under the guise of rescuing colonies from Spanish misrule, at the end of the nineteenth century America waged a war with Spain, and seized Guam and the Philippines in the Pacific.⁴

Since its victory in the Spanish-American War in April 1898, the US had been able to be more assertive toward China. America's military involvement in China began

¹ Arnold Xiangze Jiang, *The United States and China*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988, p. 1.

² Michael Schaller, *The United States and China in the Twentieth Century*, 2nd Ed., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990, p. 14.

³ Stanley B. Weeks and Charles A. Meconis, *The Armed Forces of the USA in the Asia-Pacific Region*, St Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1999, p. 236.

⁴ Arnold Xiangze Jiang, *op. cit.*, p.18.

indirectly in 1899, when American Marines based in the Philippines landed as part of an international army at the port of Tienjin to suppress the Boxers.⁵ After the First World War, President Wilson agreed to Tokyo's demand for the temporary control of China's Shantung province.⁶ Wilson's policy incited Chinese intellectuals to protest against the US and its liberal democratic values in 1919.

The US policy toward China has since shifted from non-involvement to active engagement. The US signed a new Sino-American treaty on 11 January 1943. Soon after the conclusion of this treaty, the US was able to operate its bases, supply and transport services, radio networks, airlines, and army post offices in China, and this cooperation aided Washington's efforts in fighting the Japanese.⁷ From late 1943, the American leadership came to realise that the rivalry between the KMT and the CCP would jeopardise Washington's war effort and eventually elicit Russia's support for the Communists. Thus the US decided to strengthen the Nationalist government by providing Chiang Kai-shek with war materials and by encouraging him to reform his country.⁸ Due to Washington's support, China was able to participate in the 1943 Cairo Declaration with the US and Britain, which promised to return to China all territories lost to Japan. In June 1944 Vice-President Wallace visited Chiang Kai-shek in Chongqing, and persuaded him to forge a united front with the Communists to fight against Japan, while also requesting that an American military observer mission stay in Yen-an.⁹ At Yalta in February 1945, Roosevelt urged Stalin to support the Nationalist government, and as a result a Sino-Soviet (The Nationalists and the USSR) treaty was ratified on 14

⁵ Michael Schaller, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

Boxers Uprising (in Chinese I Ho Tan, meaning righteous fists) erupted in 1898-1900 as an anti-foreigner movement in China, but this movement was crushed by an international force of Britain, French, Russian, American, German, and Japanese troops. As a result of foreign intervention, China was compelled to pay an indemnity of US\$333 million, to amend commercial treaties to the advantage of the foreign nations, and to permit the stationing of foreign troops in Beijing (Infoplease Dictionary).

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

⁷ John King Fairbank, *The United States and China*, 3rd Ed., Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971, p. 305.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 306.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 307.

August 1945.¹⁰ The US had been eager to mediate the peaceful unification of the Nationalists and the Communists, but it failed to do so, and finally gave up its efforts. On 5 August 1949, the US State Department released *United States Relations with China, With Special Reference to the Period 1944-1949*, often referred to as the China White Paper, which announced an American plan to abandon the Nationalist government as nothing could be done to prevent a Communist victory.¹¹ On 5 January 1950, President Truman announced that the US had no intention of involving in the Chinese civil war by saying that:

The US has no predatory design on Formosa or any other Chinese territory. The US has no desire to obtain special rights or privileges or to establish military bases on Formosa at this time...The US government will not pursue a course, which will lead to involvement in the civil conflict in China. Similarly, the US government will provide military aid or advice to Chinese forces on Formosa. In the view of the US government, the resources on Formosa are adequate to enable them to obtain the items, which they might consider necessary for the defence of the Island.¹²

The US policy toward the PRC and Taiwan in early 1950 was ambiguous and in effect played a double game. As a result, Washington was threatened by the PRC with the expulsion of America's legation and citizens from mainland China; and the Taiwanese side, the United States suffered an air strike that partially destroyed the American-owned Shanghai Oil Company.¹³ This US ambiguity was closely connected with the British policy toward the PRC. London was anxious for the future of its economic interests in China, and therefore recognised Beijing in early January 1950. At the same time, the US was feuding with China over American hostages in Mukden (Shenyang).¹⁴ Following the Mukden incident, the complexion of the US-PRC relations

¹⁰ R. K. I. Quedsted, *Sino-Russian Relations*, Sydney: George Allen & Unwin, 1984, p. 108.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 80-81.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 113.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 116.

¹⁴ On 2 November 1948, Chinese Communist forces occupied Mukden (Shenyang), and guarded American consulate headquarters. On 18 November, the consulate's radio transmitter was seized, but Consul General Ward refused to surrender it. As a result all US citizens in the city were interned in their houses and the members of consulate staff were under house arrest. After more than a year negotiation with the PRC, on 10 December 1949, Americans and other foreigners in Mukden were able to depart the city. (*Ibid.*, pp. 58, 101).

was one of hostile competition rather than benign friendship. US intervention in the Chinese civil war in the mid-1940s was the first unpleasant encounter, but the major confrontation between the two countries began during the Korean War of 1950-53.

The Korean War had particular implications for the US as well as for China. At that time the US policy toward the PRC was not fully developed because Washington had been at a crossroads between Beijing and Taipei. The PRC, too, did not set up policy options toward the US because of the latter's lukewarm attitude towards Taipei. In the final stages of the Pacific War, the Soviet Union took the initiative in Northern China, and it occupied North Korea just after the surrender of the Japanese. This strategic environment encouraged the North Korean regime to launch a surprise attack upon South Korea. The Soviet-backed North Korean invasion eventually invited the American-backed United Nations Forces to defend the democratic government of South Korea. Fearing for its border security, the PRC intervened in the war, employing more than a million troops in the war, and subsequently became a member of the 1953 Korean armistice with the US. China's involvement in the Korean conflict led to Beijing aborting the incorporation of Taiwan, and induced the US to shift its Taiwan policy from that of non-intervention toward a firm commitment to defending the island.

After the Korean War, the US established a series of security treaties with its Asian allies, including the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) in September 1954 and defence alliances with Seoul in 1953 and with Taipei in December 1954. In the meantime, China grasped the initiative at the 1955 Bandung Conference, which was held in western Java and attended by leaders of twenty Asian and African states.¹⁵ Since Washington's defence alliance with Taipei in 1954, the former has supported the latter's military build-up, and strengthened the fortification in front of Quemoy (Jinmen).¹⁶

¹⁵ John K. Fairbank, *The United States and China*, *op. cit.*, p. 367.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 367-68.

Following the PLA's invasion of Tibet in 1950, the US assisted the Dalai Lama when he fled to northern India (following the revolt against Chinese rule of Khamba tribesmen in eastern Tibet in 1959).¹⁷ After the Sino-US rapprochement in 1971, America's financial support for the Dalai Lama ceased, but since the Tiananmen Massacre both the US Congress and American public have supported the Dalai Lama's effort to return to Tibet.¹⁸ The US has continued to support the Dalai Lama and his idea of the autonomy of Tibet under the Chinese government

To the South, Vietnam appeared as a serious issue between Washington and Beijing. At the end of the Pacific War, Ho Chi Minh requested America's support in securing independence for his country. However, the Truman administration declined Ho's request for American economic assistance and diplomatic support in the anti-colonial struggle in Vietnam.¹⁹ The US regarded Vietnam as part of France, and supported French efforts to restore Vietnam as a colony after the Japanese surrender.²⁰ Following the diplomatic recognition of Ho's government by China and the Soviet Union in January 1950, Washington established diplomatic ties with the puppet regime of Emperor Bao Dai in Saigon that had been established by the French in 1949.²¹ After the outbreak of the Korean War, the US intervened against the communist insurgency in Indochina on behalf of the French. By 1954 the US provided 78 percent of the costs of the French military operations and the latter sent over three hundred military advisers to South Vietnam for its struggle against the North.²² At the same time, China and the Soviet Union provided North Vietnam with economic and military assistance.

¹⁷ Michael Oksenberg, "Taiwan, Tibet, and Hong Kong in Sino-American Relations", in Ezra F. Vogel, ed., *Living with China*, New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1997, p. 81.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

¹⁹ William R. Keylor, *The Twentieth-Century World*, 3rd Ed., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996, p. 367.

²⁰ John King Fairbank, *The United States and China*, *op. cit.*, p. 418.

²¹ William R. Keylor, *op. cit.*, p. 367.

²² *Ibid.*

The administrations of President Kennedy and President Johnson became deeply involved in the Vietnamese civil conflict in an attempt to prevent the Indochina States from collapsing in the manner suggested by the then current 'domino theory'.²³ Although America dispatched more than half a million troops to the war, President Richard Nixon needed to find a peace plan to end America's military involvement in Indochina. Eventually, at Guam in July 1969, he announced the Nixon Doctrine, which meant the gradual withdrawal of American troops and a simultaneous strengthening of the South Vietnamese forces in order to encourage them to resume the defence of their country by themselves.²⁴

In July 1971 President Nixon announced his plan to visit to Beijing for the normalisation of relations between the two governments. He finally went to China in February 1972, and concluded a joint communiqué in Shanghai on 27 February. However, Beijing still demanded the total withdrawal of American military forces from Taiwan, while the US insisted that the dispute between the two Chinas could be resolved only by peaceful means. Following the exchange of liaison office in 1973, President Ford visited China in 1975.²⁵ In 1978 President Carter decided to establish diplomatic relations with China (beginning on 1 January 1979) in order to constrain Soviet expansionism in Asia and the Warsaw Pact build-up.²⁶ After normalisation the two countries signed the US-China trade agreement in 1979, and this economic linkage helped to set up most-favoured nation status, and boosted trade, investment, and business exchanges.

²³ *Ibid.* The idea of domino theory is that if one key nation in the region fell to control of communists, others would follow like toppling dominoes. This theory was used in the US and Australia to justify their involvement in Southeast Asia (particularly in the Vietnam War) and Central America (The Hutchinson Dictionary of World History).

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 374-75.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 380.

²⁶ A. James Gregor, *The China Connection*, Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1986, p. 89.

During the Cold War era, the US sold weapons and military technology to China to deter the Soviets expansionism. The ties were, however, suddenly torn after the 1989 Tiananmen Incident. Following the turmoil of the Soviet Union in the late 1980s, China also faced social unrest similar to that of the Soviet Union and Eastern European countries. In early June 1989, the Tiananmen protests brought approximately a million people onto Beijing streets, comprising workers, civil servants, journalists, private vendors, Catholic seminarists and even police trainees.²⁷ After the bloody suppression on the eve of June 4, 1989, the US, Japan and a number of European countries imposed economic sanctions on China. After the Tiananmen uprising, Deng Xiaoping asked Jiang Zemin and his colleagues to develop policy options to appease people and keep them satisfied, while quietly paying attention to the maintenance of the Party's dominant political role.²⁸ As a means of national reform, Deng Xiaoping began to single out attacking corruption and to open the economy more intensively. The party eventually disciplined hundreds of thousands of party members - starting with 74,000 in the first year after the Tiananmen protests.²⁹

Five years after the Tiananmen uprising, the US policy of constructive engagement was announced when the Secretary of Defence William Perry visited China in October 1994.³⁰ After his visit to Beijing, many high-ranking officers of both nations exchanged visits to each other's military institutions. Chinese Defence Minister Chi Haotian visited Washington in 1996, and the then-chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, General John Shalikashvili visited in Beijing in 1997. During the visit of Jiang Zemin to Washington in November 1997, the two countries agreed to expand military-to-military contacts in order to move toward a strategic partnership. In 1998, China and

²⁷ Susan L. Lawrence, "In Tiananmen Shadows", *FEER*, 27 May 1999, p. 10.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ Richard D. Fisher, Jr. "China's Arms Require Better US Military Ties with Taiwan" *The Heritage Foundation* Backgrounder no 1163, (11 March 1998), p. 2.

the US signed a Military Maritime Consultation Agreement; a consultation mechanism to strengthen military maritime safety.³¹ Despite Washington's public announcement of a constructive engagement policy, many Chinese strategists seem to view America as a potential aggressor.³² The Chinese leaders also regard Washington's enhanced security relationship with Japan and the selling of sophisticated weapons to Taiwan as important indications of the US containment policy.³³ The Chinese believe that the US containment policy has stemmed from the American objective of maintaining its hegemonic position in world politics.³⁴ However, as Wei Wang points out, US efforts in restraining China's emergence as a great power will eventually be frustrated because China is already too strong to contain.³⁵ Overt hegemonic rivalry between Beijing and Washington continues to be a major issue in the Asia-Pacific regional security framework.

8.1.2 The Taiwan Issue

The Taiwan question has become a key issue between China and the US since the beginning of the Cold War. On 25 January 1950, the Truman administration prepared a policy to abandon Taiwan, despite the effort of Nationalist supporters in US Congress, who were opposed to such a decision.³⁶ A week later, Secretary of State Dean Acheson, in a speech before the National Press Club, announced that America's Pacific defence perimeter included Japan, the Philippines and surrounding islands, but he did not mention Taiwan and South Korea.³⁷ His statement regarding the Pacific defence perimeter immediately resulted in a major debate over the importance of Taiwan to US interests in the Western Pacific. In the meantime, the Korean War broke out. Indications

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² Chu Shulong, "Bilateral and Regional Strategic and Security Relationship between China and the US after the Cold War", *CICIR*, vol. 10, no. 5, (May 2000), p. 11.

³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 3-10.

³⁴ Wei Wang, "How we should understand and face the world ?", *Liaowang*, No 50, (18 December 1995).

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ June M. Grasso, *Truman's Two-China Policy 1948-1950*, London: M. E. Sharpe, 1987, p. 126.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 127.

are that the North Korean leader Kim Il-sung was encouraged by Acheson's statement, and thus waged a surprise attack toward South Korea. At any rate, Pyongyang's invasion of Seoul in June 1950, saved Taiwan's government from the PRC's attempt to incorporate Taiwan. On 27 June 1950, President Truman reversed US policy toward Taiwan with the following statement:

The occupation of Taiwan by communist forces would be a direct threat to the security of the Pacific area and the US forces performing their lawful and necessary functions in the area. Accordingly I have ordered the Seventh Fleet to prevent any attack on Formosa. As a corollary of this action, I am calling upon the Chinese government on Formosa to cease all air and sea operations against the mainland.³⁸

Truman's initial policy had not meant the abandonment of Taiwan into the hands of the Communist, but rather it alluded to Washington's non-involvement in direct military means for the security of the Nationalist government. From January to June 1950, Washington continued its military and economic assistance to Taipei.³⁹ Washington and Taipei eventually established a security alliance in 1954 and America's military and economic support to the Taiwanese government continued. With the normalisation of Sino-US diplomatic ties in 1979, relations between the US and Taiwan were transformed into unofficial ones. Just after Washington formalised ties with Beijing, the US Congress passed the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA). The TRA's fundamental goals were to help maintain peace, security and stability in the Western Pacific by authorising the continuation of commercial, cultural and other types of relationship between the peoples of the US and Taiwan.⁴⁰ When the Reagan administration sold F-15 E/F aircraft to Taiwan in 1982, China strongly protested against

³⁸ Harry S. Truman, "Statement by the President on the Situation in Korea" 27 June 1950, quoted by David G. Muller, Jr., *op cit.*, p.17.

The US policy toward Korea and Taiwan was at that time "non interference". However, the Truman administration reversed its position to a firm commitment over Taiwan after the outbreak of the Korean War in the early 1950s.

³⁹ June M. Grasso, *op. cit.*, p. 137.

⁴⁰ Susan L. Shirk, Deputy Assistant Secretary for East Asia and Pacific Affairs, US Department of Defence, "The Taiwan Relations Act at Twenty", Testimony before the House International Committee, 14 April 1999. See also Tan Qingshan, *The Making of US China Policy*, London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1992, p. 25.

the arms deal. As a result, the two countries signed a joint communiqué on 17 August 1982 as follows:

The United States Government states that it does not seek to carry out a long-term policy of arms sales to Taiwan, that its arms sales to Taiwan will not exceed, either in qualitative or in quantitative terms, the level of those supplied in recent years since the establishment of diplomatic relations between the United States and China, and that it intends to reduce gradually its sales of arms to Taiwan, leading over a period of time to a final resolution.⁴¹

As indicated in the above statement, Washington's arms sales to Taiwan were a matter of flexibility. It did not mention the closing date of US-Taiwan arms deals. Following the communiqué, however, the US could sell arms to Taiwan as long as it felt that a threat existed for Taiwan from mainland China. More importantly, America could guarantee the security of Taiwan and its people by selling needed arms to the island. Beijing continuously argues that Taiwan is a province of China, thus Taiwan should accept the principle of the 'One China Policy' as a basis for negotiations in the reunification process.⁴² On the other hand, Taiwan has declined Beijing's assertion of 'One China Policy', instead it insists that Beijing should deal with Taiwan on an equal basis because China and Taiwan are virtually divided nations.⁴³ To lessen the tension regarding the arms sales, the Reagan administration decided to sell nuclear technology to China, and Congress passed a nuclear-related bill in December 1985.⁴⁴ The nuclear agreement enabled Washington to open China's nuclear market, and helped China to develop its nuclear program.

For economic and political reasons, since 1991 Beijing and Taipei have improved their relationship through various channels, including the opening of dialogue, bilateral

⁴¹ Committee on Foreign Affairs, the US Congress, 97th Congress, Second Session, "China: Taiwan: United States Policy", pp. 31-32, quoted by Tan Qingshan, *The Making of US-China Policy*, *op. cit.*, p. 87.

⁴² Department of Defence Report to Congress, "Pursuant to the FY 99 Appropriations Bill, The Security Situation in the Taiwan Strait", February 1999.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ Tan Qingshan, *op. cit.*, p. 115.

trade and personal exchanges between the two states.⁴⁵ This improved situation suddenly deteriorated on 21 July 1995 when the first of two PRC missile exercises commenced. In the subsequent five days, the 815th Missile Brigade of the Second Artillery Corps of the PLA test-fired six M-9 medium-range surface-to-surface ballistic missiles into the sea off the Taiwan Strait. In mid-August 1995 a second flurry of PLA missile tests ensued, with the firing of Exocet anti-ship missiles from navy destroyers in the East China Sea. In March 1996 the Second Artillery fired four more missiles, bracketing Taiwan's largest northern and southern ports with another massive sea exercise.⁴⁶ Washington quickly responded by dispatching two carrier battle groups, and helped Taiwan conduct a peaceful election (the initial courses of the PRC's sabre-rattling). The Taiwan question has since been one of the most sensitive diplomatic issues between China and the US. China argues that Taiwan should be incorporated into the mainland as soon as possible, while Taipei's position is to maintain the status quo (including its qualitative edge over Beijing in terms of defensive weapons and equipment).⁴⁷ Thus, the Taiwan Strait will continue to be a flashpoint in Asia for years to come, and the role of the US will remain as a significant factor in the cross-Strait relations.

Beijing has regularly reaffirmed its right to use force against Taiwan. PRC officials have identified several scenarios that would trigger military intervention. The best known of these is a declaration of independence by the Taipei government. In 1996, China's chief arms control negotiator, Sha Zukang, said the PRC's pledge of 'no first use of nuclear weapons' applies to foreign countries, but not to Taiwan.⁴⁸ A PRC spokesperson also said that "the Chinese will not fight the Chinese; the threat to use force is not directed at Taiwan compatriots but at foreign interventionist forces and

⁴⁵ Bernice Lee, "The Security Implications of the New Taiwan", *IJSS*, Adelphi Paper 331, (October 1999), p. 54.

⁴⁶ Edward Timperlake and William C. Triplett II, *Red Dragon Rising*, Washington D. C.: Regnery Publishing, Inc., 1999, P. 156.

⁴⁷ Bernice Lee, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

⁴⁸ Denny Roy, *China's Foreign Relations, op. cit.*, pp. 205.

Taiwan independent elements”.⁴⁹ The Chinese government thus claims that it seeks to achieve the unification of the country by peaceful means, but will use its forces if necessary.⁵⁰ China has three Army Corps that have been furnished with the latest weapons from Russia, and it intends to use these rapid reaction corps to attack Taiwan and to secure the South China Sea if it deems such action necessary.⁵¹ It is likely that China intends to use all necessary means, including military attack against Taiwan to achieve the unification of the island.

The US continues to upgrade its military dialogue with Taiwan to help sustain deterrence in the Taiwan Strait. However, China regards America’s arms sales to Taiwan as an intervention into the Chinese internal sovereign issue.⁵² In its 1998 Defence White Paper, China outlined its position on the Taiwan question:

Taiwan is an inseparable part of Chinese territory. It is a lofty mission and a common aspiration of all Chinese people, including the Taiwan compatriots, to put an end to the cleavage between the two sides of the Taiwan Straits and realise the reunification of the motherland. The Chinese government adheres to its stand for solving the issue of Taiwan according to the basic principle of “peaceful reunification, and one country, two systems,” and resolutely oppose any attempt, by words or deeds, to split the country by creating an “independent Taiwan”, “two Chinas”, or “one China, one Taiwan”.⁵³

Taiwan, on the other hand, has a “three no’s policy” towards the mainland: no contact, no negotiation, and no compromise with Beijing.⁵⁴ In 1991, Taiwan established the Strait Exchange Foundation (SEF), chaired by Koo Chenfu, a multi-millionaire and member of the Kuomintang Central Standing Committee. The PRC counterpart was the Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Strait (ARATS) headed by former Shanghai Mayor Wang Daohan. Wang and Koo met in Singapore in 1993, and ARATS’s

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 203-4.

⁵⁰ Information Office of the State Council of the People’s Republic of China, *China’s National Defence*, Beijing: January 1998, p. 9.

⁵¹ Vic Morrow, “China’s Arms Require Better US Military Ties with Taiwan”, *Time*, November 6, 1997.

⁵² *China’s National Defence*, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

⁵³ *Ibid.* p. 8.

⁵⁴ Denny Roy, *China’s Foreign Relations*, *op. cit.*, p.198.

Vice-Chairman Tang Shubei visited Taiwan in 1994. During their meeting, Beijing tried to persuade Taiwan to drop the “three no’s policy”, while Taipei expressed peaceful gestures and a gradual movement towards independence.⁵⁵ Cross-Strait relations were suspended in 1995 due to Beijing’s missile tests in the strait, but bilateral talks were resumed in October 1998. Business links between China and Taiwan have also intensified. By 1998, Taiwan invested more than US\$30 billion in China, which allowed about 30,000 Taiwanese firms to operate their businesses, and accommodated approximately 200,000 Taiwanese business people on mainland China.⁵⁶ However, both dialogue frameworks have shown little marked progress so far.

On 1 February 2000, the US House of Representatives passed a bill, the so-called ‘Taiwan Security Enhancement Act (TSEA)’. The PRC government expressed its strong indignation and objection to the bill, accusing it as being dangerous, not only infringing China’s sovereignty but also undermining relations between the US and China.⁵⁷ After the TSEA bill, China issued its White Paper, ‘*The One China Principle and the Taiwan Issue*’ on 21 February 2000. The paper argued that if Taiwan intends to become independent, or if any foreign power tries to invade and occupy it, or if it refuses peaceful dialogue for resolving the cross-strait unification problem, then China is ready to use force to safeguard China’s sovereignty and territorial integrity.⁵⁸ The paper was aimed at preventing Taipei from any declaration of its independence during Taiwan’s presidential election scheduled for 18 March 2000, and at blocking Washington-Taipei military cooperation on strategic arms sales.⁵⁹ On the same day, Assistant Secretary of State Stanley Roth stated that the threat of the use of force to resolve the Taiwan

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ Susan L. Shirk, “The Taiwan Relations Act at Twenty”, *op. cit.*

⁵⁷ Lu Qichang and Zhang Yanyu, “Taiwan Security Enhancement Act is a Dangerous Political Bill”, *CICIR*, vol. 10, no. 4, (April 2000), p. 22.

⁵⁸ The US Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, “China/Taiwan: Evolution of the One China Policy”, (12 March 2001), p. 43.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

question is contrary to the commitments of the US to Taiwan, and he also reiterated his government's policy of three principles of 'peaceful resolution, cross-dialogue, and one China'.⁶⁰

The Taiwan question is a very complicated one: for the US, defending it from China's invasion is a matter of commitment between Washington's government and the people of Taiwan; for China, unification of the island is a matter of sovereignty under the terms of its 'One China Policy'. The scope of self-defence weapons and equipment has been a controversial issue between Beijing and Washington. Despite the harsh protest of the PRC, the US continues to support Taipei's effort to enhance its military posture. In April 2001, the Bush administration decided to supply Taipei with advanced weapons, including eight conventional submarines, four Kidd-class destroyers and 12 submarine-hunting P-3 Orion aircraft.⁶¹ It is also reported that a joint US-Taiwan signal-intelligence centre in central Taiwan has been significantly upgraded.⁶² On the other hand, China recently conducted an exercise, 'Liberation One', on and near China's Dongshan Island, off the coast of Fujian Province. This exercise began in May 2001 and involved more than 100,000 troops along with Su-27 and Su-30 fighters, Kilo-class submarines and Sovremenny-class destroyers.⁶³ The exercises undoubtedly aimed at simulating attacks on Taiwan.

There is a gulf between China's plan to unify the island as soon as possible, and Taiwan's intention to maintain its government as a separate country. This difference has mainly arisen out of the different approaches and viewpoints of the Beijing-Taipei, and their administrations' attitude towards unification. However, Chinese peoples' desire for the unification of their county will become an important factor for the future unification of China. There is a possibility that the PRC may yet menace the people of Taiwan by

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

⁶¹ David Lag, "US-Taiwan Relations US Holds Tighter to Taiwan's Hand", *FEER*, August 30 2001

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ *Ibid.*

employing the firing of more missiles into the sea off the island state, or on to uninhabited mountainous territory. The purpose of China's demonstration would be to pressure the Taiwanese government to respond to the mainland's peaceful unification proposal. Other means of unification, such as the blockade of the island, the invasion of the island by use of force, or bilateral unification dialogue between the two sides, seems unrealistic in the near future. The example of successful governance of "one-country two-systems" in Hong Kong's case, and China's sustained economic development and military modernisation in the current decade will be an important touchstone for China in negotiating the re-incorporation of Taiwan. At any rate, the Taiwan question will continue to be one of the most significant Sino-US diplomatic issues in this time.

8.2 The United States and the Asia-Pacific Regional Countries

8.2.1 US Relations with Regional Countries

At the end of the nineteenth century, the US had established itself as a Pacific power by annexing the Hawaiian Islands in 1898 and the Philippine Islands in 1899. Since then, the Asia-Pacific region has emerged as one of the most important areas for US foreign policy. With its involvement in the Asian political arena, the US has fought three major wars in Asia, with Japan in the Pacific War, with North Korea and China in the Korean Conflict, and with North Vietnam in the Vietnam War. The US casualties in the half century since 1945 - more than a half million were wounded and more than 192,000 died in the Pacific - demonstrated how seriously America perceived the region of the region in the furtherance of its own national interests.⁶⁴ Consistent with the US global security strategy, US engagement in Asia provides stability of the US and regional

⁶⁴ Richard C. Macke, Commander, US Pacific Commander, "US Security Interest in Asia", A Statement to the US House of Representatives, 27 June 1995, p. 18. See also Stanley B. Weeks and Charles A. Meconis, *The Armed Forces of the USA in the Asia-Pacific Region*, *op. cit.*, pp. 23-37.

The casualties of 192,000 include 90,000 in the Pacific War, 34,000 in the Korean Conflict, and 57,000 in the Vietnam War.

countries, and allows the US to conduct approximately US\$520 billion of trans-Pacific trade annually, thereby providing with twice the amount of trade it carried out with Europe.⁶⁵

The major security relationship between the US and Asia-Pacific nations began just after the eruption of the Korean War on 25 June 1950, which the Soviet-backed North Korean communist regime waged a war against South Korea. After the Korean War, to cope with a Communist enlargement strategy, the 'San Francisco System' was initiated in September 1951, through which the US signed a number of treaties (all signed in San Francisco) with Asia-Pacific countries: the Mutual Security Treaty with Japan; the Mutual Defence Treaty with the Philippines; and the Australia-New Zealand-US (ANZUS) accord.⁶⁶ A similar US alliance was further expanded to countries such as the ROK in 1953, Taiwan in 1954, and Thailand in 1962. This security framework has since played a significant role as an anti-Communist block.

East Asian countries have recently emerged as global trade and investment giants. Even though many Asian countries experienced a financial crisis in the late 1990s, the Asia-Pacific region continues to be an important part of the global economy. To achieve a mutually beneficial relationship, the US and the Asia-Pacific countries have been important partners for both economic and security reasons.⁶⁷ The Asia-Pacific region is very significant not only for the American economy, but also for the US security strategy in its global context. The US Department of Defence notes that the US has to prevent regional powers from posing a direct military threat to the US and its allies, and to enhance its economic prosperity by guaranteeing American access to the dynamic economies of the region.⁶⁸ Ellings and Simon also indicate that Southeast Asia

⁶⁵ Heritage Foundation, "Issue 2000", Chapter 18 Regional Strategy: Part I Asia.
<http://www.heritage.org/issues/chap18> (Internet Accessed: 23 May 2000).

⁶⁶ Douglas T. Stuart and William T. Tow, "A US Strategy for the Asia-Pacific", Adelphi Paper 299, *IJSS*, pp. 4-5.

⁶⁷ Heritage Foundation, "Issues 2000", *op. cit.*

⁶⁸ Douglas T. Stuart and William T. Tow, "A US Strategy for the Asia-Pacific", *op. cit.*, p.6.

has been an indispensable market and supplier for the US economy, a potential arena for global instability; and a strategic transit area for suppliers of Middle Eastern oil.⁶⁹ The economies of Asian nations require substantial oil mainly from the Persian Gulf. As a result, promoting stability in the Gulf, maintaining freedom of the seas, protecting sea lines of communication, and other efforts to safeguard energy supplies have become a great concern for the US and Asia-Pacific nations.⁷⁰ Any disruption on the sea lines of communication (SLOCs) in Southeast Asia would likely interfere with the world trade and the US force projection. Such impediments to global transportation through key chokepoints could delay the response of the US power projection in a crisis and even interfere with its carrying out of timely operations.⁷¹ In this context, free passage along the SLOCs in Southeast Asia is essential to the US short and long-term security and economic interests.⁷²

The Asia-Pacific region also shows a number of problematic constraints, and continues to remain a relatively turbulent area. Most countries in the region have to face numerous sources of conflict, including unexpected leadership changes, unresolved territorial disputes, competitive claims to sovereignty, and an ever-growing arms race.⁷³ Despite the above complex situations, the region continues to remain a core of US national interests with respect to the nexus of security and economic linkages. According to the "Joint Vision 2010", Americans pursue such policies as protecting the rights of transit on the high seas, and enlarging the community of free market democracies to ensure close relations with its allies in the years ahead.⁷⁴ The US has been maintaining

⁶⁹ Richard J. Ellings and Sheldon W. Simon, eds., *Southeast Asian Security in the New Millennium*, London: M.E. Sharpe, 1996, p. 6.

⁷⁰ US Department of Defence, "The US Security Strategy for the East Asia-Pacific Region", *op. cit.*

⁷¹ Reynolds B. Peele, "The Importance of Maritime Chokepoints", *Parameters*, (Summer 1997), pp. 61-74.

⁷² A. James Gregor, "Qualified Engagement US China Policy and Security Concerns", *US Naval War College Review*, vol. L11, no 2, (Spring 1999).

⁷³ Ashley J. Tellis et al., "Sources of Conflict in Asia", in Zalmay Khalilzad and Ian O. Lesser, eds., *Sources of Conflict in the 21st Century*, Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1998, pp. 64-69.

⁷⁴ Office of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, "Joint Vision 2010 America's Military: Preparing for Tomorrow", Washington, D.C., 1997, p. 3.

substantial military presence around the world for the interests of the US and its allies. US military presence in the Asia-Pacific region also provides the US with the credibility by being able to rapidly project its forces into areas of international tensions, and to preserve peace and stability in international waters.⁷⁵ The US Pacific Command is responsible for the security and interests of America in the Asia-Pacific region. The area of responsibility of this command not only encompasses a great deal of territory (roughly half the globe), but also numerous countries with different interests and diverse security requirements.⁷⁶ The region is made up of 43 countries and 10 US territories, six of the world's largest militaries, and nearly 60 percent of the world's population.⁷⁷ Furthermore, 35 percent of the US two-way trade passes in this area, amounting to more than US\$548 billion in 1998. Most Asian countries have experienced remarkable economic growth during the past several decades because of their export-oriented economic policies and comparatively stable regional environment. This secure environment owes much to the direct result of decades-long US commitment to the Asia Pacific nations through forward deployed military forces, which have been the linchpin for protecting the important interests of the US and other regional countries.⁷⁸

Through their overseas presence and peacetime engagement, such as defence cooperation, security assistance, and training and exercises with friendly nations, the US armed forces claims that it helps deter aggression and coercion, prevent and reduce conflicts, and promote stability and democracy.⁷⁹ Through 2000, the US Pacific Command participated in more than 1,500 combined exercises and other activities with foreign military forces, including *Tandem Thrust* with Australia, *Cobra Gold* with

⁷⁵ 1998 Year of the Ocean, "The Ocean and the National Security", 1998.

http://yoto98.noaa.gov/yoto/meeting/nat_sec_316.html (Internet Accessed: 24 July 2000).

⁷⁶ Admiral Archie Clemens, Commander in Chief, US PACOM, "An Address to Armed Forces Week Luncheon", Colorado Springs, 10 May 1999.

⁷⁷ US Pacific Command, "US PACOM Facts", 2001

<http://www.pacom.mil/about/pacom.htm> (Internet Accessed, on 12 June 2001)

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ The White House, "A National Security Strategy for A New Century", October, 1998

Thailand, *Balikitan* with the Philippines, *Keen Sword* with Japan, and *Rim of Pacific (RIMPAC)* with Canada, Australia, the ROK, Japan, Chile and the United Kingdom.⁸⁰ Maintaining a substantial overseas presence not only promotes bilateral relations between the US and regional countries but also prevents the emergence of a hostile regime.

However, from Beijing's point of view, US forces in the Pacific theatre did not resolve regional conflicts. Chu Shulong argues that although the US advocates that its military presence has contributed to easing tensions and resolving regional conflicts in the Asia-Pacific region, China denies the validity of such logic by saying that the Vietnam War, the Cambodian War and the internal turmoil of some Southeast Asian countries all occurred during Washington's intimate involvement in the region.⁸¹ He further points out that Washington's hegemonism in the region, the continuation of Cold-War thinking, the enhancement of the US-Japan security alliance, and the interference in other sovereign nations' internal affairs by the US have clearly jeopardised the security and prosperity of the Asia-Pacific region.⁸² The different perception exhibited by China and the US remains as a source of conflict. Adjusting to the growth of Chinese power within Asia and in the wider global community is one of the most important foreign-policy issues facing the US in the Asia-Pacific in the years to come.⁸³ The US will be called on to work with some key regional states to resolve this uncertainty in the future. At any rate, the US military presence should be preserved for the peace and prosperity of the Asian people as well as for the US national interest in the region.

Korea and Japan

⁸⁰ US Pacific Command, "US PACOM Facts", 2001. <http://www.pacom.mil/about/pacom.htm> (Internet Accessed, on 12 June 2001).

⁸¹ Chu Shulong, "Bilateral and Regional Strategic and Security Relationship between China and the US after the Cold War", *CICIR*, vol. 10, no. 5 (May 2000), P. 5.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 1.

⁸³ US Department of Defence, "A Strategic Framework for Asia-Pacific Rim", 1992.

Although the US established diplomatic relations with Korea through the effort of Commodore Shufeldt's gunboat diplomacy in 1882, genuine relations between the US and the Republic of Korea stemmed from the US forces' occupation of South Korea in order to disarm the Japanese army in 1945. As post-war US policy in Asia focused on Japan and China, the US forces withdrew from South Korea in 1949 despite the fact that the Soviet-backed North Korean regime had been a significant threat to the security of South Korea.⁸⁴ After Dean Acheson's (then US Secretary of the State) statement of excluding Korea from the US Pacific defence perimeter, North Korea launched a surprise attack on South Korea, on the assumption that the US would not intervene immediately in case of a civil war in Korea. Pyongyang's expectation of America's non-involvement proved to be a miscalculation, as Washington immediately responded to the Korean conflict. Since then, Washington and Seoul has become a true ally for the mutual benefits and prosperity through military, economic and social cooperation.

Only two years after the 1868 Meiji Restoration, Japan established a modern military based on the European model, a new army after the French model, and a new navy after the British model.⁸⁵ After its victory in the 1895 Sino-Japanese War, Japan was known to the world as a great naval power. In 1931, Colonel Ishihara Kanji, in his speech to the research section of the Kwantung Army, argued that the next war would be mankind's last great world war; and following this war either America would be become the leader of Western civilisation, or Japan would become the leader of Eastern civilisation.⁸⁶ He had already forecast the fatal war between Japan and the US. After the Pacific War America has undoubtedly become the world leader. Conversely, Japan was humiliated and ruled by the US occupational forces. In the contemporary world,

⁸⁴ Edward A. Olsen, *US Policy and the Two Koreas*, London: Westview Press, 1988, p. 4.

⁸⁵ Nobutaka Ike, "War and Modernisation" in Robert E. Ward, ed., *Political Development in Modern Japan*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968, p. 190.

⁸⁶ William L. Neumann, *America Encounters Japan*, Baltimore: 1963, pp. 161-62, quoted by Nobutaka Ike, *op. cit.*, p. 206.

however, Japan has become America's biggest trading partner, and the bulwark of the US Western Pacific strategy. For more than half a century, about 87,000 US troops based in South Korea and Japan have provided a security shield for regional countries.

Due to its defence budget constraints, the US has sought allied cooperation for the maintenance cost of its overseas military presence. Beginning with the FY 1997 Defence Authorisation Act, US Congress has stipulated that allies should share the responsibility for achieving mutual security objectives.⁸⁷ The US forces in the ROK and Japan have played a vital role in contributing to the peace and stability of the two nations as well as the region as a whole. Admitting the scale of the US contribution to their national security, both Korea and Japan agreed to bear the burden of cost sharing for the US forces on their soil. Japan's cost sharing for the US forces in 1997 reached US\$3.7 billion, which covered 75 percent of US basing costs, while the ROK contributed US\$736 million for the US forces in the same year (See Table 8.1).⁸⁸ The Republic of Korea and Japan provided the US with a larger amount of sharing costs than NATO nations did, representing the fact that the US has been operating its forces in East Asia with a smaller budget.

Table 8.1 Cost Sharing for the US Forces in the Regions in 1997

Countries/ Region	US Personnel Stationed	Direct Support (US\$ million)	Indirect Support (US\$ million)	Total Cost (US\$ million)
NATO	93,902	22	2,612	2,634
Japan	47,000	2,944	781	3,725
ROK	35,663	350	385	736
Pacific Total	82,663	3,294	1,167	4,461
Grand Total	180,751	3,407	3,943	7,350

Source: US DOD, Report on Allied Contributions to the Common Defence, *op. cit.*

In its 1997 Department of Defence (DOD) Annual Report, the US confirmed that the US forces should be forward-deployed or stationed in key overseas regions on a peacetime basis, in order to prevent aggression, demonstrate US commitment to

⁸⁷ US Department of Defence, "Report on Allied Contributions to the Common Defence", A Report to the US Congress by the Secretary of Defence, March 1999.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

allies and friends, gain familiarity with overseas operating environments, conduct joint training with friendly forces, and provide initial capabilities for a timely responses to any crisis.⁸⁹ The US leaders seem content to maintain the current force level in the region around Korea and Japan for as long as they want an American military presence there. However, the American leadership has, as discussed in an earlier chapter, encountered the Okinawans' harsh protest to withdraw the US forces from the island since 1995. Okinawa is believed to be a linchpin of American military presence in the East Asia-Pacific region because the island is strategically located astride East China Sea marine lanes, half an hour flight by F-16 fighters from Taiwan, and less than an hour's flight by Chinese aircraft from Shanghai.⁹⁰ Nevertheless the possibility of the total withdrawal of US forces from Okinawa is slight, rather the reduction of the US military presence in Okinawa being the more likely outcome. Any diminution of American forces in the ROK or Japan could jeopardise the security equation in the region and increase China's challenge toward East Asia.

Southeast Asia Nations

The Southeast Asian region is another important US strategic interest area. Consistent effort between the US and Southeast Asian nations, such as port access agreements, military training and education programs, and other bilateral security-related frameworks has reaffirmed Southeast Asia's increasing importance as a regional partner for enhancing security.⁹¹ After the withdrawal of US forces from the bases in the Philippines in the early 1990s, most of the ASEAN nations' leaders have been concerned about the future of regional stability, even though many countries had existing military ties with the US. The US has formal security relations with Thailand and the Philippines

⁸⁹ US Defence Technical Information Centre, "2000 Annual Report", 2000.

⁹⁰ Kent E. Calder, *Pacific Defence*, New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1996, p. 93.

⁹¹ Douglas T. Stuart and William T. Tow, *A US Strategy for the Asia-Pacific*, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

and exchanged a memorandum of understanding with Singapore in 1990. The US has conducted port calls in Malaysia and Brunei, and has maintained a Maritime Search and Rescue Agreement with Indonesia since 1988.⁹² ASEAN nations tend to regard the American military presence as critical to their overall sense of security; even Malaysia and Indonesia have publicly called for American troops to continue to be deployed in the region.⁹³

However, there has also been some friction between America and the ASEAN nations. Thailand, for instance, turned down an American request to establish an emergency offshore supply depot in one of its ports, because of the fear that any close military relation between Washington and Bangkok might give offence to the Chinese.⁹⁴ Since the late 1990s, the US government has negotiated with such ASEAN nations as Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia to agree to a US military presence, but no confirmation of these requests had been heard from those countries so far. Vietnam was one of a few countries in Southeast Asia, which closely cooperated with the Soviet Union during the Cold-War era. But with its former ally's support at an end, Vietnam has been extremely concerned about a Chinese challenge. Vietnam may be presumed to be China's primary adversary among the ASEAN nations because of their historic animosities, including the 1979 border conflict. Richard Hull has pointed out that after the Chinese occupation of Mischief Reef in 1995, Vietnam carefully considered allowing the US Navy to use its naval facilities at Cam Ranh Bay.⁹⁵ There is a possibility that if Vietnam were to face imminent threat from Chinese provocation on its border (or on the disputed islands in the South China Sea), it might request America's support, and would eventually invite a US military presence on its soil. The continued strengthening of the

⁹² Jeffrey D. Young, *US Military Interaction with the Southeast Asian Countries*, Report for the US Congress, 27 February, 1992.

⁹³ Michael Yahuda, *International Politics of the Asia-Pacific, 1945-1995*, New York: Routledge, 1996, p.260

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 144.

⁹⁵ Richard E. Hull, "The South China Sea", *Strategic Forum*, no. 60, (February 1996), p. 4.

US security dialogue and confidence-building measures with the members of ASEAN through ARF is one of the many ways in which the US is working to enhance political, military and economic ties with friends and allies in Southeast Asia.⁹⁶

Australia

Geographically, Australia is located between the Pacific and the Indian Oceans. Thus, Australia's national interests are naturally diverse. Australia is fundamentally a maritime nation; it therefore depends heavily upon sea-lanes for international trade. For example, iron ore, comprising well over fifty percent of Australia's exports, passes through the South China Sea.⁹⁷ China's naval challenge towards the South Pacific is at present not imminent. However, the confrontation between the navies of China and Australia may well emerge in the Taiwan Strait and the South China Sea, which Australia regards as important waterways for their commercial shipping and naval activities. During a tense standoff between Beijing and Washington over the US spy plane incident, Beijing accused three Australian naval vessels of breaching China's 12-nautical-mile territorial zone while they were sailing through the Taiwan Strait in April 2001.⁹⁸ Although the Australian government responded by saying that the Australian vessels were conducting their voyages quite properly in accordance with international law, this incident signalled the two countries' potential naval rivalry. Australian navy is trying to enhance its capability to counter any potential challenge in the region. According to its 2000 Defence Review, Australia, as a maritime nation, should be ready to block any hostile air and sea invaders in order to defend its island continent.⁹⁹ For such a mission, the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) is upgrading its assets through the

⁹⁶ William S. Cohen, "Annual Report to the President and the Congress", 1999, p. 12.

⁹⁷ Archie R. Clemens, "Sea Power in the Era of Globalisation", in The Sejong Institute, ed., *Korea's Seapower and National Development in the Era of Globalisation*, *op. cit.*, p. xix.

⁹⁸ Amit Baruah, "Australian warships confront Chinese Navy", *The Hindu* (an Indian newspaper), 30 April 2001.

⁹⁹ Australian Department of Defence, "Defence Review 2000: A Public Discussion Paper", June 2000, p. viii.

acquisition of sophisticated weapons, and the development of training and doctrine. The RAN operated nine major warships at the end of 2000, but by 2005 it will possess a fleet of 14 warships.¹⁰⁰

Australia already has strategic alliance with Britain and the US. Australia's security policy had worked in accordance with the British Asian policy framework until the mid-1960s. Accordingly, Australian forces took part in a number of operations at the request of the British, including World War I, the Korean War, the Pacific War, the operation against communist insurgency in Malaysia during 1958-60, and helped to defend Malaysia from Indonesia's confrontation during 1963-65.¹⁰¹ During World War II, the US established a number of naval bases around Australia, and both countries have shared many common interests in the Western Pacific region.¹⁰² Australian sailors and airmen have been participating in every RIMPAC exercise with the US.

In the course of the Vietnam War, Australia joined in a multilateral security establishment, the FPDA (Five Power Defence Arrangements), which is composed of the United Kingdom (UK), Australia, New Zealand (NZ), Malaysia and Singapore. This agreement was formed in 1971, as a cooperative defence body that obliges Australia, NZ and the UK to consult with Malaysia and Singapore in the event of an attack on the latter two.¹⁰³ In the 1990s, Australia was actively involved in regional institutions such as ARF and APEC. The APEC concept, in particular, was proposed by former Australian Prime Minister Bob Hawke, at a meeting (in Seoul, in January 1989) of representatives from twelve major trading states in the Asia-Pacific region – the then six ASEAN members, plus Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea and the US. Australia also supported the ARF's process by reinforcing the linkages between the US

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

¹⁰¹ Bernie Bishop and Deboah McNamara, *The Asia-Australian Survey 1997-98*, South Melbourne: Macmillan, 1997, p. 329.

¹⁰² Tom Frame, *Pacific Partners: A History of Australia-American Naval Relations*, Sydney: Hodder and Stoughton, 1992, p.166.

¹⁰³ Bernie Bishop and Deborah McNamara, *op. cit.*, p. 560.

and East Asia, engaging China as a constructive participant, and encouraging Japan to become a more positive player on regional security issues.¹⁰⁴ APEC and ARF were considered amongst the most important diplomatic successes of the Hawke and Keating governments, helping Australia become enmeshed within the Asia-Pacific region.¹⁰⁵

Despite Australia's favourable role in the Asia-Pacific region, there are somewhat controversial issues that affect Australia's relations with its neighbouring countries. Malaysia and Indonesia have expressed unease towards Australia on some issues. When the British government decided to relocate its surveillance facilities from Hong Kong to Shoal Bay near Darwin in 1997, the Malaysian authorities expressed their displeasure with such a decision.¹⁰⁶ The most striking event between Australia and Indonesia erupted in 1999, when the Australian government announced its preparedness to take a leading role in the UN peacekeeping operations in East Timor. An intelligence news update analysed the Australian initiative as "A strategic doctrine, dubbed as Howard Doctrine that would have Australia not only adopt a more active role in Asian security matters, but do so as a deputy to the US and a broader agenda of Western-oriented interests".¹⁰⁷ Australia's active involvement in East Timor represents a shift in Australian foreign policy from a low profile to a more active role in Asian affairs, and seemingly in an attempt to use such efforts to back the US.

In addition to the East Timor issue, Australia has participated in America's operations to impose sanctions on Iraq and the US's war against the Taliban. In 1998, the Australian government sent 250 troops, two refuelling aircraft and medical units to the bombing operation in Iraq.¹⁰⁸ In October 2001 Australia dispatched a number of troops

¹⁰⁴ Ministry of Australian Defence, *Australia's Security Strategy*, Canberra: 1997, p. 25.

¹⁰⁵ S. A. Madsen, "Contemporary Australian and New Zealand Foreign Policy", *Australian Defence Journal*, no. 136, (May/June, 1999), p. 37.

¹⁰⁶ Ministry of Australian Defence, *Australia's Security Strategy, op., cit.*, p. 14.

¹⁰⁷ Wade Hunley and Peter Hayesl, "East Timor and Asian Security", *NAPSNet*, Special Report, 23 February, 2000.

¹⁰⁸ Mike Head, "Why is Canberra Backing the US in the Gulf?", World Socialist Web Site.

<http://www.wsws.org/news/1998/feb1998/howard.shtml>: (Internet Accessed on 12 march 2000).

and supplies of equipment to support America's war on terrorism in Afghanistan. This included some 150 Special Air Service (SAS) troops, two refuelling planes, and a warship (*HMAS ANZAC*).¹⁰⁹ With its leading role in the UN peacekeeping operation in East Timor, and the support of America's war on terrorism, Australia has become an even closer ally of the US. It seems that Australia would become a front line state of the US security strategy in the Western and Southern Pacific regions. This US-Aussie strategic alliance will eventually collide with the Chinese naval ambitions in the Southern Pacific and the Indian Ocean.

Russia

There had been only minor contact between the US and Russia in the early twentieth century. Even these, however, came about mainly through economic relations just after the foundation of the USSR in the 1920s.¹¹⁰ The US and the USSR became allies in the Second World War as part of the effort to crush the Axis countries. When the advancing armies of the United States and the Soviet Union met at the Elbe River in the heart of Germany on 25 April 1945, the Soviet Union had already become one of the world's superpowers.¹¹¹ In mid-1945, both the US and the Soviet Union maintained their force level of 12 million troops respectively, but after the war, the US reduced its troops to 1.4 million, in contrast to the Soviet Union's retention of 4 million troops.¹¹² During the period 1946-1947, the sphere of the Soviet military stretched from the eastern Mediterranean to the Persian Gulf. This Soviet expansionism was first initiated in Iran, which provided a wartime oil supply route from the Gulf to the Russian frontier along which British and American arms were transported to the Soviet Union in an effort to

¹⁰⁹ Phillip Coorey and Ian McPhedran, "150 SAS men head our force", *The Advertiser* (an Australian newspaper), 5 October 2001, pp. 1-2.

¹¹⁰ Leo J. Bacino, *Reconstructing Russia*, Kent, Ohio: The Kent State University Press, 1999, p. 16.

¹¹¹ William R. Keylor, *The Twentieth-Century World*, op. cit., p. 251.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, p. 254.

crush the German army.¹¹³ A series of Soviet interventions extended to Turkey and Greece in 1945-47, and in the Berlin blockade in 1948. The Berlin blockade instigated the US containment policy against the Soviet Union for the defence of Western Europe. As a result of the blockade, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and Warsaw Pact Organization were formed in 1949 and 1955 respectively. From then on, the Cold war confrontation between East and West, and Washington and Moscow, continued until 1985. The emergence of Mikhail Gorbachev as new Soviet leader, and his policy of political openness (glasnost) and economic restructuring (perestroika) helped thaw decades of confrontation between the two superpowers.

India

Since its independence in 1947, India has pursued a policy of nonalignment. As a result, India has rarely worked with either Washington or Moscow. From the 1950s, however, India has presented the US with a number of contentious issues, including US military associations with Pakistan in 1954, Washington's support of Pakistan in the Indo-Pakistani War in 1971, and India's exclusion by the US in the Geneva Conference in 1955 for the consultation about the future of Vietnam.¹¹⁴ During the 1970s, relations between Washington and New Delhi further deteriorated, due to the Indo-Soviet rapprochement in 1971 and the normalisation of Sino-US relations in 1979. From India's point of view, Sino-US dialogue and the US-Pakistani alliance pose a significant threat to the security of the Indian state. The May 1998 nuclear tests of both India and Pakistan astonished the other protagonist, sub-continent nation, as well as China and the US. After the tests, India and Pakistan became embroiled in an acute confrontation near the Kashmir town of Kargil, where the two countries exchanged heavy artillery fire and air

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 256.

¹¹⁴ Norman D. Palmer, *The United States and India*, New York: Praeger, 1984, p. 24-25.

strikes.¹¹⁵ India has long been frustrated by its immediate competitor, China, which has been ahead of India in terms of economic and military power, particularly in the field of nuclear weapons. On the other hand, China regards the Indian nuclear test as a great threat to its national security. During the Cold War, the US supported Pakistan to restrain the Indo-Soviet alliance. However, the nuclear tests upset the US, and the latter therefore imposed economic sanctions on both India and Pakistan.

8.2.2 Sino-US Naval Rivalry in the Asia-Pacific Regional SLOCs

Since the foundation of the Republic, the US has been a seafaring nation relying on the oceans for food, commerce and defence, and it has exerted influence wherever and whenever US citizens, interests, and friends have been at risk.¹¹⁶ In fact, the US has been highly dependent on its naval forces for its national security and seaborne trade. The US also has a special interest in maintaining secure and stable sea-lanes around the world.¹¹⁷ The Americans believe that maintaining the security and navigational freedom of the high seas is of fundamental importance for global peace, security, and prosperity.¹¹⁸ Consequently, the US has supported the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) with its provisions for unimpeded passage through international navigation. Former Secretary of Defence, William Perry, stated in 1994 that, “the US supports the Convention because it confirms the traditional high seas freedom of navigation and overflight, and it enables American military operations over, under and on the world oceans.”¹¹⁹

¹¹⁵ Hilary Synnot, “The Causes and Consequences of South Asia’s Nuclear Tests”, Adelphi Paper 332, *IJSS*, (December 1999), pp. 35-36.

¹¹⁶ US Department of Navy, “1999 Posture Statement, America’s Twenty-First Century Force” 1999.

¹¹⁷ 1998 Year of the Ocean, “The Ocean and the National Security”, 1998.

http://yoto98.noaa.gov/yoto/meeting/nat_sec_316.html (Internet Accessed: 24 July 2000).

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ William Perry, “National Security and Law of the Sea Convention”, A Statement to the Congress, 24 July 1994.

During the Cold War the Asia-Pacific region and its waterways were mainly dominated by the US and, to a lesser extent, the Soviet Union. However, in the post-Cold War world, the US has become the sole predominant maritime power over the global SLOCs. As the world's economies are increasingly closely linked, the freedom of commercial vessels' transit on the high seas and through strategic chokepoints become even more important.¹²⁰ The experience with the closure of the Suez Canal in 1956 indicated that such a disruption to the Southeast Asian seaways might increase freight rates by as much as 500 percent.¹²¹ The freedom of unimpeded transit through the straits in the Southeast Asian region is critical to US interests, such that any obstruction to the key straits through the Indonesian archipelagos may pose a threat to American global strategy.¹²² Thus, the preservation of navigational safety along the Southeast Asian chokepoints is one of the most important tasks facing US maritime strategy.

If China intends to control the Southeast Asian seaways, what are the implications for the US? For the US, the sea-lanes are critically important both economically and militarily. The total volume of American trade with the Asia-Pacific region has well exceeded that of the European Union (EU) since the mid-1990s, and in 1999 the share of US trade to the Asia-Pacific was 38 percent of America's total, while that of the European Union and Latin America was 18 percent and 15 percent respectively.¹²³ More significantly, the seaways are crucial passageways for the US naval force projection in the event of a global crisis. In this context, it is imperative for the US to secure these sea lines of communication. Today, no one denies that the US stands in the centre of gravity of international politics. Likewise, the US Navy enjoys sole hegemonic sea power status on the world's oceans.

¹²⁰ 1998 Year of the Ocean, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

¹²¹ John H. Noer, *op. cit.*

¹²² Perry Wood and Dianne L. Smith, *op. cit.*, p.

¹²³ "The Region", US Seventh Fleet.

<http://www.c7f.navy.mil/compo.html> (Internet Accessed, 12 August 2001).

It can be said that China's naval challenge does not aim at the US directly, but expanding Beijing's naval influence towards US allies and friends could pose indirectly pose a substantial challenge to Washington. China's potential naval presence in Myanmar could harm international navigation in the Strait of Malacca not only for the US but also for East Asian countries. Thailand, the Philippines and Indonesia also worry about China's blue-water naval ambition in the South China Sea, and they are increasingly anxious not to offend Beijing, and might feel compelled to adjust the reality of China's naval influence over the region.¹²⁴ This possible shift in the balance of power in Southeast Asia would diminish US influence in the region, and eventually interfere with Washington's economic and political interest in the regional waterways.

There are a variety of possible uncertainties to international navigation through the Southeast Asian sea-lanes. Local armed conflicts, especially those concerning sovereignty of disputed islands and offshore resources, could severely intimidate, and disrupt regional shipping. As James Gregor points out, China might use the pretext of policing maritime control and international navigation (such as preventing smuggling, enhancing safety, managing risk, or relieving traffic congestion at the chokepoints), in order to implement a control regime over the seaways.¹²⁵ If these straits were to be closed, notably by China or by any other power, vessels in transit would have to pass through the relatively shallow Torres Strait between Australia and Papua New Guinea or circumnavigate Australia.¹²⁶ Undoubtedly, the Asia-Pacific region will remain as an inevitable area for the United States' activities, not only in terms of its commercial interests but also for its global strategy. Donald Emmerson indicates that security, prosperity and democracy have predominated among the commonly uttered justifications

¹²⁴ Steven W. Mosher, *China's Plan to Dominate Asia and the World*, San Francisco: Encounter Books, 2000, p. 112-13.

¹²⁵ A. James Gregor, "Qualified Engagement", *US Naval War College Review*, vol. L11, no 2, (Spring 1999).

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

for American foreign policy in the Southeast Asia in the twentieth century.¹²⁷ This US policy continues to be a major element in the region. China's naval resurgence in the South China Sea and regional waterways will eventually prompt an America's response.

In addition to the Southeast Asian SLOCs, the US navy will face China's challenge in the Panama Canal, which had been operated by the US until 1999 since it was completed in 1914. According to the 1997 canal treaty between the Panamanian government and Hong Kong's Hutchison Whampoa Ltd., the company leased a port for twenty-five years on either end of the canal, Balboa on the Pacific and Cristobal on the Atlantic.¹²⁸ Although the treaty allows the US to intervene militarily to defend the canal, there is a concern about China's attempt to extend the range of its navy by commercially controlling the two Panamanian ports.¹²⁹ Although the Panama Canal treaty is a contract of commercial lease, China could use port facilities for its naval force. Constantine Menges, a professor at George Washington University, elaborates the Chinese role in Panama as follows:

I see China systematically trying to establish positions of influence in countries around the world where they can obtain benefits and where it might be useful at some future time to put pressure on the US. The Panama Canal has long been considered one of the most strategically significant places on earth. It's of major importance to the US for both military and commercial shipping and transit. I think the Chinese purpose in using bribery and corrupt methods to win the bidding for the contract on managing the ports at both ends of the Panama Canal has both a geographical and commercial purpose. Geographically, China sees its location in Panama as a place where it can establish a base of influence in a small country, using political and commercial means, where it can work closely with its new ally Cuba to help those who oppose the US in Latin America, and where it might also be able to position weapons such as medium-range missiles that potentially could be used to threaten the US in times of crisis, or times of the choosing of the Chinese regime.¹³⁰

To implement its wider maritime role the US Pacific Fleet resumes the responsibility of security and stability of the region. The US Pacific Fleet has

¹²⁷ Donald K. Emmerson, "US Policy Themes in the Southeast Asia in the 1990", in David Wurfel and Bruce Burton, eds., *Southeast Asia in the New World Order*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996, p. 103.

¹²⁸ Bill Gertz, *The China Threat*, Washington D. C.: Regnery Publishing, Inc., 2000, P. 78.

The Hong Kong Company has the option to extend the lease for another quarter century.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 82-83. There are no longer any American bases within a hundred miles from the canal, and the Hong Kong Corporation seems to be an arm of the People's Liberation Army (p. 82).

¹³⁰ Bill Gertz, *The China Threat*, *op. cit.*, pp. 94-95.

approximately 250,000 personnel, employing three aircraft carrier battle groups with 188 ships and 1,434 aircraft.¹³¹ The major component of the Pacific Fleet consists of the Third and Seventh Fleets: the former resumes the defence of the western approaches to the Continental US, including Alaska and the Aleutian Islands; while the latter's area of responsibility includes the Pacific and the Indian Oceans from the international dateline westward all the way to the east coast of Africa, and from the Kurile Islands in the north Pacific to the Antarctic in the south.¹³² About 100,000 of the US Pacific Command's military personnel are stationed in the Asia-Pacific region (See Table 8.2).¹³³ Furthermore, approximately 400,000 US citizens, excluding military personnel and their dependents, live, work and study in this region.¹³⁴

Table 8.2 US Troop Strength in the Asia-Pacific (personnel)

Countries and Region	1990	1993	1995	2000*
Japan	50,000	45,227	44,527	39,750
Republic of Korea	44,400	37,413	30,913	36,630
Philippines	14,800	('92:Withdrawal)		
Subtotal	109,200	83,640	76,400	76,380
Afloat or otherwise forward deployed	25,800	25,800	25,800	25,800
Total	135,000	109,440	102,240	102,180

Source: US Department of Defence, *A Strategic Framework for Asia-Pacific Rim* (US GPO, 1992)

- The Military Balance 2000-2001, p. 33.

As part of the US Pacific Fleet, the Seventh Fleet resumes its area of responsibility, including the Western Pacific and the Indian Ocean. Since its foundation in 1950 as the US Seventh Fleet, it participated in a number of regional conflicts, including the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Gulf War, and in 1996 it dispatched aircraft carrier battle groups in waters off the Taiwan Strait. The Seventh Fleet has about 20,000 navy and marine troops, and a variety of ships and aircraft, including 1-2 aircraft

¹³¹ "US Pacific Fleet Today", 12 May 2000.

<http://www.cpf.navy.mil/apffacts/cpftoday.htm> (Internet Accessed: 12 December 2000).

¹³² Stanley B. Weeks and Charles A. Meconis, *The Armed Forces of the US in the Asia-Pacific Region*, *op. cit.*, pp. 137-38.

¹³³ US Department of Defence, "The US Security Strategy for the East Asia-Pacific Region", *op. cit.*

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

carriers, 3-5 Aegis guided-missile cruisers, 5-10 destroyers and frigates, 4-5 fast attack submarines, 4-8 amphibious transport and landing ships, 4-6 logistics and support ships, 2 mine countermeasures ships, and 200 aboard aircraft.¹³⁵ During the whole year, about 50 percent of fleet forces are deployed at sea, covering important sea-lanes in the Southeast Asian region as well as part of the Indian Ocean. The fleet units conduct more than 100 exercises per year with navies of regional countries, including the ROK, Japan, Australia, Russia, India and Southeast Asian nations. The fleet's area of responsibility is verges on overlapping with the waters claimed as areas of influence by China, thus the US strategic interest in preserving the seaways continues to be a basis for conflict between the US and China.

The increased reliance of trade and Middle Eastern oil has reinforced US security interests in the Southeast Asian shipping lanes. The US dependence on Middle Eastern oil is not significant, and its volume is expected to fall from 19 percent in 1998 to less than 10 percent by 2010, mainly due to the rise of its oil imports from Latin America and the increased production of mineral resources in North America itself.¹³⁶ However, Gulf oil will remain invariable in facilitating the training and maintenance of the US Pacific Fleet. Therefore, the US commitment to the security of the Southeast Asian SLOCs will not be lessened, since the US interest does not rest only on the oil issue alone, but also emphasises its force projection capability and bilateral trade with nations in the region.

The US Navy implements its strategy through four enduring concepts: forward presence; deterrence; sea and area control; and power projection.¹³⁷ To achieve these strategic goals, US naval forces pursue the control of the sea-lanes, which are used to move its troops, equipment, and supplies to areas of conflict. Naval force today is

¹³⁵ "Forward Presence", United States Navy Seventh Fleet.

<http://www.c7f.navy.mil/fwdpres.html> (Internet Accessed, 21 July 2001).

¹³⁶ "Energy Security in the Asia-Pacific", Asia-Pacific Centre for Security Studies, (15 January 1999).

http://www.apcss.org/Publications/Report_Energy_Security_99.html (Internet Accessed, on 12 March 2000).

¹³⁷ US Department of the Navy, "1999 Posture Statement, America's Twenty-First Century Force" 1999.

regarded as one of the most effective diplomatic tools and powerful instruments in implementing national policy with respect to other states because of the self-sufficiency and freedom that it allows the host-nation.¹³⁸ The US military presence on the high seas provides it with a capability to project power to areas of international tensions, to help friends and allies, and to preserve international peace and stability.¹³⁹ The US naval force has been undertaking a significant role in the security of the Southeast Asian seaways through its firmly stated readiness and its combined exercises with its Pacific partners, but there are still some constraints for the future stability of the region. It is likely that today's smaller US naval force, which is significantly reduced from the Cold War force of the 1980s, will face broad and frequent challenges in the future.¹⁴⁰ During WWII, the Pacific Fleet possessed some 1,970 ships, but by the end of 2000 it has only 193 ships in its order of battle.¹⁴¹ There exists another problematic issue concerning the Southeast Asian Nuclear Weapons Free Zone (SEANWFZ) Treaty signed by ASEAN nations. One of the significant issues preventing America from supporting the treaty at this point is the inclusion of EEZs and Continental Shelves in the SEANWFZ, with which the US believes to be inconsistent with internationally recognised high seas freedoms of navigation and overflight.¹⁴² At any rate, the US military presence remains as a security balancer on the high seas and a bulwark against China's naval surge in the Asia-Pacific region.

8.3 Recent Controversies Between China and the United States

In February 1972, President Nixon shook hands with Mao in Beijing. This historic meeting paved the way for the normalisation of relations between China and the

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

¹³⁹ 1998 Year of the Ocean, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

¹⁴⁰ US Department of Navy, "1999 Posture Statement", *op. cit.*

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.* See also Military Balance 2000-2001 p. 67.

¹⁴² US Department of State, "US Position to the Southeast Asian Nuclear Weapons Free Zone", 15 December 1991.

US. The normalisation has not resulted in enduring friendly relations between the two countries on every occasion. On his way home from Beijing, Nixon jotted down in his diary, "What they want is: to build up their world credentials, to incorporate Taiwan, and to get the US out of Asia".¹⁴³ Since then, China has virtually stuck to these policies that Nixon recognised in embryonic forms at that time. Indeed, China has been arguing these issues with the US ever since.

China's naval modernisation poses a great concern to America's Asia-Pacific strategy. In addition to naval rivalry between the two countries, a series of dissonances between China and the US emerged as troublesome diplomatic issues. China's spy scandal involving a US nuclear lab, the NATO's bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade, and the Cox report¹⁴⁴ - all these suggest themselves to be indications of America's inclination to 'containing China'.¹⁴⁵ America's Theatre Missile Defence (TMD) and National Missile Defence (NMD) initiatives and the April 2001 US spy plane collision with Chinese fighters also appeared as another source of conflict between the two countries.

China's efforts to obtain nuclear information from the US originated in 1955, when Shanghai-born Qian Xuesen was sacked from the US ballistic missile programs at the Caltech Jet Propulsion Lab.¹⁴⁶ After his discharge, Qian Xuesen was invited to Beijing and became the father of China's missile force there. He contributed to the development of the 20-odd 1980s-era ICBMs. However, China's nuclear spy issue did not become serious until May 1999, when the Cox report was released to the public. According to the Cox report, China had stolen information on seven US thermonuclear

¹⁴³ Terry McCarthy and Jaime A. Florcruz, "Collateral Damage", *Time*, 24 May 1999, p. 35.

¹⁴⁴ The Cox Report is a report, dubbed as "The Report of the US House of Representatives Select Committee on US National Security and Military/Commercial Concerns with the People's Republic of China", conducted by Republican Congressman Christopher Cox and eight other Congressmen from both the Republicans and Democrats from June 1998 to January 1999.

¹⁴⁵ Johanna McGrey, "The Next Cold War?" *Time*, 7 June 1999, p. 33.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

warheads currently deployed in the US ballistic missile arsenal and an enhanced radiation weapon (commonly known as the “neutron bomb”, which neither the US, nor any other country has yet developed).¹⁴⁷ The report also reveals that China plans to supplement its silo-based CSS-4 ICBMs targeted on US cities with mobile ICBMs, for both road-mobile and submarine-launched programs.¹⁴⁸ According to the *Economist*, China now has design information on nuclear weapons on a par with America’s, and the first of these new weapons could be deployed as early as 2002.¹⁴⁹ Since the Cox report, however, China has strongly denied such allegations, and its hard-liners regard the report as proof of American containment policy towards China.¹⁵⁰ The Cox report was aimed at warning US policy makers to be cautious towards China’s technology stealing from US nuclear institutions, but it also demonstrates that China has emerged as a potentially substantial nuclear threat to the US.¹⁵¹

With the 7 May 1999 NATO bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade, Sino-US relations further deteriorated. Although an official compromise on the Belgrade incident had been concluded between Beijing and Washington, the bombing issue has another implication. The embassy bombing brought China and Russia closer together. Russian presidential envoy Victor Chenomyrdin flew to Beijing on 10 May 1999 for consultations on issues, such as the embassy strike and the Kosovo crisis.¹⁵² No significant countermeasure from Beijing and Moscow had been made after the incident, but China harshly criticised the bombing as being deliberate by the US military authority. A decade after the June 4 Massacre, on 10 May 1999, students in Beijing again

¹⁴⁷ A Quiet Vision Publication, “The Cox Report”, Electric Paperback, pp. 7-8. Seven US thermonuclear warheads include W-88 (Trident D-5 SLBM), W-87 (Peacekeeper ICBM), W-78 (Minuteman III (Mark 12A) ICBM), W-76 (Trident C-4 SLBM), W-70 (Lance SRBM), W-62 (Minuteman III ICBM) and W-60 (Minuteman II ICBM).

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

¹⁴⁹ “Assessing the Nuclear Fallout”, *The Economist*, (May 29th 1999), p. 30.

¹⁵⁰ Johanna McGrey, “The Next Cold War”, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

¹⁵¹ Bill Gertz, *The China Threat*, *op. cit.*, P. 126.

¹⁵² Susan L. Lawrence and Shawn W. Crispin, “Double-Edged Fury”, *FEER*, 20 May 1999, p. 11.

marched, but this time they were part of a protest against the May 7 missile strike on China's embassy in Yugoslavia which killed three Chinese journalists.¹⁵³ Following the embassy bombing, it seems that Chinese leaders feared that the students would next stage protests against a 'weak central government' unless Beijing push forward a strong protest to the US and NATO.¹⁵⁴ The bombing incident, in some respects, helped Chinese leadership to shift their people's emotion away from the tenth anniversary of the 1989 Tiananmen uprising to an anti-American demonstration.

The US missile defence strategy has had a long history. In 1967, the US and the Soviet Union signed the Outer Space Treaty, banning the deployment or use of weapons of mass destruction in Earth's orbit, and signed the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty in 1972. By the early 1970s, these the two countries were abiding by the doctrine of Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD) as the two superpowers had achieved the numerical parity of strategic weapons.¹⁵⁵ Former US President Reagan announced the Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI) in 1983, on the assumption that the MAD doctrine would not become untenable in the future, and that the Soviets would not compete against the SDI program because of its economic limitations. However, the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991 left the SDI concept politically stranded.¹⁵⁶ North Korea's missile test and suspected nuclear development in 1998 prompted the US missile defence project, the so-called the National Missile Defence (NMD) system. The NMD also aimed at the potential missile threat from China to Taiwan and American territories, including Alaska, Hawaii and the western part of the Continental US (CONUS).

The NMD has become the focus for a hot debate not only in East Asia but also among many nations of the world. China sent a harsh protest against the NMD initiative

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁴ Stratfor, "Red Alert: More Aggressive Chinese Foreign Policy Elicits US Response" *Asia Intelligence Update*, May 14, 1999.

¹⁵⁵ George Friedman, "The Wrong Debate Over Missile Defence", *Stratfor*, Global Intelligence Update, 14 May 2001.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

on the grounds that it clearly destabilises the security of the Asia-Pacific, and it could spark a further regional arms race.¹⁵⁷ The Chinese believe that the US design of NMD and Theatre Missile Defence (TMD) would further deteriorate the relationship between China and the US. They also believe that the possible inclusion of Taiwan in the TMD program would seriously interfere with Chinese efforts to unite the island, and even encourage Taiwan's inclination to declare its independence.¹⁵⁸ In addition to China, many other European nations such as Russia, Sweden and Germany expressed deep concern about the NMD, fearing it will lead to global insecurity.¹⁵⁹ Although Japan and South Korea have reluctantly agreed to President Bush's plan of a missile defence shield, most strategists in Japan and South Korea suggest that the NMD plan would jeopardise the regional security framework by furthering a big-power dispute between the US and China.¹⁶⁰ It is uncertain how the Bush administration would implement the hundreds of billion-dollar project, given its limited defence budget, technological hurdles, and the lukewarm attitude of its allies. The plan has been a controversial issue amongst defence policy makers of East Asia as well as the rest of the world. China and Russia, in particular, would continuously harass America over the issue.

The April 2001 US spy plane incident occurred at a sensitive time between Moscow and Washington were dealing with the expulsion of Russian embassy officials, and Beijing and Washington were in conflict over the US high-tech weapons sales to Taiwan. Under the Bush administration, a significant wing of the China hawks (often called 'blue team' members) has taken high-ranking positions, in contrast with the Clinton administration, which championed 'red team' members for a strategic

¹⁵⁷ Paerick M. O'Donogue, "Theatre Missile Defence in Japan", *Strategic Studies Institute*, (September 2000), p. 2.

¹⁵⁸ Gu Guoliang, "TMD, NMD and Arms Control", *NAPSNet*, 26 October 2000.

¹⁵⁹ Joseph Coleman, "World Wary about Bush's Missile Plan", *The Associated Press*, Tokyo, 2 May 2001.

¹⁶⁰ Doug Struck, "Asian Allies See Hazards Ahead Bush Plan Raises Sensitive Defence Issues for Japan and South Korea", *The Washington Post*, Seoul, 3 May 2001.

partnership with China.¹⁶¹ Despite the recent spy plane incident, Chinese President Jiang Zemin continued his Latin American tour in an attempt to enhance China's geopolitical influence in a region where the US has long dominated both politically and economically.¹⁶² The spy plane incident triggered further debate between Washington and Beijing over issues, such as the US surveillance activities over the Chinese territories, and China's provocation against US routine patrol missions in international air space. There is a possibility that there could be a naval clash between both countries' naval ships in the future, including submarines in the high seas or each other's territorial waters.

Despite recent controversies between China and the US, Washington shares many strategic interests with Beijing, including a de-nuclearisation of North Korea, cooperation in UN peacekeeping missions and mutual economic cooperation between the two countries.¹⁶³ China needs the US for technological development and as a market for labour-intensive manufactured goods, while the US needs China's cooperation for the stability of the Asia-Pacific region. However, Washington and Beijing are likely to continue to confront with each other over sensitive issues, such as the Taiwan question, human rights, America's NMD initiative, and the influence of each other over the regional SLOCs.¹⁶⁴

8.4 The United States Policy Choices toward China

8.4.1 Engagement Policy

¹⁶¹ Robert Marguand and Ann Scott Tyson, "More Angst between China, US" *The Christian Science Monitor*, 2 April 2001. See also Bill Gertz, *The China Threat*, p. 46. William C. Triplett II, former professional counsel to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, coined the term "red team" to describe pro-Beijing specialists in the US government, and "blue team" to describe conservatives who consider themselves locked in an ideological struggle with the pro-China experts.

¹⁶² Stratfor, "China: Leveraging the Crisis", *Today's Global Intelligence Update*, 11 April 2001.

¹⁶³ Gary Klintonworth and Murry McLean, "China and the US: Neither Friends Nor Enemies", in Stuart Harris and Gary Klintonworth, eds., *China as a Great Power*, *op. cit.*, pp. 73-74.

¹⁶⁴ "A Hint of the cold war over the South China Sea", *The Economist*, April 7th 2001, p. 31. See also Craig S. Smith, "Visiting Chinese to Urge Bush Not to Sell Arms to Taiwan", *The New York Times*, 12 March 2001.

The relationship between China and the US has varied considerably since World War II. During the Korean War China was America's enemy, while during most of the Cold War era China was a strategic partner in containing the Soviets' influence in the Southeast Asian region. Now, however, China emerges as a competing power against American interests in the Asia-Pacific. Many Americans believe that China's emergence as the world's next economic and military giant not only provides enormous economic opportunities for American companies and workers, but also poses a substantial threat to the US interest in the Asia-Pacific.¹⁶⁵ Because of China's critical importance in the Asia-Pacific region, the US has worked to bring China more squarely into the international community in order to promote regional stability and economic prosperity.¹⁶⁶

In September 1993, the Clinton administration declared its policy of comprehensive engagement with China. However, this policy has not been fully implemented due to several negative factors. These included the March 1996 Taiwan crisis, NATO's eastward expansion, and the revision of the US-Japan Defence Guidelines.¹⁶⁷ However, the October 1997 and June 1998 summit meetings between President Clinton and President Jiang fostered US-China relations and served as a momentum in furthering the US strategy of comprehensive engagement with China.¹⁶⁸ As we have seen, the US and China share many common global and regional interests, including the maintenance of regional stability and sustained economic development, the preservation of peace on the Korean Peninsula, and the prevention of the spread of WMD and their means of delivery.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁵ The White House, "President Clinton's Remarks on US Foreign Policy", Mayflower Hotel, Washington D.C., 7 April 1999.

¹⁶⁶ William S. Cohen, Secretary of Defence, "1998 Annual Report to the President and the Congress".

¹⁶⁷ Zhang Yebai, "Can a Constructive Strategic Partnership be Built up between China and the United States?", Peter Koehn and Joseph Y.S. Cheng, eds., *The Outlook of US-China Relations Following the 1997-1998 Summits*, Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1999, p. 143.

¹⁶⁸ US Department of Defence, "The US Security Strategy for the East Asia-Pacific Region", 1998.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

Why does the US pursue an engagement policy with China? Harry Harding points out that it is critical for the US to preserve a balance of power in the Asia-Pacific region, such that China neither feels threatened by any other power, nor perceives the opportunity to establish hegemony over any part of the area.¹⁷⁰ The US believes that peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region can be secured through close cooperation between the US and China. Thus, China's constructive attitude toward the US and other nations in the region is critical to the security and wellbeing of the region. The US also wants to create transparency within China's defence program, including its planning and procurement process, and continues to engage China in order to foster cooperation and confidence building.¹⁷¹ US diplomatic efforts are geared to facilitate the emergence of a China that is both stable and non-aggressive, a China that cooperates with the US in building a secure regional and international order, that adheres to international rules of conduct, and that has an open vibrant economy.¹⁷² This is why Washington's engagement policy toward Beijing is important for the interest of the Asia-Pacific region. The pursuit of such a US policy option will help promote the stability of the US itself and China as well as other Asia-Pacific countries.

8.4.2 Containment Policy

US containment policy originated with George F. Kennan, State Department senior specialist on Soviet affairs under the Truman administration. His doctrine of a containment policy was generated by the vulnerability of the Western European countries, which in turn was caused by their inability to recover from the war-induced dislocation of their economic systems.¹⁷³ Nevertheless, many strategists and scholars of

¹⁷⁰ Harry Harding, "A Chinese Colossus?" in Desmond Ball, ed., *The Transformation of Security in the Asia-Pacific Region*, London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd, 1996, p. 122.

¹⁷¹ William S. Cohen, Secretary of Defence, "1998 Annual Report to the President and the Congress".

¹⁷² Stanley O. Roth, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia-Pacific Affairs, "Challenge in US-Asia Policy", A Testimony before the House International Relations Committee, 10 February 1999.

¹⁷³ William R. Keylor, *The Twentieth-Century World, op. cit.*, p. 262.

his time criticised his ideas. Walter Lippmann, for instance, criticised Kennan's statement regarding direct military involvement in containing the Soviet Union as little more than wishful thinking.¹⁷⁴ He predicted that in containing the Soviet Union, the US would be forced to rely on proxies, who would act for their own reasons, on their own judgement, and consequently the US had to be involved in unwanted crises.¹⁷⁵ John F. Dulles, then US Secretary of the State, also denounced Kennan's containment policy by saying that it was static rather than dynamic, and eventually dismissed Kennan from the Foreign Service.¹⁷⁶ However, during the Cold War the US conducted a comprehensive containment policy against the Soviet Union on almost every issue, including the Korean War, the Cuban Crisis, and the Vietnam War. This policy brought acute confrontations between the two superpowers.

Although the US finally won the Cold War against the Soviet Union, it also experienced many difficulties in world affairs during that period through its pursuit of the containment policy. The policy, particularly during the Vietnam War, brought about various economic and social problems, such as the dollar crisis, the acceleration of inflation, an economic slump, and public and congressional resistance.¹⁷⁷ The containment policy also proved to bring no benefits for either party because it caused distrust and antagonism between the US and the Soviet Union. Thus, in the late 1980s, the US pursued a moderate containment policy toward other nations, in more cautious and flexible manner, such as the use of military force and covert action, and not with the indiscriminate use of force for purposes of intervention.¹⁷⁸

US strategic options in Asia can be described as: effective missile defence; selling defensive weapons to Taiwan; maintaining the US military presence in Korea and

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 155.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 156.

¹⁷⁶ Ole R. Holsti and James N. Rosenau, *American Leadership in World Affairs*, Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1984, p. 219.

¹⁷⁷ A. James Gregor, *The China Connection*, Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1986, p. 85.

¹⁷⁸ Glenn Hastedt, *American Foreign Policy*, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1988, p. 328.

Japan; improving military cooperation with Australia, the Philippines, and Thailand; urging Israel and Britain not to sell advanced military technology to China; and improving, military exchange between China and Taiwan.¹⁷⁹ On the other hand, China's national objectives are best summed up as: to develop economic and technological potential under the leadership of the current CCP; to secure future energy supplies; to unify all Chinese claimed territories by 2010; and to improve regional and international influence and prestige.¹⁸⁰ Most of US policy options are clearly related to China's ambitions to become a hegemonic power in the global community. At the same time, China's goal to become a unified, wealthy and hegemonic power is also closely related to the US policy toward the Asia-Pacific region. A containment policy for China will stimulate Beijing in accelerating its military modernisation efforts, instigating a regional arms race and increasing the likelihood of military conflict in regional hot spots, such as the Korean Peninsula, the Taiwan Strait, and the South China Sea.¹⁸¹

Clinton administration's policy of engagement with China had fostered stability in Asia, but many Republicans in the US Congress, and many new staff in the Republican George W. Bush administration, criticised the engagement policy as no more than an appeasement. They regard China's military provocation and inhumane practices (such as China's aggressive military actions in the South China Sea, the 1996 missile testing in the Taiwan Strait, Beijing's arrests of the China Democracy Party founders, Christian leaders and Falun Gong leaders) as the products of the engagement policy by the Clinton administration.¹⁸² They even argued that Clinton's engagement policy had provided China with more sophisticated military technologies, such as the special explosive bolts used in separating the different stages of a missile and state-of-the-art

¹⁷⁹ Stephen Yates, "Issues'98, Chapter 15. China", The Candidate's Briefing Book, *The Heritage Foundation*, 1998.

¹⁸⁰ Patrick Taylor, "China's Schedule for Taiwan", *International Herald Tribune*, 31 January 1996.

¹⁸¹ Harry Harding, "A China Colossus?", *op. cit.*, p. 122.

¹⁸² Steven W. Mosher, *China's Plan to Dominate Asia and the World*, San Francisco: Encounters Books, 2000, p. 140.

supercomputers.¹⁸³ After reviewing the engagement policy of the previous government, President Bush has initiated its containment policy toward China by launching the NMD initiatives, and agreeing to sell modern arms to Taiwan.

8.4.3 Constructive Engagement

Constructive engagement was first used by the US in the 1970s and 1985 to deal with the contentious debate over the illegitimacy of the apartheid regime of South Africa.¹⁸⁴ Although constructive engagement has been criticised as failing to achieve anticipated benefits, it nonetheless can be used for addressing not only moral issues but also questions of security agenda, such as the nuclear proliferation in Asia and the Middle East.¹⁸⁵ As constructive engagement aims at not isolating but continuing relationship with other country, it can be used by the US to deal with potential conflicting issues of China, such as nuclear proliferation and recent naval challenges on the region's seas.

An engagement policy does not mean that the US ignores China's human rights violations, or that the US condones Chinese exports of dangerous weapons technology to regimes, which pose threats against US national interests.¹⁸⁶ The outcomes of the 1995-96 Taiwan Strait Crisis, according to China's reaction, show that the US leadership would choose a flexible response to any issue relating to its national interest according to China's reaction. Cooperation between the US and China is vital to the regional security, prosperity and peace, and neither country can benefit from a policy of confrontation or isolation.¹⁸⁷ It is critically important for both countries to consult major international

¹⁸³ A. I. Santoli, "Clinton's New Computer Sales Risks Upgrading PRC Missile Strikes", *China Reform Monitor*, no 263, 10 December 1999, quoted by Steven W. Mosher, *op. cit.*, p. 140.

¹⁸⁴ Ivanica Vodanovich, "Constructive Engagement and Constructive Intervention: A Useful Approach to Security in Asia Pacific", Focus on the Global South.
<http://www.focusweb.org/focus/pd/sec/Altsec2/vodanovich.htm> (Internet Accessed, 12 December 2001).

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁶ William H. Perry, "US Strategy: Engage China, Not Contain It", *op. cit.*

¹⁸⁷ Madeleine K. Albright, Secretary of State, "US Foreign Operations Budget", *A Statement before the Senate Appropriations Committee on Foreign Operations*, 20 May 1999.

issues, including that of nuclear non-proliferation and anti-terrorism, and so within the framework of cooperative partnership. How the US leadership chooses which foreign policy option to adopt with regard to China is obviously closely tied to China's attitude to the US and its allies. The US engagement policy toward China will face many challenges in the future, but the constructive engagement policy of the US will undoubtedly be mutually beneficial to China and the rest of the Asia-Pacific countries.

Sustained economic growth and gradual liberalisation of trade in China have already provided the US with great opportunities. It appears likely that US policy would continue to accommodate China for purposes of its own economic interest, but at the same time it would respond sternly on such issues as the use of force to intimidate Taiwan, and nuclear and missile proliferation. The Chinese are very sensitive about the US emphasis on human rights and a democratic value system because they think Washington uses such agenda as a political tool to justify trade sanctions against low-cost labour products, and the US ultimately wishes to overthrow the Chinese communist government.¹⁸⁸ At the same time, Beijing, in some respects, has to respond positively to the US diplomatic approach because close relations with Washington will not only enable Beijing to promote economic prosperity but will also help enhance China's international status.¹⁸⁹

President Clinton's engagement has sometimes been interpreted as a pro-China policy.¹⁹⁰ This view is based on the assumption that the Clinton administration's loosening of trade restrictions with China enabled the latter to obtain nuclear weapons secrets from the US.¹⁹¹ One Pentagon official also condemned the China Initiative by issuing a critique of the China program with Harvard University's John Kennedy School of Government (a program, which was funded by a Hong Kong patron named Nina Kung, who in 1997

¹⁸⁸ Richard J. Ellings and Sheldon W. Simon, *Southeast Asian Security in the New Millennium*, New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1996, pp. 224-25.

¹⁸⁹ Chang Ya-chun, "Beijing's Maritime Rivalry with the US and Japan", *Issues & Studies*, vol. 34, no 6, (June 1998), p. 78.

¹⁹⁰ Bill Gertz, *The China Threat*, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*

provided US\$1 million to it), describing scheme as a ‘training program for Chinese spies’.¹⁹² However, these examples may be seen not as the outcome of false-engagement policy, but as the result of mismanaging of the policy. Americans should not adhere to the view that the final victory in the Cold War came from its stern containment policy toward the former Soviet Union. China is in many respects quite different from the Soviet Union. China has had a long history of preserving its nationhood in spite of numerous outside challenges, especially in its long tradition of the “Middle Kingdom”. China also has economic potential coupled with skilled manpower and ability to tap economically healthy ethnic Chinese communities around the world.

Since its first month in office, the Bush administration designated China as a strategic competitor, which represented the biggest threat to the US, but after the tragic carnage of New York and Washington on 11 September 2001, Bush’s policy toward Beijing altered dramatically from his earlier decisions.¹⁹³ The Bush administration seems to realise that the cooperation with China is necessary for its war efforts against terrorism and for its global economic strategy since China’s entry into the WTO. However, the controversy between Beijing and Washington over the Taiwan question and China’s maritime ambitions towards SLOCs in the Western Pacific and the Indian Ocean will continue to be thorny issues between the two great powers.

How effectively the US handles China’s naval ambitions will strongly affect the overall maritime security of the Asia-Pacific community and the rest of the world. In this context, Washington’s constructive engagement toward Beijing can foster considerable stability for the Asia-Pacific region. As such, this policy option would enable the United States to also restrain China’s naval ambitions and to prevent regional arms race. More important still, it would guarantee more secure and prosperous Asia-Pacific community.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 43.

¹⁹³ Stratfor, “Return to China”, *Global Intelligence News Update*, October 15, 2001.

Conclusion

China was a predominant nation in Asia, both in political and economic terms, until the mid-nineteenth century. During its long history, China was primarily a continental power, except for brief period of maritime dominance. It became an advanced sea power in the fifteenth century, when Admiral Zheng He conducted ambitious voyages as far as Middle East and Western Africa. His expeditions went far beyond those of early western explorers (who ventured to the “New World” nearly a century later) with respect to the technology of the ships and his crews’ navigational skills. However, China’s maritime expeditions were suddenly halted with the Ming dynasty’s abandonment of a sea-faring policy. China itself became the prey of European sea powers from the mid-nineteenth century, and experienced a century of humiliation almost entirely due to a combination of naval challenges from the outside world and internal rebellions.

After the fall of the empire, the Chinese state existed under a troubled Republican regime until the death of Sun Yat-sen, and the eventual split between the Nationalists and the Communists. The protracted civil war on mainland China continued for more than two decades until 1949, when the People’s Republic of China (PRC) was established. When the PRC came into existence, its naval force was very small, with about 4,000 troops and some 100 ships, mostly those surrendered by the Nationalists or captured by the Communists in the final stage of the civil conflict. During Mao Zedong’s 17-year rule, the PRC leaders were guided by his doctrine of ‘people’s war’; a doctrine that gave rise to policies which were inward-looking and isolation in character. His strategy was to rely heavily upon the country’s vastness to swallow up an invading army and make it subject to guerrilla-style attack until his forces gained enough strength to expel it. Therefore, throughout the 1950s and 1960s, the

major responsibility of the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) was to focus on coastal defence. As a consequence, China's naval capabilities lagged far behind those of the West, and continued to do so for nearly half a century. Even during Deng Xiaoping's era, naval modernisation progressed slowly due to other priorities (such as economic and technological development) being put in place.

This thesis has argued that China's regional security environment has changed markedly in the post-Cold War era, especially with its commencement of a more ambitious maritime strategy. The end of the 1990s saw China's land border disputes largely settled, while those on the sea remained, and arguably even grew. Moreover, China's naval challenge has emerged as a great concern to many countries around the Western Pacific and the Indian Ocean, adding to the actual and potential tensions on the seas. China's maritime assertiveness in the region has been further encouraged by the disintegration of the former Soviet Union and the subsequent diminution of the Russian Pacific Fleet. China's oil imports from the Middle East, and island disputes in the South China Sea have also increased Beijing's attention to the security of sea-lanes from the Gulf to mainland China.

The South China Sea dispute has been a significant source of tension and conflict in the region. Major military clashes in the region occurred between China and Vietnam, and China and the Philippines during the past three decades. The exploration of offshore resources in the region continues to be a source of tension for the various claimants involved. ASEAN nations have realised that bilateral talks between China and each claimant is unlikely to resolve the dispute, thus they are considering a multilateral security regime within their regional frameworks, such as ASEAN and the ARF. Alternatively, Southeast Asian littoral nations can establish multinational naval peacekeeping forces (MNPKEF) for the navigational safety along the Malacca Straits and in the South China Sea. The MNPKEF can be organised by either ASEAN or ARF member nations. Should such a grouping be formed, its function can be enhanced through the conduct of multinational maritime exercises and the exchange of

military information among member countries. The best way for ASEAN to maintain regional security and prosperity is, therefore, to accommodate China and the US in its organisational structure.

In addition to the sea challenge, there are a number of contending issues between China and the US, including the Taiwan issue, US-Japan security alliance, and Theatre Missile Defence initiative in Asia. The Taiwan issue has long been a thorny issue between Beijing and Washington, as China regards Taiwan as one of its provinces, while US leaders see defending Taiwan from the PRC's military provocation as one of the most important US commitments towards peoples of the Asia-Pacific region. The Chinese believe that the US is an immediate obstacle for their re-unification with Taiwan, and US-Japan Defence Guidelines are in many respects targeting China's naval ambitions towards regional waterways. The Chinese also believe that the possible inclusion of Taiwan in the TMD program would seriously hinder China's effort to unify Taiwan.

Since the end of the Cold War, the US-China relationship has emerged as one of the most important issues in the Asia-Pacific region. There is no doubt that the two countries continue to play a significant role in the region in the coming decades. With the growing ambitions of China's navy towards the Southeast Asian waterways and the Indian Ocean, the US and China's neighbouring countries have displayed great apprehension in this area. China is trying to expand its maritime influence not only over the regional waterways, but also beyond these to the world's strategic chokepoints, such as the Suez and Panama canals. All these sea-lanes are critical for the US global strategy because they are the source of numerous national interests, including the safety of commercial shipping and force projection for the US and its allies. Any impediment created by China in such waterways would damage the overall security climate of the Asia-Pacific region.

Some observers have characterised the twentieth century as 'the American Century', and others are now predicting that the twentieth-first century will be 'the Naval Century', an

era in which naval and maritime power will be even more critical elements of national power and prestige. As the economies of the world grow rapidly and expand globally, the sea has become an increasingly important 'highway' for this expansion. Likewise, many nations in the Asia-Pacific have overlapping claims over territorial seas and islands. This reality has encouraged many of the Asia-Pacific nations to enhance their naval forces. Of these, China's naval resurgence is the most significant feature of regional strategic framework.

To cope with China's potential sea challenge, the US should, through constructive engagement policy, accommodate the PRC in the global community. The sustained US military presence in the Asia-Pacific region, and joint naval exercises with regional navies, will contribute to the implementation of such a policy, and thereby guarantee the safety of regional waterways. China has already emerged as a great power in a regional context. With its entry into the WTO on 11 December 2001, China is now able to further accelerate its economic development and expand its diplomatic influence. In such a situation, the US constructive engagement policy toward China is even more significant, helping to promote the security and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region, as well as for the international community as a whole.

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