# UNDERSTANDING CHINESE AND INDIAN BALANCING STRATEGIES

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#### **ABSTRACT**

This paper aims to explain the dynamics of balance of power between China and India in a historical perspective. We shall conduct case studies to demonstrate how China and India seek to counterbalance each other in three strategic geographical areas: South Asia, Southeast Asia and at the Indian Ocean Rim. In order to do so, we will examine variables such as arms transfers, military spending, bilateral and multilateral agreements, joint

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military exercises, and the role of non-Asian actors. The paper concludes that nowadays balance pattern between China and India reflects preferences towards alignments and arms build-up as the main strategic behavior.

Keywords: Balancing. China. India.

#### INTRODUCTION

Due to the rise of China and India in the 1990s, many academics agree that the twenty first century will be dominated by Asian countries (ZAKARIA, 2008; HURRELL, 2009). The relative decline of the United States in the first decade of the new century, and the unfulfilled expectations that this 'lonely superpower' (HUNTINGTON, 1999) would bring peace and prosperity has paved the way both to new powers to emerge and to the possibility of an alternative framework of global security and defense. Despite Brazil's membership of the emerging 'BRICS' group of countries, Asian studies in Brazil have been conducted at a slow pace. With that in mind, this paper hopes to address that deficit by contributing an assessment of the dynamics of Asian security and defense.

International structures of power and wealth are subject to change. Asia is consolidating itself as the main hub for commercial and economic activity, as well as it starts to play an increasingly important role in international security.

Using International Relations Alliance Theory as a starting point, and in particular drawing on the work of Russett (1971), we will attempt to identify the key balancing and counterbalancing dynamics between China and India. A review of existing literature will shed light on different forms of security cooperation and levels of institutionalization and commitment between partners. This paper will address the following questions: what are the main patterns of security and defense cooperation of Beijing and New Delhi? What are the patterns of China and India's relationship with their neighboring countries? How can political and diplomatic cooperation – including arms transfers – shed light on the prevailing balance of power?

In order to answer these questions, we will begin by examining the existing literature on several forms of alignments as alliances and ententes. We shall establish which of these phenomena is more present. In the second section, we will develop an analysis of the dynamics of security between China and India from the Cold War to nowadays. This section will make clear how patterns of cooperation have changed over time within those countries and their partners. In the third and final section, we will describe and analyze the patterns of alliances and the shifting balances of power that Beijing and New Delhi has experienced. A historical lack of trust between these regional actors, combined with a tradition of weak regional institutions, leads us to postulate that China and India view alignments in a more favorable light than alliances, which have an impact in how balancing is done.

### ALIGNMENTS, ALLIANCES AND ENTENTES: A LITERATURE REVIEW

This section of the paper explores the differences between alignments, alliances and ententes. Can we describe Indian and Chinese relationship with other countries as seeking to produce an alliance, an entente or an alignment? The focus of this paper is to understand Sino-Indian balancing strategy using the analytical framework of the Theory of Alliances. It is important to clarify certain terms in alliance theory. An alliance is a component of a state's foreign policy. States have been forming – and dissolving – alliances for many years and have proved fundamental in the realization of their interests (DUFFIELD, 2008).

As part of a field of inquiry, influential studies have asked the question, 'what is an alliance?' Olson & Zeckhauser's (1966) seminal study is an example of how economists and political scientists have applied economic theory to help improve our understanding of military alliances. They see a military alliance as 'a group of nations that are bound to provide protection to all members from aggression by common enemies'. An alliance of this nature fosters military security or deterrence and therefore could be considered a 'public good'. Diverging from Olson & Zeckhauser's (1966) definition of alliances, Stephen Walt (1987, p. 01) describes an alliance as 'a formal or informal relationship of security cooperation between two or more sovereign states'.

In International Relations, 'alignment' suggests a degree of harmony between two or more countries. The interests, policies or particular issues between these states are therefore congruent. Glenn Snyder examines the level of support that a state can expect in its future interactions. He argues that (formal) alliances 'are one simply behavioral means to create or strengthen alignments. Thus, alliances are a subset of alignments those that

arise from or are formalized by an explicit agreement, normally in the form of a treaty' (SNYDER, 1997, p. 06). That being the case, an entente can be seen as a form of alignment. The use of the term 'entente' was more common in former days; however it is still used to describe a kind of short-term alignment (and therefore different from a full alliance). Robert A. Kann (1976, p. 611) defines an entente as "a flexible agreement of cooperation between two foreign powers". Bruce Russett (1971) adds that in an entente states consult or cooperate in political matters. Russett sees an entente as a type of alliance, albeit on a larger scale. Ententes can be understood as alignments that comprise military cooperation, non-military activities or humanitarian cooperation.

Russett and Snyder interpret 'alliances' in much the same way. Russett defines an alliance as "a formal agreement among a limited number of countries concerning the conditions under which they will or will not employ military force" (1971, p. 262). Snyder (1997) describes alliances as formal agreements, orchestrated by states and focusing on military matters and relationships with other states or groups of states outside the alliance. John Mearsheimer (1995) also recognizes institutions – and alliances – as part of a state's efforts to maintain or increase their power.

Balance of Power theory can also contribute to our understanding of the formation of alliances. States form alliances as a 'balancing' strategy to reduce the power of a hegemonic power or to provide a weaker state with security. T.V. Paul (2004, p. 03) identifies three forms of 'balancing': hard, soft and asymmetric. Hard balancing strategy constitutes an overt build-up of arms and the creation and maintenance of a formal alliance. Soft balancing implies a tacit agreement that can include a more limited build-up of arms. In this instance, states would develop ententes and/or limited security to counteract a threatening state or a rising power. Finally, asymmetric balancing comprises both state and non-state actors. When a state acquires significant military power within a region, its neighbors will engage in a strategy of balancing. Thus T.V. Paul (2004, p. 07) argues that 'the objective of a regional balancing is to generate a stable distribution of power with the aim to prevent a war'. Commonly, a strategy of balancing will include an alignment, entente or alliance with an extra-regional power to acquire weapons, modernize or gain military advantage.

The next section shed light on the present-day security arrangements in Asia. We will begin with an examination of Chinese regional security.

### A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE OF THE CHINESE SECURITY DYNAMICS IN ASIA

In February 1950, just after the establishment of the Popular Republic of China (PRC), an alliance was declared between Beijing and the Moscow. Soviet support was essential for the preparation of war and the rebuilding of its defense industry (SCHICHOR, 1998, p. 140). Shortly after the establishment of a Communist regime in China, the country found itself embroiled in the Korean War. The desire to become a major power in the region – and the War itself – led to the development of an indigenous defense industry. The alliance with the USSR was paramount in modernizing Chinese military capabilities.

China's alliance with the USSR was short-lived. The death of Stalin in 1953 changed the dynamics of the Sino-Soviet relationship. The USSR entered into a period of 'collective leadership'; Khrushchev being the most prominent followed by Malenkov in the Council of Ministers and Beria in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Up until this period, bilateral cooperation between the Moscow and Beijing was strong. By the end of 1953, China accounted for 20% of Soviet exports; the amount of Chinese exports to the USSR was of 55.6%. From 1949 to 1961, China received tanks, airplanes, helicopters, frigates and submarines. Specific weapons acquisitions included 150 Tu-2 bombers, 500 IL-28, 1,500 MIG-15 fighters, 300 MIG-17, 20 MIG-21, 2,500 T-34/85 tanks, 4 Gordy Class destroyers, 4 Whisky and 4 Romeo Class submarines (MING, 2003). Khrushchev's accusations of Stalin's crimes at the 20th Congress of the Communist Party in the Soviet Union in 1954 and the puncturing of the 'cult' of Stalin created malaise in Beijing and a thawing of the Sino-Soviet partnership. The Chinese pressed ahead with their communist revolution which combined the principles of Marxist-Leninism and Maoism. Other events, including the 'pacific coexistence' of USSR and United States, Soviet refusal to support the Chinese attacks on Kuomintang troops on the Quemoy Strait, Moscow concessions to the Americans after the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, the lack of support to 'Third World' revolutions and the end of technology transfer to China's nuclear program generated much embarrassment to Sino-Soviet relations. China started to send supplies to support the revolutions in North Korea, North Vietnam, Pakistan, Cambodia and Laos. In addition, the Chinese Communist Party sent weapons to the 'wars of liberation' in Indonesia, Myanmar, Thailand, Malaysia, Philippines, Algeria, Republic of Congo, Somalia and Tanzania (MING, 2003, p. 30).

The USSR began to criticize China for jeopardizing international peace and provoking the Americans into a potential nuclear showdown. Moscow subsequently suspended any further cooperation with Beijing. In April 1960, China released papers that condemned Moscow for abandoning Leninist practices. In retaliation, the Soviets cut off all military cooperation and ordered home the 1,300 technicians and specialists based in China. This decision impacted heavily on Chinese plans for military rebuilding; many programs were canceled or suspended. However, China continued its research in nuclear technology and in 1964 detonated its first nuclear bomb. Chinese ruling elites continued their quarrels with Moscow, particularly during the Brezhnev era and after the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. The rise of Deng Xiaoping in 1970 instigated a closer relationship with the US, with President Nixon visiting the country in 1972 (HOFF, 1994, p. 182). The deterioration of Sino-Soviet relations was illustrated by other events: the USSR supported the Vietnamese invasion of Kampuchea that removed a pro-Beijing government; shortly after, Moscow sent a military force to help the Babrak Kamal regime in Afghanistan. At the same time as the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, China began to cooperate militarily with the West; arms transfers to China included helicopters from France, aviation engines from the UK, missiles from Italy, radars and helicopters from United States and advanced computers and electronics from Japan (SCHICHOR, 1998).

Despite the improvement of relations between China and Western powers, some setbacks occurred. President Ronald Reagan's decision to sell 150 F-16 fighters to Taiwan – and to deepen ties with that country – exacerbated relations between China and the US. However, after Mikhael Gorbachev became leader of the Communist Party in 1985, the USSR began to improve relations with the Chinese. Sino-Soviet relations were changed by the events of Tiananmen Square in 1989¹. The massacre by the People's Liberation Army provoked the US government into canceling the 'Pearl Peace' Program, thus frustrating China's desire to modernize its armed forces with American advanced military equipment and returning its efforts do Russia as a supplier.

The fall of the Berlin Wall also brought about change in the Sino-Soviet relationship. In 1991, Jiang Zemin visited Russia to buy helicopters

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The New York Times reported 400 to 800 deaths. The Chinese Red Cross put the figure of the number of student deaths at 2,600. Also see: KRISTOFF, Nicholas D. A Reassessment of how many died in the military crackdown in Beijing, The New York Times, 21 June 1989. Disponível em: <a href="http://www.nytimes.com/1989/06/21/world/a-reassessment-of-how-many-died-in-the-military-crackdown-in-beijing.html?pagewanted=2&src=pm">http://www.nytimes.com/1989/06/21/world/a-reassessment-of-how-many-died-in-the-military-crackdown-in-beijing.html?pagewanted=2&src=pm>.

and order Sukhoi Su-27 aircraft. From 1992, during Boris Yeltsin's administration, Russia sought to improve its relationship with Asian countries. The new international and political environment saw China and Russia return to bilateral military cooperation and 'birth' of the 'Strategic Partnership'. Russia understood Chinese aspirations for modern weaponry and decided to establish ties once again with the objective of increasing weapons sales. It is worth noting that in order to protect its own weapons technology, Russia did not sell China cutting-edge defense equipment. Russian arms transfers to India, on the other hand, were of recent versions (BRAUER; DUNNE, 2004).

Arms transfers are a thorny issue for Chinese-Indian relations. The Himalayan War of 1962 was a turning point for the nation's defense policy, especially for India. Between 1950 and 1960, India received military aid from the United States in order to contain communist China. However from 1960 to 1990, US-Indian relations froze because of US efforts to placate China and the strengthening of relations with Pakistan. The transfer of hardware and technology was virtually non-existent until 1990, when the Americans attempted to countervail Chinese ascendency (COHEN, 2010, p. 136-137; 268-298). During the period of the 1962 War and after, the Soviets began to provide assistance to the Indian defense industry. Soviet-design but Indian-manufactured arms took place into the scenario of the military context of Asia-Pacific. Almost 70% of defense agreements were Soviet (BASKARAN, 2004), the remaining being British and French.

Other issue that played against Beijing and New Delhi rapprochement was Sino-Pakistan relations. Although Pakistan was armed by the US in the 1950s, arms transfers to Pakistan ceased in the early 1960s. This meant that Pakistan could only count on Chinese help to build an arms industry necessary for its security needs. In 1965, China became Islamabad's main supplier of military equipment. In the 1970s, Pakistan received 300 fighters and 1,000 T-59 Chinese tanks; by the 1980s transfers to Islamabad included missile assistance which helped Pakistan keep pace with India's nuclear program. As a consequence, Islamabad had the capability to detonate six nuclear devices in 1998, matching India's nuclear tests of 1974 and 1998 (BASKARAN, 2004, p. 184-187). After the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in the 1980s, Pakistan received military aid from the Reagan administration to the tune of three billion dollars, aid that included F-16 fighters, attack helicopters, tanks and howitzers. More recently, as a result of the 9/11 terrorist attacks and

America's reliance on Pakistan in the hunt for members of Al-Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan, the Bush administration approved a 3.2 billion aid package beginning in 2004. An additional aid package of five billion dollars was approved by the American Senate that will come into effect from 2012 to 2016<sup>2</sup>. Countries in the South Asia region continue to spend highly on defense and military equipment. According to US Department of State<sup>3</sup> figures, South Asian military expenditure in proportion to global expenditure rose from 0.8% to 2% during the 2000s. Most notably, China and India unsuccessfully pursued a self-sufficiency policy that attempted to eliminate the technological gap between East and West. However, China and India continue to rely on foreign procurement to maintain the balance in the region.

For a better understanding about how India's actions impacts on Chinese decision making and regional strategy, in the next section we shall analyze New Delhi's security environment and how China helps to shape it

### A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE OF INDIA'S SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

In the 1940s and early 1950s, colonial and imperialist powers posed the greatest threat to India and other post-colonial states (DASH, 2008). Consequently, from 1947 to 1962 Indian foreign policy and security concerns were characterized by the philosophies of Gandhi and anti-imperialism. The socialist identity of the government in the same period would shape the evolution of India's state and economy for the ensuing decades (CHIBBER, 2006). India's rise as an independent state affected its relationship with Britain as well as other polities of the old Indian Union, most notably Pakistan.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> EUA concederão US\$ 2 bilhões em ajuda militar ao Paquistão. *Estadão*, São Paulo, 22 Oct. 2010. Disponível em: <a href="http://www.estadao.com.br/noticias/internacional,eua-concederao-us-2-bilhoes-em-ajuda-militar-a-paquistao,628341,0.htm">http://www.estadao.com.br/noticias/internacional,eua-concederao-us-2-bilhoes-em-ajuda-militar-a-paquistao,628341,0.htm</a>. Although approaved in 2010 the five billion dollars aid package to Islamabad was not fully available in 2016. Recently, US Senate panel submitted aid to Pakistan to certain conditions related to Islamabad "taking demonstrable steps against the Haqqani terror network", US Senate panel clears bill to block \$300m military aid to Pakistan. *The Express Tribune*, 25 May 2016. Disponível em: <a href="http://tribune.com.pk/story/1110052/hurdles-us-senate-panel-clears-bill-block-300m-military-aid/s">http://tribune.com.pk/story/1110052/hurdles-us-senate-panel-clears-bill-block-300m-military-aid/s</a>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> For further information see <a href="http://www.state.gov/t/avc/rls/rpt/wmeat/1999\_2000/index.htm">http://www.state.gov/t/avc/rls/rpt/wmeat/1999\_2000/index.htm</a>>.

Located in South Asia, India has land and sea borders with Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar, China, the Maldives and Sri Lanka. Although India's conflict with Pakistan is better known, New Delhi has security issues with nearly all of its neighbors. Issues related to the Indian-Pakistan split remain unresolved. According to Sood (2009), Pakistan poses a threat to Indian security in the form of a conventional military competitor, a nuclear power and a provider of logistics, intelligence and resources for terrorists and other subversive activity inside Indian Territory. In the late 1990s and 2000s, the exacerbation of Pakistan crisis has seen the country towards becoming a failed state; this has had a disadvantageous effect on India's security and regional stability. In this relation, from hard to asymmetrical, diverse types of balancing are in play.

Sood (2009) also sees Bangladesh foreign policy towards India as problematic. During the India-Pakistan split in 1971, Bangladesh enjoyed a better relationship with India; however that country – as well as Nepal - has since developed a deep fear of Indian hegemony (DASH, 2008). But neither of them poses threats to New Delhi in a conventional manner. On a broader level, the numbers of Bangladesh refugees in India, combined with an increasing level of Islamic activity in the country, are problems in their own right. Nepalese terrorist supporters and the externalities of that country internal conflict are a problem to India. This issue links to Beijing when Nepal uses the "Chinese card" when bargaining with India (MOHAN, 2009). Another potential threat emanates from Sri Lanka. That country civil war and its repercussions in the South of India have been a problem for the government in New Delhi since the 1970s, culminating in military intervention in the 1980s. These events seriously compromised the Indian government objectives at the time. In addition to Islamic terrorists linked to Pakistan, the country has suffered Maoist revolts, especially in the northeast of the country.

Therefore we can claim that threats from South Asian neighbors do exist for Indian security, and none of them is more important as the one posed by Pakistan. Authors such as Mohan (2006), Sood (2009) and Roy (2009) agree that India's foremost security issue is Pakistan, and this has shaped the country's foreign policy and strategy for Asia. Since India's independence in 1947, India and Pakistan have been in a state of constant competition and conflict. The period has witnessed four major conflicts: Kashmir in 1947 and 1965, the dispute over Bangladesh independence in 1971 and Kashmir again in 1999 (also known as the Kargil War).

Although the main reason for India-Pakistan conflict has been regional and territorial competition, we can point to other causes for the continuation of hostilities. Thomas (2004) suggests the conflict can be understood by studying three levels of balancing. In the first level (regional), balancing and competition exist between India and Pakistan; in the second, a balance existed between India/Afghanistan and Pakistan/ China. The third and final level shows India siding with the Soviet Union and Pakistan with the US.

Country	India	Pakistan
Level		
Regional	Afghanistan	China
Global	Soviet Union	United States

Figure 1: Main India and Pakistan Alignment partners during the Cold War Source: the authors.

Figure 1 shows how these dynamics led to an alignment system that extended from a regional to a global level. India's staunchest ally in this period was the Soviet Union.

Despite never being a formal aligned member of the socialist bloc, India's foreign policy guaranteed close ties with the USSR. The struggle for independence in India and the civil war in China was supported by Soviet logistic, intelligence and military resources (as was the case in India during British rule). Independence for India and the rise of the Popular Republic in China resulted in a strengthening of ties between those countries and Moscow, especially in the realms of trade, technology transfers and arms dealing. From 1947 to the collapse of the USSR, the bulk of Indian military equipment was Soviet-supplied. After the Sino-Indian War of 1962 and the deterioration of Soviet-Chinese relations in the 1950s and 1960s, ties between New Delhi and Moscow grew stronger. The logic of balancing took effect in the 1970s, once the US started engaging China.

The relationship between India and the USSR, especially after the death of Nehru in 1964, was strategic but pragmatic; different to the formalized alliance typified by the Warsaw Pact and NATO. The worsening relationship between the USSR and China (the latter playing a key role in the formation of India's foreign policy), and the US policy of containment in the region, made explicit the USSR's need for allies in the region.

Sood (2009) highlights the high regard that Indian policy-makers had for China and its role on a regional and global level. This high regard was shattered after the invasion of Tibet in 1962. As this historical review shows, China is understood as a rational actor that tends to maximize its wealth and power through the adoption of a realist mindset. However until 1962, India's foreign policy is seen as idealistic (THOMAS, 2009).

The strategic relations described above show clearly India's main alliance and balancing structures during the Cold War era. The collapse of the USSR and domestic reforms in India in the 1990s have revised India's foreign policy; contemporary Indo-US cooperation and the relevance of the Indian Ocean are now of central concern.

The presented historical background helps to understand the geopolitical landscape that influences China and India, in particular the balance of power that exists between then in the twenty first century. In following section of the paper, we will examine India and China's strategic alignments, particularly their alliances and ententes.

### CHINA AND INDIA POST-WAR DEFENSE AND SECURITY COOPERATION IN ASIA - PACIFIC

Historical processes are key in understanding the contemporary balance of power between China and India. The rigid bipolar structure was challenged by China's withdrawal from the Soviet bloc and India's non-aligned foreign policy. In this sense, India and China's alignment with Soviet Union and the US during the Cold War has created a flexible pattern of cooperation, different from a formal alliance or an ad hoc coalition (HAGERTY, 2006).

If the Cold War was marked by a structure of trilateral relations between China, US and Pakistan against India, USSR and Afghanistan, two macro-events have induced a change in this pattern. Firstly, the collapse of the Soviet Union has left only one superpower on the world stage. The distribution of power has shifted in an unexpected way, leading to changes in alignments and other forms of military and political cooperation.

During the 1990s, the world witnessed the rapid rise of China and its march towards being a global power. At the same time, China has opened its economy and improved its relations with the West. India, on the

other hand, maintained a close relationship with Moscow, and in doing so became its main strategic partner in Asia. India's nuclear tests in 1998 precipitated a serious diplomatic impasse with the US and its allies, a situation worsened by Pakistan's own nuclear tests in the same year.

The second macro-event that would affect the Asian landscape was Al-Qaeda's attack on American soil on the 11th September 2001. Terrorism became the principal security issue for the US, and central Asia was judged to be one of the main roots of the problem. In this context, US-Pakistan relations and United States strategic evaluation of India rapidly shifted. The White House under Bush administration fastened its approximation with New Delhi, initiated during Clinton years ahead the US government.

Steadfast security and defense cooperation exists between India and Russia. Since the breakup of the former USSR, arms and technology have played a key role in Indo-Russian relations. Russia and the UK have supplied a high percentage of India's arms imports from ground forces equipment to navy submarines and a Carrier. One of the most impressive cooperation projects between India and Russia is the BrahMos, a supersonic cruise missile.

In order to counteract the strategic challenge posed by China, South Asia is the main stage for Indian maneuvering. The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) is an initiative created by Nepal and Bangladesh to foster technical and economic cooperation and integration in South Asia. Although created in 1985, it wasn't until the 1990s that India sat up and took notice; SAARC was actually part of India's strategy for securing its nearest region from external influences. Economic cooperation has grown since the implementation of SAARC Preferential Trade Agreement (SAPTA) and SAARC Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA), albeit at a slow pace (TEIXEIRA JR, 2010).

Soft power has been followed by greater proximity and military cooperation, in particular by the Maldives. As a result of closer cooperation with India, this country '[agreed] to set up a network of 26 radars across the Maldives atolls to be networked to the Indian coastal radar system, along with the establishment of an air station to conduct surveillance flights and coordinate naval patrols in the Maldives Exclusive Economic Zone.' (IISS, 2010, p. 336). After the fall of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in 2009, Sri Lanka has increased defense cooperation with India. Both countries took part in joint naval exercises in 2011, as the SLINEX II

(RADHAKRISHNAN, 2011) and 2013 SLINEX III<sup>4</sup> in order to consolidate lines of communication and security in the Indian Ocean.

India continues its quest for partners in the realms of diplomatic approximation and military cooperation. The need to have geographical influence that extends beyond the Indian Ocean, and India's desire to secure energy and trade routes, has led to see Japan and South Korea as relevant partners. More importantly, Japan and South Korea are deemed essential for balancing China and its territorial claims in the East Asian Seas. In 2007, India embarked on a series of joint naval exercises with Japan and South Korea, the US, Russia, the Philippines, Vietnam, New Zealand and China. The participation of Japan, South Korea, Vietnam, New Zealand and Philippines illustrates India's inclination towards the US and its allies in the Asia-Pacific region.

The Indo-US approximation is the most important novelty in the Asiatic alignment system. However, as Hagerty (2006) states, US-India relations are more of an entente than an alliance. India still maintains rhetoric of 'strategic autonomy' a issue in the core of its strategic culture (MALIK, 2010). The late US recognition of India as a nuclear power and their technology transfer proposals may be valuable in India's efforts in balancing China; it may also be relevant to the US's containing strategy. As Indo-US relations improve, the United States can also become an important arms supplier to India.

How will China act – and react – towards India in the Asian strategic environment? Until the late 1970s, China enjoyed strong cooperation in politics and military affairs with the USSR. In the meantime, Russia never ceased to be an important arms supplier and source for technology. China and Russia are currently the principal actors in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), a regional organization focused on defense cooperation in central Asia. SCO may well develop into an important political dialogue forum, not least because it has India and Iran as Observer States. Along with weapons systems, Russia is a key energy provider to China; gas and oil are important factors in Russia's GNP therefore the ties between the two countries are consolidated.

South Asia is fast becoming a key strategic front for China; it often attempts to capitalize on India's sometimes strained relations with its neighbors. Pakistan is China's strongest ally in the region. In addition to that

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> SRI Lanka India Naval Exercise (SLINEX 13). *Indian Navy,* New Delhi. Disponível em: <a href="http://indiannavy.nic.in/operations/slinex-13">http://indiannavy.nic.in/operations/slinex-13</a>.

Beijing is also trying to consolidate its relationship with Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka.

Despite the historically cordial relations between India and Bangladesh, problems have always arisen. Water resources have been a point of dispute between the two states, as has the volume of Bangladesh immigrants in India and ethnic change in the country. Following these problems, China seeks to embrace South Asian countries. Chinese economic relations with them countries are bigger than India's, except Bhutan. Sood (2009) and General V. P. Malik (2010) state that New Delhi prime area of influence is being seriously engaged by China, especially through the strengthening of military and logistics in Tibet. This problem is increased if we take in account the relations between Nepalese Maoists and Indian communist Naxalite with China.

Nevertheless, it is the 'string of pearls' that concerns most Indian analysts. Several Chinese naval bases in the Indian Ocean may pose future threats to India, a situation that would not be possible without South Asian countries cooperating with China. The Maldives have allowed China to build a base in Marao and China is helping Sri Lanka to build port and bunker facilities at Hambantota. Those facilities will add to the existing Chinese functioning ports in Gwadar (Pakistan), Chittagong (Bangladesh) and Sittwe (Myanmar), crucial to Chinese sea lines of communication.



Figure 2: Chinese Sea lines of Communication in Indian Ocean
Source: JOHN, L.; HORNER, C. China faces barriers in the Indian Ocean, *Asia Times online*,
10 Jan. 2014. Disponível em: <a href="http://www.atimes.com/atimes/China/CHIN-02-100114">httml>.5</a>
httml>.5

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Also see: Pehrson (2006).

There are also plans to build military installations in Myanmar. Another state aligned with China is North Korea, crucial to Chinese naval policy and avoiding South Korea and the US possessing a beachhead in South China.

As one of the main examples of Balance of Power behavior, in the next section, we demonstrate how power maximization in terms of arms transfers and building military capabilities occurred in China and India.

## BALANCE OF POWER IN NUMBERS AND INITIATIVES: CHINA AND INDIA INTERCONNECTEDNESS OF THE MILITARY BUILD-UP

Both China and India are extremely keen to increase their weapons capabilities. Despite efforts to become self-sufficient vis-a-vis defense, they are still dependent on foreign technology and weapons. Since the 1962 War, both countries have sought to develop modern armed forces. India's defeat resulted in a modernization program of its defense industry and armed forces. In order to possess state-of-theart weapons systems, foreign procurement was necessary. According to Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), see table 1, from 1990 to 2014 India and China were the world's biggest arms importers. Although China is considered the largest importer, recent advances in the development of their defense industry have enabled the country to become the sixth largest exporter of defense equipment. The United States (30%), Russia (19.7%), Germany (10.9%), France (8.2%), United Kingdom (4.5%) and Israel (3.4%, just behind China in the list) are the main export countries. Together they represent 76.7% of all global transfers.

The US and Russia have an important role for China and India. During the Cold War, power dynamics between countries changed as a consequence of arms transfers from the USSR and the United States.

The USSR played a substantial role in providing China and India with advanced technological weaponry. A new strategic partnership emerged in the 1990s that enabled the Chinese to equip themselves with advanced armament.

Table 1: Top 10 Largest Arms Importers (1990 – 2014).

Rank 1990	Recipient	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Total 1990-
2014											2014
1	India	1470	2297	1867	1986	2955	3682	4591	5566	4243	52641
2	China	2900	1678	1906	1407	937	1020	1651	1715	1357	40582
3	Turkey	511	666	675	733	469	733	1489	670	1550	29258
4	South Korea	1644	1749	1679	799	1274	1570	1066	179	530	29025
5	Saudi Arabia	195	195	363	756	1020	1215	899	1192	2629	28317
6	Japan	507	487	688	533	430	303	273	313	436	23444
7	Taiwan (ROC)	508	12	11	60	97	198	425	582	1039	22037
8	Greece	731	1712	516	1225	648	77	33	52	213	21433
9	UAE	2021	919	751	560	605	1210	1088	2252	1031	20084
10	Egypt	748	707	336	159	686	630	281	628	292	19284
	Others	13443	16097	15416	16090	16510	19471	17106	147674	149873	333132
	Total	24679	26519	24207	24308	25631	30108	28902	27916	28308	619237

Source: SIPRI Arms Transfers Database 1990-2014. SIPRI notes: Figures are SIPRI Trend Indicator Values (TIVs) expressed in US\$ m. at constant (1990) prices; A '-' indicates that the value of deliveries is less than US\$0.5m.

India purchased weapons from the USSR/Russia to counteract US and Chinese weapons transfers to Pakistan; in total India purchased 70% of its arms from the USSR/Russia. Committed to a policy of diversifying its strategic partners, India views the United States as an important arms supplier. In 2004 President Bush and Prime Minister Vajpayee signed the Next Steps for Strategic Partnership (NSSP). From a US point of view, a stable Pakistan, and efforts to improve relations with India, are important instruments in counteracting China for a 'strategically stable Asia' (COHEN; DASGUPTA, 2010, p. 166).

Table 2: Arms Exports to India(1990 - 2014).

Country	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Total Sum 1990- 2014
Australia	8	17	17	17	17	17	1570	653	150	108
Canada	10 <del>-</del> 01	-	(=)	-	7.	58	0-	18	18	36
France	5	9	13	18	25	29	34	51	108	1160
Germany (FRG)	15	18	18	42	55	37	8	15	37	1143
Israel	206	95	36	73	112	166	246	459	560	2837
Italy	4	5	-	-	12	306	12	6	11	435
Kazakhstan	658	S <del>7</del> 33	170	-	-	75	1670	070	-	17
Kyrgystan	18	18	2	_	2 1	2 1	100	120	100	166
Netherlands	-	303	(5)	10	20	1	1	15	10	1325
Poland	218	101	-	2	2	23	(4)	11	920	514
Russia	923	1785	1555	1503	2332	2553	3913	3742	2146	34076
Singapore	-	-	-	-	8	-	-	-	_	19
Slovakia	0.73	S <del>7</del> 3	150	-	-	58	14.50	85	150	192
South Africa	858	8 <del>.</del> 731	( <del>12</del> 8)	ā	5.	4	31	31		99
South Korea	1 <b>7</b> 2	8 <del>7</del> 8	. <del></del>	5		Ti.	10.72	8 <del>5</del> 8	-	336
Sweden	8,71	050	-	-	-	=	(18)	8.70	-	55
UK	923	164	224	112	120	140	160	120	150	2509
Ukraine	-		73.5	-	5	17	48	101	37	545
USA	74	87	5	2	54	203	139	982	1138	2744
USSR	853	8 <del>7</del> 88	-	5	-	78	10.70	878	150	3260
<b>Uzbekistan</b>	-	-	340	170		-	-	-	90	600
Total	1470	2297	1867	1986	2955	3682	4591	5566	4243	52641

Source: SIPRI Arms Transfers Database. Note: USSR include for values during 1990-1991. SIPRI Notes: Figures are SIPRI Trend Indicator Values (TIVs) expressed in US\$ m. at constant (1990) prices; A '-' indicates that the value of deliveries is less than US\$0.5m.

Table 2 shows arms exports to India. Compared to Soviet/Russian exports totaling 37.336 billion dollars, US trade to India in the same period amounted to just 2.744 billion dollars. The NSSP can be seen as a bureaucratic structure to change this imbalance and improve Indian-US relations. As an innovative and cooperative instrument, the agreement includes civilian nuclear activities, civilian space programs, advanced technological trade and missile defense. The context of an Asian regional security dynamic makes India and the United States 'natural allies', an expression coined by Douglas Feith (COHEN; DASGUPTA, 2010). On the other hand, since the Tiananmen crackdown, an American embargo on China resulted in the end of "Pearl Peace" program.

Table 3: Exports to China (1990 – 2014).

Country	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Total 1990- 2014
France	183	176	215	169	193	208	223	210	204	4000
Germany (FRG)	12	10	3	3	3	3	3	11	7	242
Israel	2	2	2	21	2	12	12	123	100	350
Italy	-	-	-	#	#	-	-	-	-	4
Japan	2	2	2	2	21	-2	-2	12	121	30
Russia	2472	1324	1529	1102	636	703	689	1133	909	32030
Switzerland	65	65	65	65	65	65	65	65	65	1105
UK	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	760
Ukraine	128	64	54	28	2	12	632	86	132	1510
USA		-	-	5	78	1.70	-			39
USSR	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	341
Total (sum) 1990-2009	2900	1678	1906	1407	937	1020	1651	1715	1357	40582

Source: SIPRI Arms Transfers Database. Note: USSR include for values during 1990-1991. SIPRI Notes: Figures are SIPRI Trend Indicator Values (TIVs) expressed in US\$ m. at constant (1990) prices; A '-' indicates that the value of deliveries is less than US\$0.5m.

Table 3 above shows arms exports to China. Chinese armed forces continue to rely on foreign-made weapons despite considerable efforts to create an indigenous arms industry. From 1990 to 2014, Chinese imports of American components totaled 39 million dollars, while USSR/Russian arms amounted to more than 32 billion. The interconnected nature of Indian and Chinese arms transfers constitute a complex web incorporating the United States, Russia, Pakistan, Israel, France, United Kingdom, and others. Sino-Pakistani relations cause concern in India, primarily because China is accused of clandestine provision of nuclear and missile technology to Pakistan. China sees the strengthening of Pakistan's military capability as paramount in efforts to counteract India (see table 4). A similar policy is used by the United States to increase Taiwan's military capability. Taipei and Beijing relations have been strained since the Taiwan Strait Crisis (1995-6), and after the Chinese approved the Anti-Secession Law in March of 2005.

Table 4: Biggest arms importers and their suppliers, 2010-2014

	Internat participation imports	on arms	Major suppliers (participation on the total of imports), 2010-2014				
Country	2010-2014	2005- 2009	1°	2°	3° Israel (7%)		
India	15	7	Russia (70%)	USA (12%)			
Saudi Arabia	5	1	UK (36%)	USA (35%)	France (6%)		
China	5	9	Russia (61%)	France (16%)	Ukraine (13%)		
UAE	4	5	USA (58%)	France (9%)	Russia (9%)		
Pakistan	4	3	China (51%)	USA (30%)	Sweden (5%)		
Australia	4	3	USA (58%)	Spain (19%)	France (6%)		

Source: SIPRI Arms transfers database 2015.

According to Table 4, China continues to be heavily dependent on Russian exports and technology transfers. After years of development, China still lacks a reliable engine model, relying instead on Russian support for the J-10 fighter, its 63 submarine fleet only had a dozen patrols in 2009. China accounted for almost half of all Russian military exports. Likewise, India is dependent on foreign powers. The Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) has been in development since 1980 and is still a long way from production. New partnerships with Israel will guarantee technology transfers and should lead to the development of the industry. Most of the key projects rely on Russian cooperation, for example the BraHmos cruise missile, the Glonass technologies<sup>6</sup>, and technology transfers for a nuclear submarine. According to SIPRI Chinese military expenditure increased by 194% from 1998 to 2008; Indian expenditure increased by 44.1% in the same period.

Since 2000, China has heavily invested in its defense industrial base. One of the overarching issues is whether China's growing defense technological capabilities are fundamentally transforming the nature of the military balance in the Asia-Pacific region, igniting arms spirals and intensifying security dilemmas. Countries such as Vietnam, Japan, and the United States have been taking steps to beef up their regional defense capabilities through weapons acquisitions or adjusting their military strategies and force deployments (CHEUNG, 2014).

#### CONCLUSION

This paper has analyzed the contemporary balance of power dynamics in South and Southeast Asia. China and India are crucial to a better understanding of these dynamics, as is their relationship with foreign powers, in particular the United States and Russia. In order to shed light on the complex web of issues involving New Delhi and Beijing, the strategic context of the region was analyzed: cooperative agreements, arms transfers, security dynamics and their relationships with countries outside the region. Using alliance theory as a reference, we demonstrated how China and India reacts to each other counterbalancing movements.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> India started its own navigation satellite, known as IRNSS, but it continues to be a partner in the Russian system. Both countries shared experiences of mutual interest, for more details see: Embassy of Russian Federation in the Republic of India. Disponível em: <a href="http://rusembindia.com/russia-india-dialogue-en/press-on-bilateral-relations/102-pressonbilateral-relation/7350-russia-india-cooperate-on-space-exploration-glonass-satellite-system">http://rusembindia.com/russia-india-cooperate-on-space-exploration-glonass-satellite-system</a>.

In accordance with the theoretical and conceptual background of this paper, one can state that the predominant form of defense and security cooperation in South and East Asia varies from ententes to some alignments. Based on definitions from Russett (1971) and Hagerty (2006), the relations that India and China establish with South Asian and Southeast Asian countries may be characterized as highly flexible, non or low-institutionalized, based on pragmatic alignment of interests (not only military) and without serious commitment towards collective defense. Interestingly, the kind and pattern of security and defense cooperation found in this area of the world seems to validate the neorealist hypothesis that security cooperation only occurs in order to maximize power and wealth (MÜLLER, 2003).

Attempts to maximize the power of agreements led China and India to adopt a flexible system of dealing with other countries, particularly *vis-a-vis* agreements and arms transfers. A flexible approach allows countries to obtain maximum advantage from their different partners. This is particularly apparent in arms and technology transfers, the two countries enjoying relations with countries from different regions of the world.

The United States and the USSR/Russia played an important role in Chinese and Indian foreign relations, but we also showed how both countries are trying to expand their network of relationships in Europe, the Middle East and Africa. For this reason, New Delhi and Beijing balance each other, not through formal alliances, but through alignments, depending on the situation. The US-Pakistan-China alignment forged during the Soviet invasion in Afghanistan through 1979 to 1989, reinforced Russia and India relations. The American Global War on Terrorism, during the Bush administration – and the importance of containing an increasingly powerful China - have resulted in the development of 'affinities' between the US and India in the form of the NSSP alignment. During George W. Bush Administration the Washington negotiated a nuclear deal with New Dehli that lifted of "a three-decade U.S. moratorium on nuclear trade with India" (BAJORIA; PAN, 2010). The advances in the nuclear realm opened doors for further US-India cooperation. More recently, Indian Navy joint 2016 Malabar naval exercise with US and Japan<sup>7</sup>. The symbolic acknowledgement of a nuclear India by the US and the joining of its Navy with Washington allies in naval exercises points to a broad new alignment that may upset Asian balance of power, with special concern to China.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> PARAMESWARAN, Prashanth. US, Japan, and India kick off 2016 Malabar Exercise: countries begin naval drills that will last until June 17, *The Diplomat*, Tokyo, 12 june 2006. Disponível em: <a href="http://thediplomat.com/2016/06/us-japan-and-india-kick-off-malabar-2016/">http://thediplomat.com/2016/06/us-japan-and-india-kick-off-malabar-2016/</a>>.

Nowadays, evidence suggests the reinforcement of India and United States alignment and a China-Pakistan partnership. The death of Osama Bin Laden in Pakistani soil in May 2, 2011, worsened US relationship with the Islamic country. Thence, Islamabad is making efforts to reduce American influence and the increase on military buys to Beijing is a clear movement in this way. In this sense, China strengthens Pakistan in a soft balancing strategy to India, whose New Delhi rise in the international system could be considered a challenge to the Chinese preponderance in East Asia.

Despite being worse in the past, contemporary Sino-Indian relations are not excellent. Confidence building measures are necessary to improve the bilateral relations to attenuate an eventually attrition about divergences in the political arena. A repeat of a conflict similar to the Himalayan War of 1962 is unlikely to happen in the context of the strength of Chinese and Indian economies. However, significant cooperation is unlikely while the prevailing balance of power persists.

### ENTENDENDO AS ESTRATÉGIAS DE BALANCEAMENTO DA CHINA E ÍNDIA

#### **RESUMO**

O presente artigo explica as dinâmicas de balança de poder entre China e Índia a partir de uma perspectiva histórica. Estudos de caso selecionados serão conduzidos no sentido de demonstrar como China e Índia buscam contrabalancear-se em três arenas geográficas: Sul da Ásia, Sudeste Asiático e ao longo da orla do Oceano Índico. Para isso, serão examinadas variáveis como transferência de armas, gastos militares, acordos bilaterais e multilaterais, exercícios militares conjuntos e o papel de atores não-asiáticos. O artigo conclui que o padrão de balanceamento contemporâneo entre China e Índia se reflete nas preferências quanto a alinhamentos e processos de rearmamento como os principais comportamentos estratégicos.

Palavras-Chave: Balanceamento. China. Índia.

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