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THE AUSTRALIA-INDIA-JAPAN-US QUADRILATERAL – A STRATEGIC COALITION IN FORMATION?

ABSTRACT: This paper provides a geopolitical analysis of the increasing strategic cooperation between Australia, India, Japan and the USA, which is apparently in formation with the undeclared aim of counterbalancing the expansion of China's influence. This paper takes an overview of the geopolitical factors and policy trends behind this phenomenon. As we will see, on behalf of both India and Japan, governments that pursue the restoration of their countries' status as leading regional powers are the leading forces behind this coalition. Thus not a commitment on behalf of a US-lead world order, but rather the pragmatic attitude of taking advantage of the increasing China-US rivalry is their main motive in it. The reason why in this situation they seek partnership rather with the USA and not with China seems to be simply that due to historical and geopolitical issues they see more conflicts of strategic interests with China than with the USA. On the other hand, this gives the opportunity to the USA to follow the classical principle "divide and rule" by taking advantage of Sino-Japanese and Sino-Indian disputes and general strategic mistrust. At the same time, the character of this cooperation as a strategic convergence between countries that all pursue an aim of strengthening their own positions as leading regional powers rather than a well-defined common goal suggests a loose strategic partnership rather than a formal alliance between them.

KEYWORDS: Asia Pacific, Australia, India, Japan, USA, strategic rivalry, economic interdependence, rapprochement, normalization policy, Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, South China Sea

INTRODUCTION

This paper takes an overview of an interesting trend of today's Asia Pacific: The ongoing quadrilateral rapprochement between Australia, India, Japan and the USA. This trend accompanies the rise of China and the increasing strategic rivalry between China and the USA. It takes place in a complex international environment, where economic interdependence is the norm, thus Cold War style antagonisms are unlikely, but great power rivalry is commonplace at the same time. This complex international structure characterized by economic interdependence and the lack of ideological antagonism makes the manifestations of great power rivalry and alignment less explicit, less open than it was during the Cold War, but that does not mean that great power rivalry would be of less significance today. The ongoing rapprochement between Australia, India, Japan and the USA apparently pursues the undeclared aim to counterbalance, if not contain the expansion of the influence of China. At the same time however, economic interdependence and cooperation is also ongoing between Australia and China, India and China, and even between Japan and China. This paper takes an overview on this trend, and factors regarding Asia's second and third largest economies, India and Japan, which drives them into these directions.

An interesting factor in this issue is that this phenomenon is taking place under rather nationalistic governments in both India and Japan. In Japan, Shinzo Abe was elected prime

minister in 2012, and India's Narendra Modi has taken office in 2014. Both of them pursue a goal to solidify the position of their countries as regional powers, and both of them aim to boost the economy of their country as well. Shinzo Abe is pursuing the so called "normalization policy" that aims to restore Japan's capabilities to be able to take full responsibility for its own security, while Modi is backed by the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Therefore their rapprochement with the USA is unlikely to be a sign of commitment to a US-led unipolar world order, but rather of pursuing a more influential international role for their own countries, and of the recognition of an opportunity for this in the rivalry between China and the USA.

TRENDS IN INDIA AND JAPAN

Trends of strategic partnership between the four countries started to take shape in the mid- 2000s. Of course, there is nothing new in Japan and Australia's being close strategic allies of the USA. The novelty of today's trends lies in two factors: One factor is that after decades of passivity determined by its so called "peace constitution", Japan is now having its comeback onto the international scene as a major power on its own right, under the aegis of the so called "normalization" policy. The other factor is the participation of India itself.

Since Indian independence in 1947, in the history of the Sino-Indian relations we have seen a trend that led into a situation where China and India apparently got trapped on a track of strategic rivalry. Conflict of interests soon came to surface between the two countries, despite enjoying a brief period of amity under the aegis of Pancha Shila in the early 1950s. As early as 1962, strategic tensions culminated in a low intensity border war between the two countries. Still in the same year, China and Pakistan established their strategic cooperation that exists to this day.¹

As China was a communist state by then, and as such, an ideological antagonist of the USA, one could assume that the most rational option for India could have been to seek American support against it. By the time however, when Sino-Indian relations deteriorated into an antagonistic standoff in the early 1960s, anything like that had become hardly possible. In the 1950s, while Pakistan became a US ally in the Cold War by joining the Baghdad Pact (joining forces with Iran, Iraq and Turkey) India committed itself to the non-aligned movement. So, as the USA committed itself on the side of Pakistan, the archenemy of India, it became virtually impossible for India to seek support from the USA against China.

Also, unexpected changes in the strategic environment offered a seemingly unlikely but in fact more willing strategic partner for India: the Soviet Union. While India's policy of non-alignment combined with the alliance between the USA and Pakistan made the option of a US-Indian cooperation highly problematic, the Sino-Soviet split made India and the Soviet Union natural allies against China. The Soviet-Indian strategic partnership started in the 1960s, and lasted till the end of the Cold War.² This partnership became even more suitable with the Soviet engagement in Afghanistan, as the USSR was fighting Pakistani-trained guerillas there, thus making Pakistan and the Soviet Union de facto war enemies, a further correlation between Soviet and Indian strategic interests throughout the 1980s. On the other hand, the anti-Soviet partnership between the USA and China in the same decade

¹ Siddiqi, R. and Yanf, J. „About an 'All-Weather' Relationship: security foundations of Sino-Pakistan relations since 9/11". *Journal of Contemporary China*. 20/71. 2011. 563-579.

² Malik, M. "India Balances China". *Asian Politics and Policy*. Vol. 4. Issue 3. July 2012. 348.

meant that the USA backed not only Pakistan but China as well thus further alienating it from India in the strategic sense. Therefore throughout the 1980s, a US-China-Pakistan trio was faced by an India-USSR duo.

This geopolitical setting ceased to exist in the 1990s. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, a major change was that the USA and China no longer needed each other as partners against the Soviets, and Russia, defeated in the Cold War, started to look for partnership with China from the mid-1990s. This way, as Russia and China started to cooperate with each other, Russia became an unsuitable partner for India to counterbalance China. India has still maintained good relations with Russia ever since then, but this is no longer a strategic partnership aiming to counterbalance China. For such an aim India started to gravitate in the direction of the USA. As the USA and China became strategic rivals, the USA became the most suitable candidate for India for such a role.

After the end of the Cold War another major change on behalf of India was the introduction of the “look east” and later the “act east” policies. These policies aim to increase cooperation between India and the countries of Southeast Asia, in the field of economic and commercial relations as well as strategic and military cooperation, and last but not least, to counterbalance the influence of China in the region. Similarly to the rapprochement between India and the USA, this policy had already been pursued by Congress administrations before 2014, but has further been intensified by the BJP administration of Modi since then. The foundations of this policy were laid by the Congress administration of Narasimha Rao and the BJP administration of Atal Bihari Vajpayee as early as the 1990s.³ In the economic aspect, this includes multilateral initiatives such as the Mekong-Ganga Cooperation established in 2000, which includes Cambodia, India, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam, and the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation established in 1997, which includes Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Thailand. At strategic and military levels the policy includes an ever increasing military support to Vietnam, joint patrols with Indonesia on the Andaman Sea, and also competition with China’s influence in Myanmar.⁴

We can see certain ambivalence in Sino-Indian relations. On the one hand, there is an ever increasing economic interdependence between the two countries. On the other hand, the two countries still have not settled their border dispute yet, and also the Sino-Pakistani partnership is still in function. There is also a conflict of interest between the “act east” policy of India, and the policies of China in Southeast Asia and in Nepal, which culminates as a struggle for influence in these regions.⁵ The strategic cooperation between India and the USA has been most apparent since the start of the BJP-affiliated Modi-administration in 2014, although it had already started under successive Congress Party administrations. The defense minister of India’s previous government already called the policies of China as a “serious threat” in 2010, and then prime minister, Congress-affiliated Manmohan Singh

³ Shahin, S. "India's 'Look East' Policy Pays off, Asia". *Global Policy Forum*, October 11. 2003. <https://www.globalpolicy.org/component/content/article/162/27908.html> (last retrieved 10. September 2016)

⁴ Bajpaee, C. "India rediscovers East Asia." *Asia Times*, October 31 2007. http://www.atimes.com/atimes/South_Asia/IJ31Df01.html (last retrieved 10. September 2016)

⁵ Panda, A. „Modi 'Acts East' at East Asia Summit." *The Diplomat*, 14 Nov 2014. <http://thediplomat.com/2014/11/modi-acts-east-at-east-asia-summit/> (last retrieved 10. September 2016)

called to strengthen the defenses of India's borders with urgency.⁶ The US-India security agreement was signed as early as 2005, and the two countries signed their nuclear cooperation agreement in 2008.⁷

In case of Japan, there is nothing new about its being a US-ally. What is new, however, is that it is increasingly repositioning itself as a regional middle power on its own right. This includes both the diversification of Japanese foreign policy, and a kind of remilitarization of the country. This is a major difference compared to the decades of the Cold War, when the foreign and security policy of Japan was marked by the Yoshida doctrine, which meant a general passivity in foreign policy, a unilateral reliance on the USA as the sole guarantor of the security of the country, and strictly limited armed forces. This was a consequence of Japan's role and experience in the Second World War, and only started to ease under the Ohira and Nakasone administrations in the 1980s.⁸ The present trend of Japanese remilitarization and foreign-policy diversification is called "normalization" as opposed to the special arrangements that existed before, and has started to evolve since the end of the Cold War,⁹ and especially since the start of the premiership of Shinzo Abe.

The normalization process in security policy rests on two pillars: It includes the improvement of the physical capabilities and arms build-up of the Japan Self-Defense Force, and on the other hand, it also includes a legislative process of easing legal restrictions on the use of force by Japan. Arms build-up by the JSDF has especially intensified since the year 2000, with the largest warships of the JSDF navy becoming 20 thousand tons, four times the size of the largest ships it had in 2000, reconnaissance satellites, AWACS surveillance aircraft, and ballistic missile defense system-equipped Aegis destroyers.¹⁰

The normalization process is accompanied by the diversification of Japan's foreign policy as opposed to its former unilateral US-orientation. The main scenes of this diversification were India, Australia and the ASEAN.¹¹

BILATERAL, TRILATERAL AND QUADRILATERAL ARRANGEMENTS

These trends started to culminate into an informal quasi-coalition of the four countries in the mid 2000s. In fact, for most of the time, the cooperation has been going on in the form of a net of trilateral and bilateral agreements between the members of the group. So far, the only part when a formal coalition did exist was the early phase of the cooperation in 2007-2008. This coalition, called the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue was initiated by Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, and discontinued due to protest by China.¹²

⁶ Bing, D. "India and China's great game in full swing". *China.org*, October 22, 2010. http://www.china.org.cn/opinion/2010-10/22/content_21181802.htm (last retrieved 10. September 2016)

⁷ Joshi, Y. "Paying Dividends: The U.S.-Indian Nuclear Deal Four Years On". *The Diplomat*, Oct 2013. <http://thediplomat.com/2013/10/11756/> (last retrieved 10. September 2016)

⁸ Singh, B. *Security, Identity, Policymaking Regime and Japanese Security Policy Development: RSIS Working Paper series*. Singapore: S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, 2013.

⁹ Soeya, Y., Tadokoro, M. and Welch, D. A. (eds.) *Japan as a 'Normal Country'? - A Nation in Search of Its Place in the World*. Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2011. 38-72.

¹⁰ Japan military guide. *Globalsecurity.org*. <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/japan/> (last retrieved 10. September 2016)

¹¹ Wilkins, T. „Japan's alliance diversification: a comparative analysis of the Indian and Australian strategic partnerships." *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* 2011/11. 115-155.

¹² Terada, T. *The United States and East Asian Regionalism: Inclusion-Exclusion Logic and the Role of Japan: GIARI Working Paper. Vol. 2010-E-3*. Tokyo: Waseda University, 2011.

Bilateral and trilateral cooperation however has intensified between all members of the group ever since then. Among the bilateral cooperation agreements, in a strategical sense, perhaps the most interesting is the one between India and Japan. The bilateral security pact between the two countries was already signed under the Congress government back in 2008. The Modi and Abe administrations also achieved a major boost here, however, and a bilateral Strategic and Global Partnership was agreed during Modi's first visit to Japan in September 2014.¹³ Apparently aiming to counterbalance the economic influence of China, India and Japan also agreed on Japan' investing 35 billion USD in India during the next five years.¹⁴

The bilateral arrangements between India and Australia include a bilateral security pact signed in 2009,¹⁵ a security cooperation framework agreement signed in 2014,¹⁶ and an agreement on Australia supplying India with uranium, made in November 2015.

Regarding The US-Indian bilateral relations, the premiership of Narendra Modi gave a major boost with paying five visits in the USA during the first two years of his premiership. Now India also has more military exercises with the USA, than with any other country.¹⁷ As we could see, however, India and the USA have already had a security framework agreement since 2005.¹⁸

The case is a bit different between Japan and Australia as both of them have been close and formal strategic allies of the USA ever since the early phase of the Cold War, thus being part of the same alliance system for decades now. The new issue regarding these two countries is the bilateral cooperation between them. Their joint declaration on security cooperation was achieved in 2007.¹⁹

On the trilateral front, we can see cooperation among India, Japan and the USA, and another one among Australia, Japan and the USA. The former started in 2011,²⁰ and was upgraded to the ministerial level in 2015,²¹ while the latter was launched in 2002.^{22, 23}

¹³ *Tokyo Declaration for India: Japan Special Strategic and Global Partnership*. Tokyo: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2014.

¹⁴ "Narendra Modi Concludes Japan Visit Bringing \$35bn Investment to India". *International Business Times*, 3 Sep 2014. <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/narendra-modi-concludes-japan-visit-bringing-35bn-investments-india-1463778> (last retrieved 10. September 2016)

¹⁵ Panda, R. „India and Australia: Security Dynamics in the Asia Pacific." *Asia-Pacific Review*. vol. 19. issue 1. 2012. 130-156.

¹⁶ *Framework for Security Cooperation between India and Australia*. New Delhi: Government of India, Ministry of External Affairs, Media Center, 2014.

¹⁷ "U.S.-India Security and Defense Cooperation". Center for Strategic & International Studies. 2015. <https://www.csis.org/programs/wadhvani-chair-us-india-policy-studies/past-india-chair-projects/us-india-security-and>

¹⁸ *Japan-Australia Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation*. Tokyo: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2007

¹⁹ *Ibid*.

²⁰ Parameswaran, P. "Why the 'New' US Trilateral Dialogue With Japan and India Matters". *The Diplomat*, October 1 2015. <http://thediplomat.com/2015/10/why-the-new-us-trilateral-dialogue-with-japan-and-india-matters/> (last retrieved 10. September 2016)

²¹ "Inaugural U.S.-India-Japan Trilateral Ministerial" US Department of State, September 29, 2015. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2015/09/247483.htm> (last retrieved 10. September 2016)

²² Pollmann, M. "US-Japan-Australia Security Cooperation: Beyond Containment". *The Diplomat*, April 21, 2015. <http://thediplomat.com/tag/u-s-japan-australia-trilateral-strategic-dialogue/> (last retrieved 10. September 2016)

²³ "Inaugural U.S.-India-Japan Trilateral Ministerial" US Department of State, September 29, 2015. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2015/09/247483.htm> (last retrieved 10. September 2016)

SINO-INDIAN AND SINO-JAPANESE RELATIONS TRAPPED IN STRATEGIC MISTRUST

The main question that we can ask is why are India and Japan more willing to align themselves with China, than with the USA. The main reason is that Sino-Indian and Sino-Japanese relations are trapped in strategic rivalry. This trap situation has two levels. A more general level is the mechanism described by Stephen M. Walt as part of the “balance of threat” concept that is countries in general tend to view countries of closer geographic proximity as more a threat, than countries lying in a long distance.²⁴ Thus, since China is in close geographic proximity to both Japan and India, while the USA is not, this will make these two countries view China more of a threat than they view the USA, even if no specific policies of China were more assertive, than those of the USA.

The second level that traps the situation is the level of specific issues. Here we have two major groups of issues. One is the ongoing border disputes. In this respect, between China and Japan, the dispute over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands in the East China Sea is a well-known issue. Here a strategic significance is given not only by the economic rights regarding the adjacent waters, but also by the fact that the location of the islands could potentially provide for China a naval base closer to both Taipei in Taiwan, Okinawa in Japan, and the open Pacific, than any naval base it owns right now. Between China and India disputed territories lie along their Himalayan boundary. In its eastern section, between the Tibet Autonomous Region and Arunachal Pradesh state, China claims land held by India, while in its western section, between the Tibet Autonomous Region and Jammu and Kashmir states, China holds territories claimed by India. Besides the border disputes there are several complex issues in both Sino-Indian and Sino-Japanese relations that trap them into mutual mistrust.

Regarding Sino-Japanese relations the issue of the so called “peace constitution” and its ongoing reinterpretation, potential future revision and the remilitarization of the country is perhaps the most problematic factor. China is opposing this process out of concerns of a re-emerging Japanese military power and at the same time it is also concerned of Japan’s alliance with the USA. However, in respect to the security of Japan, making concessions for China on either of these issues would need countering China in the other. In the presently unlikely but theoretically not impossible case that Japan ever gives up its alliance with the USA and chooses to stand on its own as a middle power balancing in Northeast Asia among three powerful neighbors, China, Russia and the USA, and also in close proximity to North Korea and the Taiwan strait, there is no doubt it would need a formidable military to sufficiently secure its borders and its international status, even if it has no offensive intentions whatsoever. On the other hand, if Japan chooses to maintain its “peace constitution”, then it will not be able to give up its alliance with the USA in such a strategic environment.

In Sino-Indian relations the strategic partnership between China and Pakistan creates a similar trap. This makes China to be de facto involved in the Indo-Pakistani feud, the bitterest issue in India’s foreign policy. China however cannot allow to put an end to its support to Pakistan as long as India is cooperating with the USA and Japan against China. India at the same time cannot allow stopping seeking partners to counterbalance China as long as

²⁴ Walt, S. M. "Alliance formation and the balance of world power." *International security*. vol. 9. nr. 4. 1985. 3-43.

China is supporting Pakistan. Even if both China and India would be willing to cease their strategic rivalry, it would be hard to either of them to make the first step.

SIGNIFICANCE AT GLOBAL LEVEL

What gives the significance to the quadrilateral cooperation is the fact that it includes both India and Japan. India and Japan are the second and the third largest economies in Asia. This means that if they identify themselves as strategic competitors of China and strategic partners of the USA, then this gives an advantage to the USA in the alliance-systems, which China can hardly compensate. As of 2016, IMF estimates put the GDP of the People's Republic of China to 11.4 trillion USD, while the combined GDP of India and Japan to 6.3 trillion USD, the combined value for South Korea and Taiwan (two other US allies) at 1.9 trillion USD, and the rest of Asia 5.9 trillion USD, which is lower than that of India and Japan combined.²⁵ This leaves little room for China to balance the strategic partnership of India and Japan with the USA, since even in the unlikely case that it can manage to gather all Asian countries as allies, except for the listed four, the combined GDP of its Asian allies would still be less than that of India and Japan. The IMF estimates the GDP of the USA to be 18.6 trillion for the year 2016, which makes the combined GDP of the USA, India, and Japan 24.9 trillion USD, which is significantly greater than the combined GDP of China and the rest of Asia.

Of course, we know that the share of China in the global GDP is likely to increase in the future, but so is that of India. Therefore, while China is likely to surpass the GDP of the USA, it is unlikely to surpass the combined weight of the USA, India, and Japan any time soon. According to the Center for Economic and Business Research, China will have been the number one economy of the world by 2030 with a predicted GDP of 34.34 trillion USD by that year, compared to the 33 trillion output of the then second largest economy, the USA. By then India is predicted to become the third largest economy in the world after China and the USA, with a GDP of 10.13 trillion. Japan, despite of its mostly stagnating economic trajectory, is predicted to keep the fourth place, right after China, USA and India, a GDP of 5.1 trillion USD.²⁶ Consequently, despite China becoming the largest economy in the world with its predicted 34.34 trillion predicted output it will still lag behind the predicted 48.22 trillion combined output of the USA, India and Japan.

China's expectations for a superpower status are mostly based on the assumption that sooner or later economic power inevitably is converted into military and political power. However, if this assumption is valid, then it will be valid for the economic growth of India and the normalization process of Japan as well. So, if its economic growth makes China a superpower, India will become a great power as a result of its own economic growth, and if economic power can be converted into military and political power in such a way, then Japan is also likely to become a formidable regional middle power (with its air and naval

²⁵ World Economic Outlook Database. IMF, 2016. <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2016/01/weodata/weorept.aspx?pr.x=52&pr.y=2&sy=2015&ey=2021&scsm=1&ssd=1&sort=country&ds=.&br=1&c=512%2C911%2C548%2C556%2C912%2C419%2C513%2C948%2C514%2C518%2C516%2C558%2C522%2C449%2C564%2C924%2C566%2C453%2C922%2C456%2C576%2C915%2C524%2C463%2C528%2C923%2C578%2C534%2C537%2C536%2C429%2C433%2C436%2C186%2C925%2C158%2C439%2C916%2C466%2C542%2C927%2C443%2C917%2C544%2C582%2C474%2C446&s=NGDPD%2CNGDPDPC%2CPPPGDP%2CPPPPC&grp=0&a=>

²⁶ "The top 20 largest economies in the world (in billions current USD)". Centre for Economics and Business Research. December 2015. <http://www.cebr.com/reports/welt-2016/> (last retrieved 10. September 2016)

power likely becoming the fifth in the world after the USA, China, Russia and India) as soon as the normalization process eliminates constitutional restrictions on converting its economic power in such a manner.

MANEUVERS IN COMPETITION FOR ECONOMIC INFLUENCE

A key issue in this strategic environment is the increasing economic interdependence between the actors. This is often seen as something solely on the side of China, however if we take a deeper look, we can see that the situation is more complex.

FDI is a good example of the competition between China and Japan for the economic influence in India. In September 2014, India reached agreements on significant FDI with both China and Japan. China and India reached an agreement on China's investing 20 billion USD in India during the next five years, while India and Japan reached an agreement on Japan's investing 35 billion USD in India over the next five years.^{27,28} This is an apparent competition between the two countries over who can invest more, and thus achieve more economic influence in India, and India is the one who benefits from this competition as investment of 55 billion USD in five years is a significant amount even for a country as large as India.

Another issue is the policy of balancing in regional economic integration. While in the past decade China favored initiatives limited to East and Southeast Asia, such as the ASEAN+3 initiative, Japan usually pursued initiatives to include India and Australia as well, and in many cases, even the USA, like in the case of the East Asia Summit.²⁹ The Trans Pacific Partnership, that includes, among others, the USA, Japan, Vietnam and Australia, but excludes China, can also be seen as an effort to counterbalance China's influence with the tool of economic integration.

THE SOUTH-CHINA SEA

An issue where the intention to contain China becomes apparent by the four countries is the territorial debate over the islands of the South China Sea. The two countries which have the most severe conflict of interests with China in this matter are the Philippines and Vietnam. In the past years, all and each of these four countries increased their strategic and military assistance to either Vietnam, or the Philippines, or both. The USA and the Philippines have been allies ever since the early phase of the Cold War, and recently they further increased this cooperation by signing an Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement In 2014. The USA and Vietnam have a less friendly past, but a strategic rapprochement started between them around 2010, and in 2016 the USA ceased its arms embargo against Vietnam. India and Vietnam already agreed on Indian military assistance to Vietnam in 2014, and they raised their cooperation to the next level when agreeing on the formation of a comprehensive

²⁷ Rajagopalan, R. P. "Chinese Perceptions of Mod's Foreign Policy." *The Diplomat*, 13 Nov 2014. <http://thediplomat.com/2014/11/chinese-perceptions-of-modis-foreign-policy/> (last retrieved 10. September 2016)

²⁸ "Narendra Modi Concludes Japan Visit Bringing \$35bn Investment to India". *International Business Times*, 3 Sep 2014. <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/narendra-modi-concludes-japan-visit-bringing-35bn-investments-india-1463778> (last retrieved 10. September 2016)

²⁹ Terada, T. *The United States and East Asian Regionalism: Inclusion-Exclusion Logic and the Role of Japan: GIARI Working Paper. Vol. 2010-E-3*. Tokyo: Waseda University, 2011.

strategic partnership during the 2016 visit of Narendra Modi in Vietnam.³⁰ Australia signed a visiting forces agreement with the Philippines in 2007, which came into force in 2012.³¹ Japan signed a defense agreement with the Philippines in early 2016, which was the first agreement of such a type signed with any country from Southeast Asia.³²

CONCLUSION

As we can see, despite economic interdependence and cooperation with China, the increasing strategic cooperation between Australia, India, Japan and the USA is constantly intensifying, and though undeclared, its apparent aim is the strategic containment of China. Where this policy is the most visible is the four countries' attitude to the South China Sea dispute, where they all give significant and ever increasing military assistance to the Philippines and Vietnam, and all the four of them are involved in this. What gives significance to this undeclared coalition of strategic partnership is that India and Japan are the second and third largest economies in Asia, and by the time China is predicted to overtake the USA as the largest single economy in the world, India and Japan are predicted to become the third and the fourth, so – if continued – by then this coalition will include the second, third and fourth largest economies in the world aiming to counterbalance the influence of the first one. At the same time, however, due to the complexity of their relations this is likely to remain a strategic partnership rather than a real alliance.

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³⁰ Sarma, S. "India-Vietnam relations after Modi's visit". *The Diplomat*, September 05, 2016. <http://thediplomat.com/2016/09/india-vietnam-relations-after-modis-visit/> (last retrieved 10. September 2016)

³¹ "Agreement between the Government of Australia and the Government of the Republic of the Philippines concerning the Status of Visiting Forces of Each State in the Territory of the Other State". Australian Treaty Series 2007 <http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/other/dfat/treaties/ATS/2012/31.html> (last retrieved 10. September 2016)

³² Tatsumi, Y. "Why Japan's Defense Deal With the Philippines Is Unique". *The Diplomat*, March 10 2016. <http://thediplomat.com/2016/03/why-japans-defense-deal-with-the-philippines-is-unique/> (last retrieved 10. September 2016)

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