



STRATEGIC VISION

for Taiwan Security

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Turkey's Coup

Burhan Cikili

India and BRICS

Jabin T. Jacob

Philippines Shakes up Relations

Tran Thi Duyen

US-India-Japan Partnership

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Cross-Strait Ties Hidden Dangers lurk

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From The Editor

THE EDITORS AND staff of *Strategic Vision* would like to wish our readers well this during this autumn season. The Asia-Pacific continues to undergo important developments. We hope that students and scholars in the academic community have the chance to keep up with these events. In support of that effort, we offer our latest edition of *Strategic Vision*.

We open this issue with James Borton, a faculty associate at the Walker Institute at the University of South Carolina, who argues that scientific cooperation can help reduce tensions in the South China Sea and assist in preserving a fragile ecosystem.

Next, Dr. Monika Chansoria, a Senior Fellow heading the China study program at the Centre for Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS) in New Delhi, examines the role of China's maritime militia in its efforts to assert control over Chinese claims.

Dr. Wen-hao Lu, currently the deputy director of the Research and Development Office at the ROC National Defense University, argues that tensions between the United States and the Philippines has greatly undermined the US pivot to Asia.

Strategic Vision's own Dr. Richard Hu and Jonathan Spangler of the South China Sea Think Tank discuss how strategic ambiguity complicates Taiwan's defense policy planning.

Finally, J. Berkshire Miller, an international affairs fellow with the Council on Foreign Relations, outlines Japan's expanding regional security role in the face of Chinese assertiveness.

We hope you enjoy this issue, and look forward to bringing you the finest analysis and reporting on the issues of importance to security in the Taiwan Strait and the Asia-Pacific region.

Dr. Fu-Kuo Liu
Editor
Strategic Vision

Tough Talks

Latest round of BRICS talks in India reveal dissension in the ranks

Jabin T. Jacob

AMONG THE MANY meetings and forums held in the run-up to or during the 8th BRICS Summit in October in Goa, India, were those involving national security advisors, youth leaders, young diplomats, women parliamentarians, central bank governors and sister cities, and the ministers of finance, health, education, environment, tourism, disaster management, agriculture, telecommunications and science and technology as well as issues of urbanization, migration, non-tariff measures, infrastructure financing and communicable diseases. As a result, the final declaration at the end of the 8th BRICS Summit in Goa, India was a massive document that seemed to cover almost every issue possible.

While this range of issues and themes reflects the great potential of the group to effect decisive change in global politics and economic development, given the state of the economies of Russia, Brazil and South Africa and the slow pace of implementation of the Indians, what we can expect will likely be an inability to follow through consistently on many of these issues. While state capacity is also different in each case, even concepts such as transparency and accountability – so crucial to the success of joint ventures, including projects in non-BRICS nations – are viewed differently in each of these countries.

Politics is also prominent in the group and China's dominant weight, with support from Russia, has

seen joint statements taking on an anti-Western tilt. Further, dynamics between India and China have had a role to play, at least from an Indian perspective, on the final BRICS statement on terrorism. The statement was seen as weak in India due to outrage over the terrorist attack on an army camp in the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir the previous month that was planned in Pakistan.

Meeting Resistance

At the meeting between Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese president Xi Jinping on the sidelines of the BRICS Summit, two issues dominated; China's resistance to India's membership in the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), and China's refusal to criticize Pakistan for state-sponsored terrorism. New Delhi did not get far on either subject.

While the BRICS Declaration itself addressed the subject of terrorism, when referring to attacks, the formulation 'against some BRICS countries, including that in India', effectively downplayed the qualitatively different and more serious nature of the terrorist attacks against India. In fact, only the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and the former al-Qaeda affiliate, Jabhat al-Nusra, are mentioned by name, both of which are primarily threats to Russia and to

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photo: Kelly Haux

Yudh Abhyas 2016, a bilateral military exercise, opens in India, bringing U.S. and Indian Soldiers together for combined training.

a lesser extent China, but not really to India. In contrast, the Taliban in Afghanistan was not named in the declaration, nor were the Pakistani-based groups that have been targeting India.

The closest India got to naming Pakistan as a terrorist threat was in a line which read, “We recall the responsibility of all States to prevent terrorist actions from their territories”. This was also how Secretary of Economic Relations and Indian Sherpa for the BRICS, Amar Sinha, answered a specific question at a press briefing on whether Modi had insisted on including ‘cross-border terrorism’ in the Declaration. He further added that for India the objective was to push certain ‘ideas’ and ‘concepts’ and ‘we got them so we are quite happy’. Both the Indian Ministry of External Affairs official spokesperson Vikas Swarup and Sinha in answering repeated questions on whether or not India was satisfied with the way terrorism was addressed in the Declaration declared themselves satisfied, or tried to remind the journalists to ‘not reduce the entire Goa Declaration only to terrorism’.

India’s official interlocutors attempted to convey the impression that the Goa BRICS Declaration was

the strongest yet on the subject of terrorism. And yet, Sinha also gave the game away by admitting in response to another question that there was no mention of Pakistan-based groups such as Jaish-e-Mohammad, and that no consensus was achieved in this regard. The United Nations recognizes Jaish-e-Mohammad as a terrorist group similar to organizations such as ISIL and al-Nusra. The failure to include Jaish-e-Mohammad in the Declaration is surely an

“The failure to include Jaish-e-Mohammad in the Declaration is surely an implicit reference to China’s blocking of the effort.”

implicit reference to China’s blocking of the effort.

While the expression, ‘international law’ makes several appearances in the Declaration, it usually does so in close proximity to the ‘United Nations’ which is a sure way of reading it as being applicable only when the interests of the U.N. Security Council, including Russia and China, allow it to operate. While the sanctity of international law has been highlighted



An AV-8B Harrier, assigned to Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron (VMM) 163 lands on the flight deck of the amphibious assault ship USS Makin Island.

with respect to outer space, there is not a single mention specifically of maritime issues, which is an issue where China has been criticized by India, as well as other Asian neighbors.

The emphasis on ‘countering misuse of the Internet, including social media by terror entities’ and ‘combating the use of ICTs [information and communication technologies] for criminal and terrorist purposes’ while a common interest of all parties is much more pertinent to China as it relates to China’s already heavy policing of the internet domestically. The fact that the need for ‘open’ use of ICT is immediately accompanied by its use to also be ‘secure’ shows the emphasis of the governments involved and also underlines the incipient threat to democratic expression everywhere. Further, while there is a call for an ‘open...secure’ internet, and it is talked of as a ‘global resource’, such offensive applications as hacking and cyber industrial espionage – where both Russian and Chinese citizens have been found to be at the forefront – were not mentioned as issues affecting the

openness and security of the Internet.

Manipulative Maneuvers

The references to the outcome of the G-20 meeting in Hangzhou earlier in the year, which included the RMB into the Special Drawing Rights currency basket, and the need for reform of international financial institutions, give the Declaration a very China-centric tone. For China, the references to the RMB helps promote its currency’s international profile as a potential rival to the US Dollar as a global currency. Each of the other BRICS nations are, in fact, increasing their borrowings of RMB loans, giving China expanded influence in their economies.

What is more, in section which discusses the ‘commitment to resolutely reject the continued attempts to misrepresent the results of World War II’, the declaration lends itself clearly to an anti-America and

anti-Japan stance, all of which is also contrary to Indian interests. At a press conference following the issuing of the declaration, the Indian foreign ministry spokesperson struggled to answer a Japanese journalist's query on the issue. The spokesperson argued that, "1945 to us represents the old world order, which we want changed" and pointed out that it was part of an effort that India, together with Japan, Brazil and Germany formed the G-4 grouping to ask for reforms of the UN Security Council. However, the Declaration made no clear commitment to such reform either, clearly undercutting the Indian claims.

Lacking Results

It would seem then that despite being the host, India's major achievement was in the pomp and ceremony of the summit rather than in substance. New Delhi seems to have been outmaneuvered by the Chinese

with support from the Russians and either indifference or support from the Brazilians and South Africans. These trends will only likely consolidate themselves given that China is the next host of the BRICS summit in 2017.

The 8th BRICS Summit at Goa then was an opportunity to witness in sharp focus the contradictions within this motley, unbalanced grouping. China is in a league of its own in the BRICS – both in economic terms as well as increasingly in the political sphere. India is the only other member that has a strong economy – the other three economies of Brazil, Russia and South Africa are all in various stages of stress. This reality limits the nature of what BRICS can practically achieve and possibly portends the group eventually having internal conflict or falling apart under the weight of its own contradictions.



photo: Christopher Morales

Two Republic of Korea Air Force C-130 Hercules depart Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson during Red Flag - Alaska 2016.



Sailors aboard the aircraft carrier USS *Nimitz* (CVN 68) watch as an EA-18G Growler prepares to land on the flight deck.

Fighting Back

One sign that this process might be getting underway is India's decision to host the BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation) summit in Goa even as the BRICS summit was winding down. A brief overlap allowed various leaders from the two groups to meet, including significantly, Xi Jinping and the Nepalese Prime Minister Prachanda. The Chinese president it must be noted had cancelled plans to visit Nepal on this leg of his tour to convey Beijing's displeasure with Kathmandu's relatively pro-India turn in recent months.

For its part India seemed to be sending a signal to the Chinese with the hosting of BIMSTEC, given that one of the important features of this group is the absence of China. The signal being that while India was open to economic cooperation with China, the latter also had to acknowledge India's geopolitical

interests. New Delhi would promote simultaneously organizations where it had the leading role distinct from those created by the Chinese or where they dominated. In this, India seems only to be taking a leaf out of the Chinese book – part of Beijing's global diplomatic strategy in recent years has been to agitate for an expanded role for itself in existing international organizations on the one hand, while simultaneously creating new institutions where it had decisive say and influence and which often rivaled older ones. ■

Switching Sides

Philippines shakes up foreign relations under President Duterte

Tran Thi Duyen

AFTER SIX YEARS of rocky and frosty ties between the Philippines and China under the former president Benigno Aquino, the relationship between these two countries has been warming up under the controversial leadership of President Rodrigo Duterte. After just over three months in office, Duterte has outlined an independent diplomatic path for the Philippines. He embarked along this new path in foreign policy, reducing the Philippines' dependence on its longtime ally the United States, when he announced a separation from the United States in both economic and military fields. Backing up his rhetoric, the Philippines leader directed the Ministry of Defense to cancel joint military exercises with the United States, issued a demand that Washington withdraw US military advisers from Mindanao, and ordered the Ministry of Defense to re-evaluate defense cooperation with the United States. He said that it was time for the Philippines to look for other avenues to avoid excessive dependence on the United States. Duterte wasted no time in seeking new partners. In August, former Philippine President Fidel Ramos was dispatched to China on an ice-breaking trip to China as a special envoy for Philippines president Rodrigo Duterte. Duterte soon followed up with a four-day state visit to Beijing himself on October 19th to the 22nd.

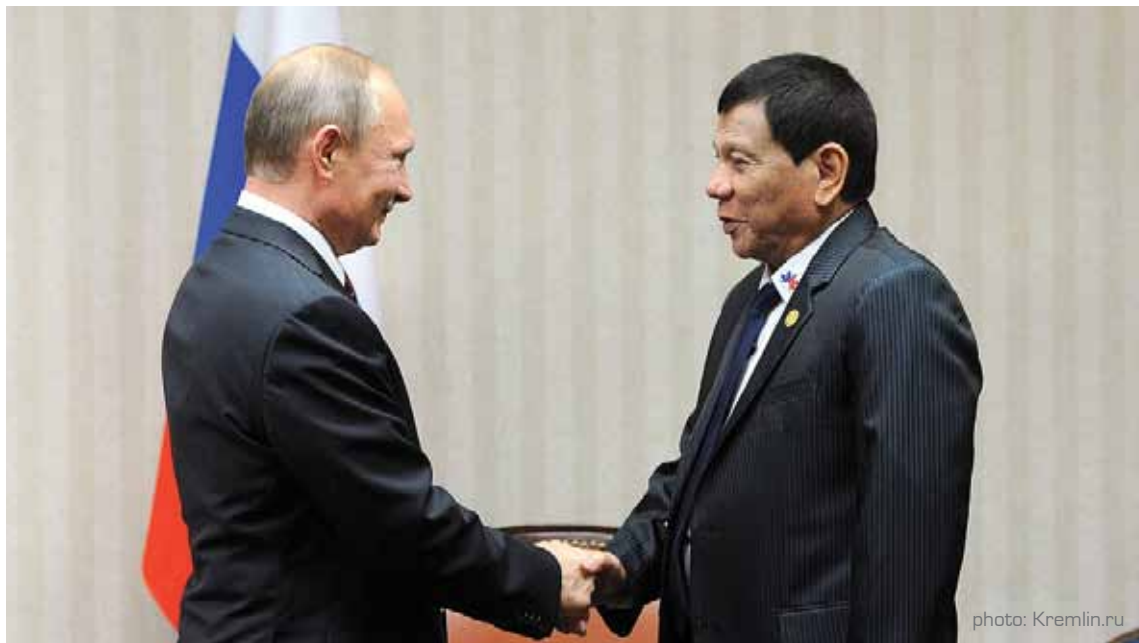
It would have been hard to imagine, four months ago, that a meeting between the leaders of the

Philippines and China could take place in such a cordial atmosphere. The visit attracted the attention of the media in the region and world, because President Duterte choose China - a country that has an ongoing and bitter dispute with the Philippines over sovereignty in the South China Sea, for his first visit outside of Southeast Asia, instead of choosing longtime ally the United States across the Pacific Ocean. The Philippines understands that China will embrace the goodwill visits because better relations with Manila will help Beijing contain Washington's influence in the region. Indeed, China welcomed Duterte with the highest level of protocol at the Great Hall of the People, along with a 21-gun salute. At the bilateral talks, the two leaders affirmed that the visit would be a new starting point in bilateral relations between the two countries.

Seeking Benefit

Looking at the visit, we can see that the Philippines has achieved three important results. First, the Philippines has gained a lot of economic benefits. China and the Philippines signed 13 bilateral cooperation deals worth US\$24 billion, including US\$9 billion in low-interest loans, with about one third of the loan offers coming from private banks and US\$15 billion in investments. China also lifted a ban

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Russian President Vladimir Putin, left, shakes hands with Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte as the two leaders meet for the first time.

on imports of processed fruit products from the Philippines. In addition, China now also encourages its tourists to go to the Philippines and is committing itself to help the Philippines in marine aquaculture and fisheries processing areas.

Second, China supports strongly efforts taken by the new Philippines government in the war on drugs. Notably, there was a Chinese business who agreed to help in the construction of a drug rehabilitation center with an area of 17 hectares for drug addicts in Davao city, Duterte's homeland.

Third, political relations between China and the Philippines have also undergone significant changes. The two sides have agreed to resolve disagreements in a reasonable manner and improve bilateral relations despite the July award by The Hague-based Permanent Arbitration Court on the South China Sea which favored Manila. Chinese President Xi Jinping stressed that Duterte's visit to China was a chance to put the China-Philippines relationship back to a friendship based on common interests and the wishes of the people of the two countries. President Duterte also stressed that there were dark points in the rela-

tions between the two countries, and that he wanted to remove these dark points, and forge a more cohesive relationship between the Philippines and China.

Solidifying Relations

Although both leaders agreed to improve the relationship between the two countries, the question remains whether the relationship can achieve a truly positive trajectory. More time is needed to see how this relationship develops over the rest of Duterte's six-year term. There are two key issues which must be recognized. First, progress so far largely consists of diplomatic commitments following a high-level visit. If this commitment does not transfer into concrete action within one year, or if the Philippines feels disappointed with China's commitments, the direction can easily deteriorate. In fact, commitment is easy, but implementation of the commitments will not be easy. Second, it is now just over four months into Duterte's six-year term and he has signaled quite a lot of foreign policy changes without much specifics about how



US Navy Admiral Harry Harris, right, speaks with Sri Lankan Naval officers during a visit for the 2016 Galle Dialogue on Maritime Security.

any of these changes will take place. Moreover, the Philippines - China political relationship at present is still at a stage where political trust is very low, and trust cannot be built up overnight. These two countries will need to make great effort and commitment to build up trust over a sustained period.

Warming Relations

Under Duterte's predecessor, former president Benigno Aquino, the relationship between the Philippines and China remained frosty for four years. The Philippines ended bilateral negotiations on the South China Sea issue after China seized the Scarborough Shoal in 2012. Already strained relations then heated up as Manila took its fight to the Hague-based Permanent Court of Arbitration in 2013. Aquino's administration also increased cooperation with its ally the United States, as well as Japan, to deal with the unpredictability in the region. In response, China canceled an invitation for Aquino to attend the China - ASEAN Expo in Nanning City in 2013. This

marked a period when Beijing and Manila turned against each other. Therefore, it must be said that Duterte's visit to China and what he achieved during his visit can be seen as an important breakthrough in the process of building up the relationship between the Philippines and China, with the expectation of further promoting the substantial cooperation and, at the same time, improve trust between the two countries.

Russia is also a country with which president Duterte is seeking a closer relationship to fill whatever gap that might be left behind by its longtime ally across the Pacific Ocean if this relationship is adversely affected. Duterte has expressed interest in strengthening economic and military ties with Russia. In the military realm, president Duterte has revealed his intentions to purchase weapons from Russia for the first time, instead of relying exclusively on the United States. In return, Russia will give the Philippines favorable credits with preferential repayment until 2025. This proves that Russia will be a factor, and that Duterte would like to send a message

to the United States that he is willing to cooperate with countries that are not part of the American alliance or part of the rebalancing foreign policy between the East and the West, as did, former president Fidel Ramos in the 1990s. On the one hand, he does not want the Philippines to be a mere pawn in the geostrategic chessboard of the great powers. On the other hand, he wants to take advantage of the availability of international capital to expedite the economic development of the Philippines. The Philippines' future plan also includes traditional regional partners, as shown by Duterte visit to Japan in late October.



Marines conduct training while underway aboard the aircraft carrier USS *Truman*. photo: US DOD

Shifting Winds

The Philippines' foreign policy reorientation is prompting questions of "whether the wind had changed direction", and how this change impact the United States and ASEAN countries. So far, the impact of Duterte's foreign policy adjustment on the regional situation remains unclear. We need to see how much of an adjustment there is, and this will take time. It may be said, however, that the first and foremost impact is that the relationship between Manila and Washington, who have been allies for 65 years, has been called into question. During the past 65 years, the Philippines has always been considered as America's little brown brother in the Asia-Pacific, heavily dependent on the United States, especially in the security realm, and the US is also the Philippines' leading foreign direct investor and third largest trade partner. But now, with the statement on independent relations with the United States, the close relation-

ship is at risk of being seriously affected, even though president Duterte explained at an earlier meeting in Beijing that his separation from Washington does not mean ending the Philippines' ties with the United States. Nevertheless, from what has occurred in the past months, one can see that the US pivot to Asia is facing great challenges as the Philippines is one of the key pillars of the policy and it plays central role in the new US-led Southeast Asia Maritime Security Initiative. With the Philippines keeping its distance from Washington, this has caused embarrassment for Washington and the United States has responded by reducing its influence on the Philippines.

Moreover, the Philippines' foreign policy adjustment is exacerbating uncertainty in relations between ASEAN, the United States and China. At the same time, it also causes more complexity in the efforts of ten Southeast Asian nations seeking to arrive at a united stance on regional issues, including the South China Sea disputes. As China comes increasingly close to ASEAN member states, these relations will

no doubt have an impact on China's approach to the South China Sea issues, creating difficulty for ASEAN to reach a consensus. This is especially true as the ten-nation group will be set to mark its 50th anniversary next year, with the Philippines as the chair of ASEAN. This means that in 2017, ASEAN is going to be in Beijing's orbit much more than in that of Washington, and Washington will have to consider what to do in the long term. This will be detrimental to ASEAN, because ASEAN wants to maintain a balance between Beijing and Washington, and not to be too close to one side or the other.

In sum, it is still too early to predict what will happen in trilateral ties between the Philippines, United States and China, because prospects still depend on many factors, in which the most important is trust. To sever a close traditional relationship can be simple, if one is heedless of consequences. But turning a frosty relationship into a warm relationship requires a long process and effort on both sides. There is no

guarantee that negotiations between China and the Philippines will produce results which will eventually satisfy both sides. Moreover, it remains to be seen how the United States' foreign policy develops under the Trump administration in the next 4 years. At any rate, with Duterte's foreign policy adjustment, in the next six years it will be not just the relationships as discussed above that will be reshaped, but perhaps

"turning a frosty relationship into a warm relationship requires a long process on both sides."

even the geo-political situation in the Asia-Pacific region in general, and ASEAN itself in particular, will also be certain to feel the impact. ■



photo: Abe McNatt

A brilliant moon rises over the deck of the USS Theodore Roosevelt in Coronado, California.

Trilateral Ties

China's rise drives deeper cooperation between India, US and Japan

Amrita Jash

IN THE 21ST Century global power politics has shifted from west to the east and has been accompanied by a strategic shift from the Atlantic to the Indo-Pacific Region. In addition, to the rise of China, the rise of India's economic and strategic clout, as well as the growing importance of the Indian Ocean, has led to the emergence of the concept of "Indo-Pacific. This significant and strategic shift in international politics has enlarged the contours of the old Asia-Pacific security architecture into a broad framework of "Indo-Pacific"- a new way to look at maritime Asia. Geographically, the

region covers the Eastern Coast of Africa through the Indian Ocean and Western Pacific Ocean. This new security architecture has prompted new frameworks with competitive and convergent security interests of actors such as Australia, China, India, Japan and the United States, which plays a pivotal role in the region. Indo-Pacific carries implications for the way countries approach security competition or cooperation in maritime Asia.

The growing economic, geopolitical, and security connections between the Western Pacific and the Indian Ocean regions are creating a single "strate-



Defense Secretary Ash Carter meets with Indian Defense Minister Manohar Parrikar at the Ministry of Defense in New Delhi.

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photo: Eric Hildebrandt

An E-2D Hawkeye and a C-2A Greyhound fly over USS Zumwalt (DDG 1000) as the ship travels to its new home port of San Diego, California.

gic system” under the Indo-Pacific security architecture. Most importantly, Indo-Pacific reflects the emerging strategic importance of the Indian Ocean in 21st century geopolitics, which is evident from the confluence of four strategies: Chinese President Xi Jinping’s “Maritime Silk Road” initiative, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s “Act East Policy”, U.S President Barack Obama’s “Rebalance/Pivot to Asia” and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe’s “Confluence of the Two Seas” - all aimed at playing a proactive role in the Indo-Pacific region. Thus, the Indo-Pacific region has become the nerve center of 21st century geopolitics, where regional and external powers are actively competing and collaborating with one another to counter and expand their own, and others influences. Who rules the Indo-Pacific? Who are the actors in the Indo-Pacific Theatre? What are their Strategic Interests? – these are the central questions that need to be examined.

There remains a strategic misconception that the Indo-Pacific idea excludes China from the regional

order. However, on the contrary, it is the expansion of China’s interests, diplomacy and strategic reach into the Indian Ocean that most of all defines the Indo-Pacific. The key driver behind the Pacific-India Ocean interconnection is the extension of Chinese interests both economic and strategic and the urge to increase its presence in south and west across the seas.

Shifting Focus

With the power shift, China too has shifted its focus to the Indo Pacific. The key factors behind China’s shift of interest are: the fact that more than 80% of Chinese oil imports get transported across the Indian Ocean, over one million Chinese citizens live or work in Africa, where it is also a principal foreign investor, and finally. As a result of this growing interest, China is increasingly strengthening its naval pres-



US Air Force technicians work on an F-16 with their Japan Air Self-Defense Force (JASDF) counterparts at Misawa Air Base, Japan.

ence in the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean. In 2015 China built its first offshore military base in Djibouti, reflecting China's deepened interest in the region. What further exemplifies China's strategic interest to play an influencing role in Indian Ocean is the "One Belt, One Road" initiative – an ambitious plan that aims to extend China-centric infrastructure and strategic partnerships into the Indian Ocean. In view of this, the "21st Maritime Silk Road" is often called the "Indo-Pacific with Chinese Characteristics". In pursuit of its interest, the most alarming trends are assessed in China's growing assertiveness in the South China Sea, which has predominantly fueled apprehensions over China's behavior in maintaining good order at sea.

Given China's increasing military posture in the region, one of the primary challenges faced in Indo-Pacific is that of the security of the Sea lanes of Communications (SLOCs). This has become the primary cause of concern for other major actors such as India, Japan and United States who seek common interest in the region against the China challenge.

These strategic interests include: First, global sea-borne trade, around 21,480 billion ton-miles in 1999, rose to almost 41,800 billion ton-miles in 2014. Of which, 40 percent of this seaborne trade is accounted for by the Strait of Malacca. Second, around 15.5 million barrels of global oil trade passes through the Gulf of Hormuz and 11 million barrels of oil pass through Malacca and Singapore straits. These factors interlink SLOC security and energy security which are critical concerns for regional and global economic growth and development. Therefore, China's naval activity is a cause of concern. For India, Japan and the United States the concerns vis-à-vis China are related to the importance of international law and peaceful settlement of disputes, freedom of navigation and overflight, and unimpeded lawful commerce, including in the South China Sea.

The strategic interests and security concerns stemming from China's increasing presence in the region have influenced other major powers to reorient their regional strategies. For instance, India's "Act East Policy", the U.S. "Pivot to Asia Policy" and

Japan's reinvigorated role as "proactive contributor to peace" - all signify their Indo-Pacific focus. Most prominently, actors such as India, Japan and United States are making proactive efforts to engage in partnerships to produce a strategic counterweight. This has led to the evolution of a trilateral partnership between the three countries. There is a convergence of interests in the regional security architecture which justifies the motivation behind the India-Japan-US trilateral partnership. Wherein, faced with the common China challenge, the central goal is to work together to maintain maritime security through greater collaboration based on shared support for peace, democracy, prosperity, and a rules-based international order.

Converging Interests

The idea of the long anticipated trilateral dialogue was first conceived in 2011, and finally attained formal stature in September of 2015, when U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry hosted the inauguration of the US-India-Japan Trilateral Ministerial Dialogue with Indian Foreign Minister Sushma Swaraj and Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida, on the sidelines of 70th UN General Assembly in New York. This strategic partnership is seen as a strong countervailing force against China's influence in the region. A concrete example of the evolving partnership is the 2015 "India-Japan-US Trilateral Malabar Naval Exercise." Malabar exercises began in 1992 as an India-US bilateral naval exercise. Japan became a permanent participant in 2015. Malabar symbolizes the strength-



US Navy Admiral Harry Harris, left, meets with Japanese Minister of Defense Tomomi Inada.

ening trilateral strategic partnership between India, Japan, and the United States amid China's expansive territorial claims and increasingly assertive stance in the South and East China Seas.

However, defense and security cooperation at the bilateral level has also significantly added to the changing security architecture in the Indo-Pacific. Washington and Tokyo have long cooperated closely

"Malabar symbolizes the strengthening trilateral strategic partnership between India, Japan and the United States"

on defense, however, what is important to note is the changing dynamics of the India-Japan strategic equation. In the recent past, both the countries have undertaken important steps forward in strengthening their strategic nexus in areas such as defense technology, nuclear energy and freedom of navigation.

Broad Cooperation

The recently signed India-Japan Civil Nuclear Deal in November 2016 is also a significant development in this cooperation. This initiative further favors India's own bid at the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) where China acts as a strong resistant force. India and Japan are also forging greater cooperation in the fields of technology transfer and defense production exchanges under the "Make in India" plan. In addition, Japan's expressed interest to cooperate in the Chah Bahar Project in which India and Afghanistan have a shared interest, would be another boost to growing partnership.

The Indo-Pacific Region has evolved from just being an idea to a significant regional construct in the global security architecture. China is the central driving force in the emerging Indo-Pacific security

architecture— both as a player as well as an influencer in the region. To counter the China challenge, India, Japan and the United States have revamped their influence and strategic presence in the region. Wherein, the "India-Japan-US Trilateral Partnership" is a strong strategic partnership in the making with significant implications. Most importantly, this strategic partnership is mainly directed as a countervailing force against China's assertive posture. However, to note, no single country can unilaterally shape the Indo-Pacific security architecture, growing security challenges can only be met by a strong strategic partnership. Given the convergence of interests against China's rise, it is likely that security cooperation between the India, the U.S. and Japan will only grow closer. ■



photo: Karen Tomasik

Two F-15s and two US Marine Corps F/A-18C Hornets return to Eielson Air Force Base, Alaska during Red Flag 2016.

Shifting Winds

Turkey's Erdogan looks East after surviving military coup attempt

Burhan Cikili

THE HISTORY OF modern Turkey is filled with military interventions into civil politics. The military has intervened directly in Turkish politics three times, and in 1997 carried out a coup. The Turkish military defines itself as the “guardians of Turkish secular democratic state” which was established by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and accepts his doctrines as the main ideology (Kemalism). All of these previous coups or attempts had one discourse in common; “Our regime is in danger!” Turkey’s constitution gives the military the authority to “step in” when needed and the same constitution still exists after years, that is one of the biggest breach in Turkish government system hence we can say July 15 coup at-

tempt was not happened all of a sudden.

On the evening of July 15th 2016, Turkish TV stations started broadcasting that some military tanks had been observed in Istanbul city and had blocked one way of two main bridges in Istanbul. In Ankara, it was reported that gunshots had been heard and military jets and helicopters were flying over the city. Later, Turkish PM Yildirim announced on TV that a coup attempt to overthrow the government was underway. Later that evening, President Erdogan appeared on TV and declared that he is safe and called people to “protest putchists on the street and do what is necessary” adding that the judiciary “will swiftly respond to this attack”.



Turkish citizens in Istanbul protest the short-lived coup against Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

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photo: Arielle Vasquez

A US Air Force B-1B Lancer takes off from Andersen AFB to conduct integration training with Royal Australian Air Force joint terminal air controllers.

By the morning of July 16, the government announced that the coup was repelled and over. However the threat continued and people were warned not leave the streets to protect democracy day and night. Every single mosque repeatedly encouraged people to go out to protect the nation and democracy. As a result of the coup, more than 280 civilians have been killed.

Purging Campaign

After the failed coup attempt, President Erdogan announced a state of emergency for three months and started a widespread purge against Gulen sympathizers everywhere, even though Gulen denied any involvement and invited the Turkish government to initiate an international investigation to substantiate its claims. The Turkish Government refused. Later, the purges even extended to non-Gulenists, Kurds, Alevites, critical journalists, writers and other opposition group.

Up to this point, 104,912 officials have been sacked and 50,979 people detained while 27,329 people were arrested. Among them 5,348 academics have been dis-

missed, or arrested. 3,531 judges and prosecutors have been dismissed. More than 120 journalists have been arrested, which makes Turkey the largest persecutor of journalists. The purges have also targeted institutions. According to the Minister of Internal Affairs more than 1,250 NGOs, associations and foundations were shutdown, which is a huge blow to civil society in Turkey. Additionally, more than 2,100 schools, dormitories and universities were shut down and 180 media outlets, newspapers, TV channels were closed permanently.

From the very beginning, pro-government media made it appear that all the purges were related to Gulen sympathizers. However, three members of the high constitutional court, which is the top judiciary position in Turkey, were among the first purged. Many of the critical journalists and politicians from the Kurdish HDP party and Alevite community members were also purged. Recently the Turkish government is preparing to take over 28 democratically elected Kurdish municipalities by force. Therefore, many Western experts suspects that the coup attempt actually provided Erdogan with a huge opportunity to silence opposition groups and take control of every institution in the country.



photo: Glenn Fawcett

Former US Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel meets with Turkish army Gen. Necdet Özel, the chief of the Turkish General Staff in Ankara, Turkey.

New Ideologies

The most critical and extensive purges happened in the military after the academic community was censored. The Turkish armed forces have long been seen as a guarantee of Turkey's stability, inside and outside the country. But the failed coup saw it break apart in a manner that will be very difficult to reverse. No less than 149 out of a total of 358 generals and admirals have been detained or dishonorably discharged. In total, about 1,400 military envoys have been fired so far while more than 10,000 of them have been detained. Those arrested include the army commander, who was fighting the Kurdish insurrection in southeast Turkey, and the former chief of staff of the air force.

Dismissals of the military staff have raised some questions from NATO since the purges have only targeted pro-NATO staff. Three days after the failed coup, 149 military envoys in NATO offices throughout Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands and Britain were recalled to Turkey and summarily dismissed. U.S. Central Command Commander Gen. Joseph

Votel expressed his concerns and said a number of the U.S. military's closest allies in the Turkish military have been placed in jail following the coup attempt. "We've certainly had relationships with a lot of Turkish leaders, and military leaders in particular, I'm concerned about what the impact is on those relationships as we continue." For pro-Erdogan people it was viewed as another indication that the US was behind the coup. In contrast, some experts believe that the coup was actually against pro-NATO generals in the military.

Those who follow Turkey's foreign policy will remember that Erdogan had long desired to join the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, which is highly attractive for authoritarian leaders who want to avoid international pressure on human rights and freedom. Similarly, recently elected Philippine President Duterte also expressed his desire to join as well. Moreover, after the 2011 Arab Spring, Erdogan publicly expresses his goal to transform Turkey into a presidential system (from a current semi-presidential system) and install himself as the first president of Turkey. His Justice and Development Party even prepared a draft amendment on the presidential sys-

tem, which would give extensive rights to the president that are equal to the power which sultans of the past yielded. After Turkey shoot down a Russian jet fighter in November 2015, relations with Russia and dreams of joining the SCO were dashed. On July 2, only two weeks prior to the coup attempt, Turkey apologized to Russia and expressed its will to improve ties, which lead to meetings between Turkish and Russian leaders.

Democratic Demise

The Turkish military was always seen as the defender of the secular regime and Turkey's Western alliance. The military was the only remaining institution which resisted Erdogan's undemocratic policies until the coup attempt. After pro-NATO generals were dismissed, Erdogan had the chance to assign new generals from among pro-Eurasians, who favor a pact which would include Russia, China and Iran. As a sign of Erdogan's restructuring of the military, the Turkish military entered north Syria to fight against ISIS and PYD (Democratic Union Party of Syria), and the YPG (People's Protection Units) Kurdish forces, and is now moving to Mosul in Northern Iraq. The previous military never supported operations in Syria. Turkish Special Forces with the Free Syrian Army groups in Syria are hoping to clear the area from ISIS, PYD and YPG (Kurdish groups) and replace them with groups that will cooperate with Turkey to avoid a Kurdish corridor in North Syria. In the name of fighting against ISIS, the Turkish military already cleared Jarablus, Azez and is now in Al-Bab from Kurdish forces. In order to stop another wave of refugees (expected from Aleppo) Turkey hopes to declare a no-fly zone in the North Syria, which has been rejected by the US and recently supported by Russia.

Russia, China and Iran openly support Turkey's decision to move away from NATO, which will defi-

nately weaken the organization. Talk of Turkey's leaving NATO date back to 2013 when Turkey considered purchasing Chinese air defense equipment, valued at \$3.44 billion. NATO openly criticized Turkey's decision and asserted that Turkey's decision would put NATO in danger and may create a major leak in the air defense system of NATO. Under pressure, Turkey cancelled the contract with China. However, since Turkey apologized to Russia, it has now invited Russian arms manufacturers into the competition,

"The military was the only remaining institution which resisted Erdogan's undemocratic policies until the coup attempt."

in addition to US, European and Russian bidders.

President Erdogan's increasingly authoritarian actions generate criticism from the EU side too. Turkey, as candidate country of EU and a source of emigration and transit migration, is extremely important for EU security and stability. While Erdogan constantly pushes EU with the Syrian refugee card to continue pushing for full membership, European parliament recently voted to halt accession talks with Turkey. On the other hand Erdogan, who is disturbed with the Copenhagen Criteria of the EU, is tactically getting closer to the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) as an alternative to the EU. However the SCO rather than being an alternative to the EU, prioritizes defense, which is more like NATO, not like the EU, which prioritizes economics and politics. Additionally, Turkey's critical economic dependency on the EU (60% of its exports are to the EU) leaves Turkey with almost no other alternatives in terms of economic partnership. The Turkish Lira also hit a record low against the USD and many economic experts believe that it is a sign of an upcoming economic crisis which might be the worst ever. The SCO's

heavyweights are Russia and China, both of which support Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, which suggests a sharp maneuver for Turkey on Syrian Policy. It was only few years ago that Erdogan accused China of perpetrating genocide against Uighur Turks in Xinjiang China, Turkey's supportive position for Uighurs is another expected problem. Even though there are many contradictions in its support of Turkey, the SCO recently appointed Turkey to chair the SCO Energy Club in 2017, being the first non-SCO country to do so.

Lingering Questions

The post-coup mass reorganization of institutions has helped the government to politicize the military in Turkey. As a result it has given the government more maneuvering capacity with the military in Syria and Iraq. Currently the Turkish government finds Russian support to be more advantageous than the US-led NATO position in Syria. While Turkey

is favoring the SCO, which is mostly led by authoritarian regimes and has no intention of supporting democratic values, relations with EU are critical for Turkey's democracy.

The coup attempt has left many questions unanswered. The number of remaining putschists is unknown. After the coup attempt, Erdogan said he could not reach the chief of military staff and the chief of intelligence, how much they were involved is unknown. The first day after the coup more than 3,500 people were detained; how and when were those names prepared? Again Erdogan claimed that he learned of the coup from his brother-in-law around an hour before it began. However, a few days ago, Russia's presidential spokesperson claimed that they "informed Turkey about the coup attempt one day before it happened." If this is true, then why was the information not acted on sooner? Clearly, many important questions remain. As the dust begins to settle, it will be possible to gain a better picture of Turkey's future trajectory. ■



photo: Paolo Bovo

A paratrooper descends onto Frida drop zone during airborne operations in Pordenone, Italy.

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Facing Uncertainty

Strategic ambiguities complicate Taiwan's defense policy planning

Richard Hu & Jonathan Spangler

TAIWAN HAS LONG played a pivotal role in regional relations, and much of its strength today is derived from its thriving economy, vibrant democracy, and strong diplomatic relations with other countries. At the same time, its de facto statehood without UN member-state status remains a seemingly insurmountable obstacle, and it must also continuously confront the daunting reality that its most important economic partner is also its most serious security threat. Taiwan's defense policy has been analyzed using many different lenses and encouraged by various defense concepts over the years, including the "resolute defense, effective de-

terrence" strategy before 1992 and again after 2008, the more proactive "effective deterrence, resolute defense" approach. In the interim, there have been a host of concepts, including the "porcupine" strategy suggested by William Murray; the "deter, defend, repel, and partner" strategy encouraged by Dan Blumenthal et al.; discussions about theater missile defense (TMD) systems; suggestions about cross-strait military confidence-building measures during the Ma administration; and the "four elements" (i.e., military technology, economic power, national identity, and China-Taiwan-US trilateral relations) assessed by Lowell Dittmer.



ROC Coast Guard members, such as these personnel conducting a ceremony in Kaohsiung, play a key role in defending Taiwan's vast maritime territory.

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These diverse conceptualizations are analytically useful for assessing the current state and future trajectory and options for Taiwan's defense policy, but there is always more to the picture than meets the eye. In Taiwan's case, there are three key ambiguities that serve as drivers of its defense policy: Washington's military commitment, Beijing's unification resolve, and Taipei's unrevealed intentions. This article outlines these three ambiguities, makes a preliminary assessment of their implications, and argues that they must be taken into consideration in any attempt to elucidate the past, present, and future of Taiwan's defense policy.

Questionable support

The first ambiguity driving Taiwan's defense policy relates to whether or not the United States will come to Taiwan's aid militarily in a contingency involving the People's Republic of China (PRC). Although the United States has served as the guarantor of Taiwan's security for over half a century, shifting global power relations suggest that its enduring support is by no means a foregone conclusion. The PRC has enjoyed nearly continuous double-digit economic growth over most of the past 30 years and transformed itself into the world's second-largest economy.

In its annual report to Congress, entitled *Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China*, the US Department of Defense concluded that none of the cross-strait military trends have been moving in Taiwan's favor since at least 2009. The RAND Corporation, in *The US-China Military Scorecard* published in 2015, estimated that if the United States were to confront the PRC in a war involving Taiwan, it would likely be a desperate affair with significant losses on both sides. Even more alarming, they see "a series of tipping points" in China's favor that might come as early as 2020.

China's rise has caused anxiety throughout the re-

gion. Doubts about the strength of US commitments to regional security have also increased, and the Asia-Pacific rebalancing strategy launched under the Obama administration has only been able to partially assuage these fears. Although the Taiwan Relations Act of 1979 and House Congressional Resolution 88 on "Reaffirming the Taiwan Relations Act and the Six Assurances as cornerstones of United States-Taiwan relations" of 2016 codify US defense commitments to Taiwan, there is no mutual defense agreement or formal diplomatic relationship between the two countries. In recent years, some US lawmakers have even resentfully told Taiwan politicians to increase their own military spending and take national defense issues more seriously. Washington, in order to maintain flexibility in its policy options and focus on its own national interests, prefers to maintain a certain level of strategic ambiguity about the extent of its military commitment to Taiwan.

Managing uncertainty

Uncertainty and ambiguity about the US military commitment has several important implications for Taiwan's defense policy and other policy approaches that are tightly linked to its security. First, it forces Republic of China (ROC) policymakers to broaden their list of policy options for arms procurement and development. In order to offset the inherent risks of relying entirely on US arms sales, Taiwan has begun to ensure that the local defense industry continues to develop and consider alternative sources of foreign arms procurement. Taipei will need to build greater momentum regarding these options while also redoubling its efforts to demonstrate to Washington that making clear commitments to Taiwan are in the best interests of the United States and beneficial to regional security and stability.

Second, given the limited resources of the Taiwanese armed forces relative to those of the People's



A C-17 Globemaster III, a high-wing, four-engine, T-tailed military transport vehicle, takes off from Wheeler Army Airfield in Hawaii on a supply mission.

Liberation Army (PLA), Taipei will also need to use non-military means to reduce the risk of military confrontation with China. Diplomatically, the administration of ROC President Tsai Ing-wen will have to proceed cautiously in order to maintain cross-strait stability. The government must find a balance that safeguards Taiwan's autonomy and seeks out new opportunities for international engagement without signaling to Beijing that its moves indicate a shift towards independence.

Economically, Taipei must ensure that Taiwan is not overly reliant on its trade relations with China in order to reduce the risk of Beijing using its economic leverage in ways detrimental to Taiwan's security interests.

Because independently guaranteeing its own security would be unfeasible for Taiwan, it must supplement its own defense capabilities by relying in part on its strong relations with the United States and its pivotal role in regional relations. Many, if not most, Taiwan people still have great expectations about US intervention in the Taiwan Strait should that day come. However, a withering willingness among US

lawmakers to become involved militarily in a cross-strait contingency or any other regional conflict has led to greater ambiguity about Washington's military commitment to Taiwan. This ambiguity cannot be ignored and is an increasingly important driver of Taiwan's defense policy.

Regional leadership

Taiwan's defense policy is also highly influenced by the ambiguity related to whether or not—and, if so, when and how—China will back up its firm resolution regarding eventual unification with military force. To this day, Beijing has not renounced the use of force against Taiwan to achieve the goal of unification. According to the ROC Ministry of National Defense, there are a variety of circumstances under which the PRC might decide to invade Taiwan, including Taiwan formally declaring independence or taking steps toward de jure independence; Taiwan obtaining nuclear weapons; foreign troops being deployed to Taiwan; extreme civil unrest or other internal disorder in Taiwan; foreign forces interfering

in Taiwan's affairs; or Taiwan delaying cross-strait negotiations on eventual reunification.

Although events over the past few decades could have been construed as falling into one of these scenarios, Beijing has failed to use force to respond in the past. Several reasons for this might include strategic patience and long-term thinking about the unification issue; acknowledgement that unification by force would be unsustainable relative to peaceful unification; concerns about military intervention by the United States and other foreign powers; and considerations about the inadequacy of the PLA's own military capabilities. That said, the current scenario may be different than in the past: The level of tension between the Beijing leadership and the Tsai administration, coupled with the PRC's increasingly hawkish position on its territorial claims, increase the ambiguity surrounding the enduring threat of unification by force.

Tough responses

The Tsai administration and DPP-majority legislature, many of whose members have leaned towards independence in the past, represent an additional variable in Beijing's calculus that could strengthen its resolve. Beijing has embraced the view that Tsai and the DPP are playing China by hiding their real intentions and pushing for Taiwan's "soft" independence—avoiding the legal aspects of formal independence while edging further towards cultural, economic, diplomatic, and military independence. Over the past two months, some PRC scholars and retired senior military officials such as Wang Hungkuang, a retired lieutenant general and former deputy commander of the Nanking Military Region, have openly voiced their views that the PRC should seriously consider recovering Taiwan and reunifying China by force before 2020, or even as early as next year.

Ambiguity regarding China's willingness to back

up its political rhetoric by force has important implications for Taiwan's defense policy. In particular, the heightened sense of threat from the PRC has increased the urgency of defense issues for the people of Taiwan, as well as ROC military officials and policymakers. It has also become a factor affecting recruitment rates, military morale, and public support for the military, which in turn may affect defense spending budgets and military effectiveness. If the Taiwan public and lawmakers perceive Beijing's unification

"The heightened sense of threat from the PRC has increased the urgency of defense issues for the people of Taiwan, as well as ROC military officials and policymakers."

resolve as strengthening, national defense issues may seem ever-more urgent, which could lead to either increasing support for strengthening Taiwan's defense and a cycle of escalation in cross-strait relations, or deteriorating enthusiasm and morale within the ROC armed forces.

The third ambiguity shaping Taiwan's defense policy is the unvocalized nature of its political administrations' true intentions regarding Taiwan's diplomatic status and, in particular, the issue of eventual independence or unification. Domestically, the independence vs. unification issue is marked by political polarization and has come to represent two ends of the domestic political spectrum. Moreover, although public support for unification has reached historic lows, leaning towards independence has the serious risk of provoking a military response from Beijing. For presidents and other high-ranking politicians in the ROC, this issue presents a major dilemma as publicly endorsing either reunification or independence would be political suicide by eliminating large swaths of potential supporters. As a result, maintaining the cross-strait status quo remains the safest approach.

Embracing political ambiguity on certain issues is standard protocol for many politicians, but it can have a major impact on certain policy issues, and defense policy in particular.

Strained communication

The inability of Taiwan's political administrations to publicly express their true intentions regarding eventual independence or unification, or even share these intentions with key officials such as the Minister of National Defense, has major implications for Taiwan's defense policy. Defense planning is an issue in which clarity is essential. For a military strategy to be effective, there must be clear national objectives. Maintaining the cross-strait status quo—the go-to policy approach for ROC policymakers—is clearly beneficial in many ways, but as a defense policy, the ambiguity presents a major conundrum and has detrimental effects on planning and implementation at the strategic, operational,

and tactical levels. This ambiguity drives Taiwan's defense policy and, given that maintaining the status quo in cross-strait relations will remain the most viable policy approach for high-ranking officials for the foreseeable future, it is likely that ROC military officials will continue to struggle with this reality and be limited to defense planning that takes this ambiguity at the highest level into account.

As outlined above, the three ambiguities driving Taiwan's defense policy relate to (1) whether or not the United States will come to Taiwan's aid militarily in a contingency involving China, (2) whether or not—and if so, when and how—China will back up its firm resolution regarding eventual unification with military force, and (3) the unvoiced nature of ROC political administrations' true intentions. These underlying issues play a major role in shaping Taiwan security issues and must be taken into consideration in any attempt to elucidate the past, present, and future of Taiwan's defense policy. ■



photo: Jeff Landis

Marine Corps tanks and vehicles in Guam wait to be loaded onto the maritime prepositioning ship USNS PFC Dewayne T. Williams (T-AK-3009).



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