



Europe-Asia Review

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Table of contents:



1. **Europe – Asia.** How the pandemic has changed our relations.
2. **Burma.** The end of an experiment.
3. **France is ‘Back’ in the Indo-Pacific**
4. **India – EU:** a partnership in the shadow of Beijing
5. For a multipolar world order. **European Union’s relations with ASEAN.**
6. **Japan – EU:** In Search for a New Security Architecture in the Indo-Pacific
7. **Pakistan.** Economy in the shadow of politics
8. **Afghanistan:** Emirate 2.0.
9. **AUKUS:** American competition with China at the expense of Europe’s security?
10. **Israel and Arab countries** one year after the Abraham Accords
11. **Taiwan:** an uncertain future between Beijing and Washington

I. Europe – Asia

HOW THE PANDEMIC HAS CHANGED OUR RELATIONS



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The pandemic has revealed new dimensions of Euro-Asian relations. Europe has realized how dependent it is on Asian suppliers of medicines and medical equipment, and that it suffers from a lack of EU competence in this area. The most important conclusions are the growing importance of health as a strategic sector, the trend towards shortening of supply chains and the growing political distance to China, while forcing a stronger position on the Chinese market and strengthening alliances with the Asian allies of the West.

Out of Asian countries, only Japan participates in the G7 format, but as many as 5 Asian countries are among the G20 club - world's largest economies. One of the members of that grouping - apart from the leading countries of the Old Continent - is also the European Union as a separate entity. During the Donald Trump presidency, G20 was a platform for talks, among others on the consequences of the trade war between the US and China (Osaka summit, June 2019) ¹ In November 2020, the leaders of G20 met virtually to discuss the state of the fight against the COVID-19 virus and measures to avert the economic and social crises. ²

The transactional approach to alliances, as represented by US President Donald Trump, reinforced the role of the Asia-Europe meetings of 51 ASEM countries.³ They constituted a stable mechanism for multilateral discussions on global challenges, such as sustainable development, climate change, regional security issues: terrorism, cybercrime, maritime security.⁴ At a meeting of foreign ministers of 51 countries in December 2019 in Madrid, they discussed what Asia and Europe can do together "for effective multilateralism". ⁵ In 2020, the summit's agenda included also the topic of fighting the coronavirus, and the ensuing economic and social crisis as a result of the global lockdown, but the ASEM summit planned for November 13 was postponed to June 2021.⁶

At the same time, the pandemic made Europe aware that in the health area it depends on imports from Asia, especially from China and India. Already in April 2020, Vice-President of the European Commission, Věra Jourová, emphasized the need to "radically change course" and diversify supply chains so as to produce as much as possible in Europe. ⁷

¹ <https://www.euractiv.com/section/economy-jobs/news/eu-says-g20-summit-priorities-to-be-multilateralism-and-wto-reform/>

² <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/international-summit/2020/11/21-22/>

³ A platform for cooperation of the European Union, Norway, Switzerland, Great Britain with 21 countries of Asia, and the ASEAN Secretariat.

⁴ <https://www.dfat.gov.au/international-relations/regional-architecture/Pages/asia-europe-meeting-asem>

⁵ <https://www.aseminfoboard.org/events/14th-asem-foreign-ministers-meeting-asem-fmm14>

⁶ <https://www.aseminfoboard.org/events/13th-asem-summit-asem13>

⁷ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2020-002449_EN.html

EUROPE - ASIA

HOW THE PANDEMIC HAS CHANGED OUR RELATIONS.

| Authors: Dr. Małgorzata Bonikowska, dr. Bruno Surdel

3

During the Franco-German Summit in May 2020 one of the main topics discussed were disruptions in trade with Asia.

Europe-China relations

In April 2019, the European Commission published a document stating that "China is simultaneously a cooperation partner with whom the EU has closely aligned objectives, a negotiating partner, with whom the EU needs to find a balance of interests, an economic competitor in pursuit of technological leadership, and a systemic rival promoting alternative models of governance." In the same month, the EU's foreign direct investment (FDI) monitoring mechanism entered into force.⁸

The pandemic that began in December of the same year in China and came to Europe in the spring of 2020, gave China several months of advantage. The talk of "masked diplomacy" began as Beijing tried to take advantage of the early reluctance of EU member states to share medical equipment with each other and acted without coordination. The Chinese aid, however, had a commercial form (sale), and the whole action may be interpreted in terms of

⁸ Commission reviews relations with China, proposes 10 actions
https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_19_1605

EUROPE - ASIA

HOW THE PANDEMIC HAS CHANGED OUR RELATIONS.

| Authors: Dr. Małgorzata Bonikowska, dr. Bruno Surdel

4

propaganda. However, it strengthened the efforts of both parties to finalize the Comprehensive Investment Agreement (CAI), which had been negotiated for 7 years.

The atmosphere of the EU-China Virtual Summit on September 14, 2020 was rather cold⁹, but led to the signing of a bilateral agreement on 100 European Geographical Indications (GIs) in China and 100 Chinese Geographical Indications in Europe.¹⁰ On December 30, 2020, under the German Presidency, the content of the CAI was agreed, thanks to which European companies will gain wider access to the Chinese market. Beijing has also committed to greater transparency on subsidies.¹¹ However, the agreement must be ratified by the parliaments of the EU countries, which calls into question its entry into force.

At the same time, the European Union continues to criticize China for not respecting human rights at home, for de facto eliminating the principle of "one country, two systems" in Hongkong, and activities in the South China Sea that are restricting freedom of maritime trade.¹² The steps taken by individual EU Member States in the Indo-Pacific basin are

⁹ <https://www.dw.com/en/coronavirus-makes-germanys-eu-china-summit-go-virtual/a-54907146>

¹⁰ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_19_6200

¹¹ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/STATEMENT_20_2546

¹² <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/outlines-european-policy-indo-pacific>

EUROPE - ASIA

HOW THE PANDEMIC HAS CHANGED OUR RELATIONS.

| Authors: Dr. Małgorzata Bonikowska, dr. Bruno Surdel

5

aligned to the US strategy,¹³ e.g. France regularly sends its ships and nuclear submarines to that area¹⁴

Europe - India relations

Recent years have seen a strengthening of Indo-European ties. In 2019, the trade in goods between the two countries amounted to EUR 80 billion, which accounted for 11.1% of India's total trade (the European Union is the country's largest trading partner). In November 2018, the EU adopted a new strategy for India, describing the country as "an emerging global power that plays a key role in the current multipolar world and is a factor of stability in a complex region".¹⁵ The change of course in domestic politics (Hong Kong) and Beijing's increasingly assertive foreign policy proved to be a factor that mobilized the two largest democracies in the world to cooperate more widely.

Due to the pandemic, the 15th EU-India Summit was postponed from March to July 2020 and was conducted online. It was agreed to start a dialogue on maritime safety and to strengthen cooperation in this area. An important topic was climate protection and

¹³Commission reviews relations with China, proposes 10 actions

https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_19_1605

¹⁴ <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3121125/south-china-sea-challenge-beijing-french-nuclear-submarine>

¹⁵ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_18_6481

EUROPE - ASIA

HOW THE PANDEMIC HAS CHANGED OUR RELATIONS.

| Authors: Dr. Małgorzata Bonikowska, dr. Bruno Surdel

6

fulfillment of the provisions of the Paris Agreement of 2015, as well as technological cooperation regarding artificial intelligence - critical in the development of the 5G network. Launching a "high-level dialogue on trade and investment" may be crucial for mutual relations, and critical for concluding the free trade agreement negotiated since 2007.¹⁶

Europe - East Asia relations

The "EU-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement" (EPA) entered into force on February 1, 2019.¹⁷ It is the largest free trade agreement in history, removing tariffs and non-tariff barriers. It is part of a block of agreements of July 2018, the second of which is the Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA),¹⁸ and the third one - "Connectivity Partnership", signed in September 2019.¹⁹ The EPA has been compared to China's Belt and Road initiative, but its potential is yet to be realized.²⁰

In parallel, European-Japanese political cooperation is developing, based on the assumption that both sides are "like-minded partners who share interests and values such as democracy,

¹⁶ https://www.mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/32827/Joint_Statement_of_the_15th_IndiaEU_Summit_July_15_2020

¹⁷ <https://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/in-focus/eu-japan-economic-partnership-agreement/>

¹⁸ <https://isdpeu/publication/eu-japan-strategic-partnership-agreement-spa/>

¹⁹ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-9-2020-0269_EN.html

²⁰ http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/wps/portal/rielcano_en/contenido?WCM_GLOBAL_CONTEXT=/elcano/elcano_in/zonas_in/ari12-2020-esteban-armanini-eu-japan-connectivity-partnership-sustainable-initiative-awaiting-materialisation

EUROPE - ASIA

HOW THE PANDEMIC HAS CHANGED OUR RELATIONS.

| Authors: Dr. Małgorzata Bonikowska, dr. Bruno Surdel

7

respect for human rights and a rules-based multilateral order."²¹ Very significant in this respect was the first ever speech of the Japanese Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi at the Foreign Affairs Council of the European Union on January 25, 2021 which concerned the vision of a "free and open" Indo-Pacific.²² French missions in the region are part of the American "freedom of navigation" strategy. In May 2021, France will take part in military exercises with Japan and the US for the first time.

Japan also invited Germany to joint exercises.²³ The new German strategy for the Indo-Pacific adopted in autumn 2020 assumes the promotion of the rule of law as well as open markets. The German government is contemplating sending a frigate to Japan with calling to the ports of Australia and Korea as well as crossing the South China Sea. It may herald a break with Berlin's current policy based on pragmatic cooperation with China, focused on trade and investment.²⁴

For the EU, the second strategic country in the region is the Republic of Korea. In 2016, a free trade agreement entered into force, thanks to which EU exports of goods to this country increased by 77% (2018) and led to sustainable trade between both parties.²⁵ In

²¹ <https://asia.nikkei.com/Opinion/EU-Japan-partnership-has-a-bright-future>

²² [EU invites Japan's Motegi to explain 'free and open Indo-Pacific' - Nikkei Asia](#)

²³ [Japan calls on Germany to send warship to East Asia | Asia | An in-depth look at news from across the continent | DW | 18.12.2020](#)

²⁴ <https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/International-relations/Indo-Pacific/Germany-to-send-naval-frigate-to-Japan-with-eye-on-China>

²⁵ <https://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/countries-and-regions/countries/south-korea/>

EUROPE - ASIA

HOW THE PANDEMIC HAS CHANGED OUR RELATIONS.

| Authors: Dr. Małgorzata Bonikowska, dr. Bruno Surdel

8

2019, the trade exchange between both parties amounted to \$108.6 billion²⁶ The European Union and South Korea are also cooperating on security policy, notably in the context of North Korea: its nuclear program and ballistic missiles.

During the pandemic, vaccines became a contentious issue between Europe and its East Asian allies. Japan and South Korea accused the Western capitals of a "vaccine nationalism", i.e. seeking to provide vaccines first to EU citizens and only then exporting them outside the bloc.²⁷

Europe - Southeast Asia relations

In January 2019, the European Union and ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Countries) decided to strengthen cooperation, and in December 2020 the Strategic Partnership was signed. Both parties declare their commitment to multilateralism, free and fair trade and open sea routes. ASEAN exports to the EU are worth nearly EUR 140 billion, and imports - EUR 97 billion.²⁸

²⁶ http://www.mofa.go.kr/eng/wpge/m_4909/contents.do

²⁷ <https://uk.finance.yahoo.com/news/davos-2021-japan-korea-vaccine-nationalism-covid-19-coronavirus-eu-122117522.html>

²⁸ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/46994/fact-sheet-euasean-strategic-partnership.pdf>

EUROPE - ASIA

HOW THE PANDEMIC HAS CHANGED OUR RELATIONS.

| Authors: Dr. Małgorzata Bonikowska, dr. Bruno Surdel

9

In November 2020, ASEAN joined the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), which also includes China, Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand (the world's largest free trade zone, covering about 30 percent of global GDP).²⁹

The free trade agreement with Vietnam - one of the ASEAN members – entered into force on August 1, 2020, i.e. at the height of the pandemic (it was negotiated since 2012).³⁰ In addition to the abolition of customs duties on 99% of goods, it has opened public tenders in this country more widely to European companies and introduced facilitations in terms of doing business and investing in Vietnam.³¹

Dr Małgorzata Bonikowska, dr Bruno Surdel

²⁹ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-asean-partnership-idUSKBN28B4V0>

³⁰ http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2015/august/tradoc_153674.pdf

³¹ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_20_1412

II. Burma

THE END OF AN EXPERIMENT



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The coup d'état in Burma put a halt to 10 years of democratic experiment, and the generals resumed their rule. The military has always had a strong position in that country, and in recent decades it has managed to establish its own "economic empire". The coup was meant to protect it from dismantling; it was also a consequence of personal political ambitions of military leaders. Most likely, the military dictatorship will persist for years at the expense of brutal crackdown on protesters, and restrictions imposed on the opposition. The external pressure will be cautious, because no country wants to directly intervene in this conflict. The role of international community, including that of Europe and the USA, is limited to declarations and punitive sanctions. China, on the other hand, may play a more active role.

The military coup in Burma took place on February 1, 2021 - just before the first session of the newly elected parliament. The National League for Democracy (NLD), headed by Aung San Su Kyi - winner of the 1991 Nobel Peace Prize, won a landslide in November 8, 2020 elections. Her NLD won 396 out of 480 seats in parliament, while the party supported by the military (USDP) - only 30. The army thus suffered a political defeat despite a quarter of seats reserved for it under the 2008 constitution. Ethnic minorities also achieved a poor result - 47 seats.¹

The election results changed the plans of the influential Burmese army chief, General Min Aung Hlaing. In July 2021, after turning 65, he was to retire from the military and start a political career, trying to reach the presidency. Not only did the decisive victory of the NLD thwart those calculations, it could also mean holding him accountable for the persecution of the Rohingya Muslim community in 2017, which resulted in the exodus of nearly a million people to neighboring Bangladesh. However, the main factor behind the coup was the generals' fears that the increasing strength and continued popularity of the NLD could put a cap on military influence, especially its economic power.

Burma: Owned by the military

The origins of the economic empire of the Burmese military (which is known in Myanmar as „Tatmadaw”) date back to the 1960s and the experiment with the Burmese socialism. In 1989, on the wave of elimination of foreign influence, the army changed the official name of the country to Myanmar. The economic power of the military grew out of the privatization of the 1990s. Two large, military concerns were then created: Myanmar Economic Holdings Limited (MEHL) and Myanmar Economic Corporation (MEC),

¹ <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-9127/CBP-9127.pdf>

BURMA

THE END OF AN EXPERIMENT

| Authors: Dr. Małgorzata Bonikowska, dr. Bruno Surdel

3

dominating the local economy and most of its lucrative sectors. They became a basis of the military's income and a tool for maintaining the loyalty of its cadres.²

The economic power of Tatmadaw is one of the main causes of difficulties in the political transformation in Burma. The military establishment has always feared that if Burma would switch from a military dictatorship to a genuine democratic system, Tatmadaw would lose its economic position, dividends and extensive influence. As an institution, military controls the ministries of defense, home affairs and the border ministry. It is completely independent of the state structures, and the constitution imposed by the military in 2008 takes it out of any civilian control. Additionally, the quarter of seats reserved for it in both houses of parliament is intended to enable the army to block any attempts to amend this constitution.

Failed transformation

Burma's gradual transformation towards democracy began in 2010 with the release of Aung San Suu Kyi from house arrest where she spent 15 years. In 2015, her party won the parliamentary elections, which allowed the opposition to enter the government and take

² <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/MyanmarFFM/Pages/EconomicInterestsMyanmarMilitary.aspx>

BURMA

THE END OF AN EXPERIMENT

| Authors: Dr. Małgorzata Bonikowska, dr. Bruno Surdel

4

control of its civilian part.³ However, the constitution written by the generals prevented the Nobel Prize winner from taking over the presidency, because it excludes candidates whose spouses or children have foreign citizenship (her sons are British citizens). As a result, her close associate Win Myint, a former speaker of the House of Representatives of the Burmese Parliament, became president. Suu Kyi herself assumed the position of the State Counsellor created for her (comparable to the position of the prime minister) and the function of the minister of foreign affairs.

Aung San Suu Kyi's position on the country's political and social map is unique. It is not only the face of the opposition, but above all the daughter of General Aung San, "father of the Nation". He was the commander of the Burmese National Army, which freed the country from Japanese occupation, negotiated with the British the conditions for gaining independence, and became interim prime minister. In July 1947, he was assassinated, and he did not see his country's independence (January 4, 1948). In 1960, his wife and daughter left the country, first to India and then to Great Britain. In Burma, the military took over the government in 1962. Aung San Suu Kyi studied political science at Oxford and learned there the Western culture. When she returned to the country after 28 years, she was immediately drawn into the whirlwind of political events. The party she founded – NLD -

³ <https://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-east-asia/myanmar/myanmar-elections-results-and-implications>

BURMA

THE END OF AN EXPERIMENT

| Authors: Dr. Małgorzata Bonikowska, dr. Bruno Surdel

5

won the elections in 1990, but the military annulled the results and placed her under house arrest.

For the West, Aung San Suu Kyi has become a symbol of steadfastness, and the face of the struggle of the Burmese people against the regime. She has lost that image in recent years due to accusations she remained silent over the persecution of the Muslim Rohingyas.⁴ The atrocities were planned and carried out by the military, but those actions were supported by the majority of citizens, and the League leader - a devoted Buddhist - did not protest. Moreover, as the minister of foreign affairs, she was trying to explain the military's actions and even agreed to personally represent Burma - in practice to defend the generals - before the International Court of Justice in The Hague in late 2019/2020 against the allegations of "genocide" in the case filed by the government of the Gambia.⁵

Abroad her reputation had been tarnished, she nevertheless strengthened her popularity at home by defending its country's image, and explaining the motives of the Buddhist majority. At the same time, her party strengthened efforts to amend the constitution which would reduce the number of military deputies and enable the transition to an authentic, full

⁴ Special Report: Fading Icon - What happened to Aung San Suu Kyi?
<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-myanmar-suukyi-history-special-report-idUSKBN1O11ET>

⁵ Aung San Suu Kyi at the International Court of Justice
<https://www.swp-berlin.org/10.18449/2019C51/>

BURMA

THE END OF AN EXPERIMENT

| Authors: Dr. Małgorzata Bonikowska, dr. Bruno Surdel

6

democracy.⁶ The November 2020 elections - won by NLD by an even larger margin than in 2015 – brought a prospect of a faster democratization, but a military coup, justified with an alleged ballot-box fraud, stopped the planned reforms.⁷

The Sarong Revolution

After the coup, General Min Aung Hlaing became the dictator - and formally - the head of the newly established State Administration Council. He has full legislative, executive and judicial power. Aung San Suu Kyi - like her close associates and hundreds of NLD's MPs - was detained. She was first accused of possessing unlicensed walkie-talkies and breaching the restrictions on the coronavirus, then – charged with corruption. The charges were designed to have her convicted and prevent her political activity.⁸ The military has introduced a state of emergency in parts of Burma and cut off internet access, anticipating mass protests in the country. Since February 1, hundreds of thousands of people have taken to the streets, engaged in civil disobedience and strikes. Similarly to the protests in the past (1988, 2007), this time they were met with a brutal reaction by the authorities.

⁶ Suu Kyi: Myanmar constitution must change for 'complete democracy'

<https://asia.nikkei.com/Editor-s-Picks/Interview/Suu-Kyi-Myanmar-constitution-must-change-for-complete-democracy>

⁷ Explainer: Crisis in Myanmar after army alleges election fraud

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-myanmar-politics-explainer-idUSKBN2A113H>

⁸ Aung San Suu Kyi to face new corruption charges, regime says on state TV

<https://www.frontiermyanmar.net/en/aung-san-suu-kyi-to-face-new-corruption-charges-regime-says-on-state-tv/>

BURMA

THE END OF AN EXPERIMENT

| Authors: Dr. Małgorzata Bonikowska, dr. Bruno Surdel

7

An original symbol of opposition to the coup have become sarongs, traditional skirts known in Burma as htamein, and the resistance against the regime began to be called the "sarong revolution". The leading role in this form of protests is played by women who hang their skirts and underwear over the streets of Burmese cities. This is a big problem for the police and the army, because, according to local superstitions, if a man passes beneath a htamein, it weakens him; he loses his masculinity.⁹ For Burmese women, the fight for democracy, personified by Aung San Suu Kyi's very many years of struggle, stands also for a fight for equality: Burma ranks 114 out of 153 analyzed countries in the Global Gender Gap Index 2020 of the World Economic Forum (WEF).¹⁰

Reaction of the International Community

The West has unequivocally condemned the coup in Burma. Criticism and calls for a halt to violence came from Washington and Brussels also after the brutal pacifications of the protests.¹¹ The statement of the G7 foreign ministers on February 23, 2021 sounded in the same vein.¹² Sanctions have also been introduced that directly affect the military

⁹ With 'Sarong Revolution', women in Myanmar defy coup and patriarchy

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-myanmar-politics-women-idUSKBN2B31TB>

¹⁰ Global Gender Gap Report 2020 | World Economic Forum

<https://www.weforum.org/reports/gender-gap-2020-report-100-years-pay-equality>

¹¹ https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/93923/myanmar-statement-high-representative-josep-borrell-latest-repression-military_en

¹² https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/93626/myanmar-statement-g7-foreign-ministers_en

BURMA

THE END OF AN EXPERIMENT

| Authors: Dr. Małgorzata Bonikowska, dr. Bruno Surdel

8

establishment and the companies that are its economic basis. It seems, however, that this is not enough to persuade the Tatmadaw to make concessions.

A bloc that could make a difference is ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Countries) of which Burma is a member. However, the guiding principle of this organization is non-interference in the internal affairs of others, so it is difficult to expect joint actions against the regime. The more so because most of the 10 member - countries of that bloc do not have a democratic system (Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Brunei, Thailand) or suffer from serious limitations (Malaysia, Singapore). Thailand which is Burma's neighbor, had itself seen a military coup a few years ago (May 2014) and is ruled by the military. Of the ASEAN countries, Singapore has come up with the most severe criticism of the coup in Burma. On the other hand, a special session of ASEAN convened because of the situation in Burma on the initiative of Indonesia and Malaysia (March 2, 2021), ended only with an appeal for reconciliation, dialogue and a peaceful resolution of the conflict. However, Indonesia's Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi called on the Burmese military to restore democracy.¹³

¹³ <https://jakartaglobe.id/news/the-safety-of-myanmar-people-is-top-priority-indonesia>

BURMA

THE END OF AN EXPERIMENT

| Authors: Dr. Małgorzata Bonikowska, dr. Bruno Surdel

9

China is a factor limiting international reactions to the coup in Burma. Western governments and their Asian allies (including Japan and India) fear that too much pressure on the regime may destabilize it and strengthen the ties between generals and Beijing.¹⁴ The more so as the military establishment has maintained pragmatic relations with its powerful northern neighbor for a long time.¹⁵ China is Burma's leading trading partner and supplier of military equipment. Visiting the Burmese capital in January 2020, Xi Jinping stated that his country "shares its destiny with Burma." Good relations with the government presided by Aung San Suu Kyi resulted in an increasing presence of the Chinese in the economic life of Burma, which is why the coup did not suit them. On March 11, China decided to sign a UN Security Council statement that strongly condemned the use of violence against peaceful demonstrators.¹⁶ At the same time, however, Beijing is striving to stabilize the situation in that country, and to calm anti-Chinese sentiments that have begun to emerge. Therefore, China could play a role of a pragmatic mediator between the military and the opposition. They acted similarly (and successfully) in South Sudan, where their serious investment interests were also at stake.¹⁷

¹⁴ <https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/japan-says-considering-response-to-myanmars-military-coup>

¹⁵ Myanmar Coup: A Battleground for Sino-Japanese Influence
<https://www.tokyoreview.net/2021/03/myanmar-coup-a-battleground-for-sino-japanese-influence/>

¹⁶ U.N. Security Council agrees to condemn Myanmar violence, urge military restraint
<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-myanmar-politics-un-idUSKBN2B22D8>

¹⁷ Strategy of 'Parallels': China in the South Sudanese armed conflict; Obert Hodzi Note d'actualité n°14/16 de l'Observatoire de la Chine, cycle 2016-2017 Janvier 2017

III. France is 'Back' in the Indo-Pacific



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The center of the world has shifted towards the Indo-Pacific and French defense concepts take this into account. The 2017 French Defense and National Security Strategy clearly shows the growing importance of this region both for France itself and for international security. This was further highlighted in the 2019 political report “France and Security in the Indo-Pacific” published by the French Ministry of Defense.

France as an Indo-Pacific Power

Paris has a relatively strong military presence in the Indo-Pacific region. It has about 4,000 troops operating in the Indian Ocean, while in the Pacific – some 3,000 troops¹. France's commitment to the Indo-Pacific is a natural process for at least two reasons. France is not a foreign country in that area as it has its territories there, such as Mayotte and Réunion islands, the Antarctic Territories in the Indian Ocean, and in the Pacific, among others, New Caledonia and French Polynesia. French Indo-Pacific territories are inhabited by approximately 1.5 million people. France also has extensive Exclusive Economic Zones there – 9 million square kilometers². It is also worth remembering that France is both a nuclear power and a permanent member of the UN Security Council, which also contributes to the country's readiness to take on greater responsibility and activity in the international arena³.

Regional Challenges

French policies in the Indo-Pacific reflect the crisis of multilateralism on a global scale, which has been noticeable for more or less a decade, and the return of power politics and strategic competition. That phenomenon is very visible in Southeast and East Asia. Since 2012, when President Xi Jinping came to power in China, Beijing's global strategy, and in particular, the regional one, have been reevaluated and radically changed. Beijing's new, remarkable assertiveness in the South China Sea significantly affects both the balance of power, alliances and the stability of the region through which passes more than a third of

¹ The French armed forces are planning for high-intensity war | The Economist

² French Indo-Pac Strategy: A Balancing Act – Second Line of Defense (sldinfo.com)

³ France and Security in the Indo-Pacific, French Ministry for the Armed Forces, 2019, www.defence.gouv.fr

FRANCE IS 'BACK' IN THE INDO-PACIFIC

| Authors: Dr. Małgorzata Bonikowska, dr. Bruno Surdel

3

global trade. Another important factor of destabilization is still North Korea, whose domestic and foreign policy, and ballistic missile tests are a constant challenge to regional security. Other important issues that necessitate greater regional involvement of Paris are terrorism, which has intensified in the region in the aftermath of the war with the so-called Islamic State in Syria and Iraq (ISIL/ Daesh), as well as an endemic piracy, persistent especially in the Strait of Malacca. Fight against illegal fishing and drug smuggling are also critical issues where Paris plays a serious and active part. All the regional problems have been only exacerbated by the climate change, which largely affects the Indo-Pacific and the Antarctic areas. It is worth noting that as part of its commitment to the Indo-Pacific – including environmental and climate change issues – France joined the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) in 2020 as its 23rd member⁴.

France's Involvement in the Indo-Pacific

France's involvement in the Indo-Pacific is multidimensional. Paris cooperates closely with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), with particular stress on ADMM + –

⁴ La stratégie de défense française en Indopacifique (defense.gouv.fr)

FRANCE IS 'BACK' IN THE INDO-PACIFIC

| Authors: Dr. Małgorzata Bonikowska, dr. Bruno Surdel

4

the platform of defense ministers of ASEAN – and a number of other countries, including such powers as India, China and Russia⁵.

Paris is party to the UNCLOS (United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea) treaty and works to uphold the principle of freedom of the seas through “Freedom of navigation” operations. This is strongly in line with American strategies in this respect. In practical terms, it means French patrols operate on a regular basis in the South China Sea. Its most recent patrol deployment of navy ships took place in early February 2021 as part of the “Marianne” mission. It started in September 2020, and covered a distance of 15,000 km from the home ports of France. Its purpose was to patrol the Indo-Pacific basin. Particularly striking for China and the countries of the region was the fact that the French nuclear-powered submarine SNA Emeraude took part in the patrol. This was not the first French navy mission in waters whose sovereignty is being claimed by Beijing. In April 2019, the French surveillance frigate Vendémiaire passed through the Taiwan Strait, causing Beijing’s outrage⁶.

The French authorities explained at the time that the French fleet crosses the strait at least once a year, and that this had not previously been negatively perceived by the Chinese authorities. Paris made clear that France would remain committed to defending the freedom

⁵ [ADMM-Plus – ASEAN Defence Minister’s Meeting \(ADMM\)](#)

⁶ [In a first, a French Navy frigate crossed the Taiwan Strait – Naval News](#)

FRANCE IS 'BACK' IN THE INDO-PACIFIC

| Authors: Dr. Małgorzata Bonikowska, dr. Bruno Surdel

5

of navigation in accordance with the law of the sea. This is, of course, also proof of real cooperation for such countries – France’s partners in the region, as India, Japan or Australia, which are concerned with Beijing’s increasingly assertive actions in the seas of the region. France did not stop at the aforementioned mission in the South China Sea. An important signal both for partners and allies, as well as for China was also the “Joanne d’Arc” mission, operating in the area reaching as far as Japan. In early April 2021, as part of that mission, the international military exercise “La Perouse” took place in the Bay of Bengal, in which the navies of the Quad bloc of India, the United States, Australia and Japan participated under the command of Paris. It is designed to help ensure the security and stability of the Indo-Pacific region. French annual Jeanne d’Arc mission aims to improve cooperation with partners in maritime surveillance, maritime interception and air operations⁷. With India, which is Paris’ strategic partner in the region, France holds “Shakti”, “Varuna” and “Garuda” exercises, including navy, army and air forces⁸. As regards its cooperation with India, France as the world’s fourth largest arms exporter is a critical partner for New Delhi, as also for other regional allies: Australia, Singapore and Malaysia⁹.

⁷ [Multinational Naval Forces Conduct Exercise La Perouse > U.S. Indo-Pacific Command > 2015 \(pacom.mil\)](#)

⁸ France and Security in the Indo-Pacific, French Ministry for the Armed Forces, 2019, www.defence.gouv.fr

⁹ [Trends in international arms transfers, 2020 \(sipri.org\)](#)

FRANCE IS 'BACK' IN THE INDO-PACIFIC

| Authors: Dr. Małgorzata Bonikowska, dr. Bruno Surdel

6

A Need of a New security Architecture for the Indo – Pacific

France has always been an Indo-Pacific power. However, in the recent decade, Paris was forced to re-examine its strategy towards that region challenged by a visible, tremendous growth of importance of the Indo-Pacific in military, economic, and technological terms. The centre of the world has shifted there and it has been also reflected by the French foreign and security policies. The rise of China and its very assertiveness in the Indo-Pacific has helped strengthening strategic cooperation between Paris and the regional allies – India, Japan, Australia and United States, among others. This process is to continue as there is a real need to redesign and build anew the security architecture for a free and open Indo-Pacific. France will take part in this effort.

Dr. Małgorzata Bonikowska, dr. Bruno Surdel

IV. India - EU

A PARTNERSHIP IN THE SHADOW OF BEIJING



CENTRE
FOR INTERNATIONAL
RELATIONS



On May 8, a virtual summit between the European Union and India took place in Portugal. It brought a long-awaited breakthrough in economic relations: the unfreezing of negotiations on a trade deal and a decision to start talks on an investment treaty. These agreements – if successful – will cover almost two billion consumers and producers. But the EU and India share not just economic interests: the actual substance is a global strategy that looms largest in their relations. Both parties declare their commitments to defending multilateralism and a multi-polar global order based on the principles of international law, and the central role of the United Nations. In practical terms, it means meeting the challenge for the region and the world posed by a new, assertive policy of China, the world’s second-largest economic power and a dynamically growing supra-regional military force.

Two largest democracies at a crossroads

Cooperation between India and the European Communities dates back to the 1960s. The current relationship between the two largest democracies was defined by two agreements concluded in early 1990s. In 1993, the *Joint Political Statement* was signed, and in 1994, India and the European Union concluded a cooperation agreement that went beyond the scope of economic relations.¹ A decade later, the relationship between the two parties took the form of a "strategic partnership", reflecting a community of values and interests both globally and in the region. Since 2000, India and the European Union have held annual summits which provide a platform for the exchange of views and reactions to current bilateral and global strategic challenges.

Last year's meeting produced a specific document, the "Five-Year Roadmap of the EU-India Strategic Partnership."² It established a High-Level Dialogue Mechanism, extremely important for bilateral trade and investment. Its first meeting took place in early February 2021 and brought talks on resuming trade negotiations which were conducted from 2000 to 2013, when they were suspended.³

A simulation carried out by the European Parliament in 2020 showed that the benefits from concluding an FTA, and thus from intensifying trade, could amount to as much as EUR 8.5 billion for both sides.⁴ Difficulties in concluding a comprehensive trade agreement have systemic causes that are almost intractable. In addition to India's protectionist tendencies in terms of tariffs, there is also a problem with better and effective protection of intellectual property (IP) in India, sustainable development and, on the other hand, lack of enthusiasm in Europe to give greater opportunities for Indian companies that wish to provide services

¹ [EUR-Lex - 21994A0827\(01\) - EN - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\)](#)

² <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/45026/eu-india-roadmap-2025.pdf>

³ <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetailm.aspx?PRID=1695708>

⁴ [Assessing the potential impact of an EU-India trade agreement - Think Tank \(europa.eu\)](#)

INDIA - EU

A PARTNERSHIP IN THE SHADOW OF BEIJING

Author: Dr. Bruno Surdel

3

in the European Union. The latter issue is also related to the much hoped for easing of visa regime for Indian professionals.⁵

The May 8 virtual meeting between the European Council and the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi brought the resumption of the FTA negotiations and the launch of talks on an investment treaty as well as about protection of "Geographical Indications" (GIS), ie traditional food products. It was the first time that the full Council met the head of a foreign government individually. Until now, the presidents of the Council and the Commission spoke on behalf of EU leaders at such 'summits'.

Economic cooperation: a potential yet to be realized

Economically, the EU ranks first among India's trading partners, and India is the tenth largest trading partner of the European Union. The trade turnover between the EU and India in 2019 was EUR 80 billion. It represents 11.1% of India's total trade, but 1.9% of the total EU trade in goods. In addition, the European Union countries are - after the United States - the second largest importer of goods from India. Trade between the two parties has increased by 72% in the last decade. The EU is also India's largest foreign investor, with the volume of EU Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) reaching EUR 68 billion in 2018 and

⁵[EU and India set to revive talks on trade deal | Financial Times \(ft.com\)](#)

INDIA - EU

A PARTNERSHIP IN THE SHADOW OF BEIJING

Author: Dr. Bruno Surdel

4

EUR 75.8 billion in 2019. However, this is not an impressive figure when compared to the EU's FDI in China at the same time: EUR 175 billion. It is worth noting, however, that there are 6,000 European companies in India, which have directly created 5 million jobs.⁶

Cooperation with India is critical for Europe also because that country is a real powerhouse in the production of medical drugs. The Indian pharmaceutical industry is worth \$ 41 billion. India is responsible for as much as a quarter of the world's medical drugs production, including being the largest supplier of generic drugs (20%)⁷. It satisfies as much as 50% of the global demand for vaccines too.⁸ The European Union realized the ramifications of that situation during the Covid-19 pandemic. Disruptions in supply chains resulted also from the fact that 70% of the active ingredients of drugs produced in India come from China. And in the initial period of the pandemic, Chinese producers temporarily shut down or had limited production.⁹

Appreciating the cooperation with India in the field of import and production of medicines and medical equipment, the European Union realized the need to diversify its supply chains. It was clearly stated by the Vice-President of the Commission, Věra Jourová, that as

⁶ <https://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/countries-and-regions/countries/india/>

⁷ [Pharmaceutical industry in India: Invest in Pharma Sector \(investindia.gov.in\)](https://investindia.gov.in/)

⁸ <https://www.ibef.org/industry/pharmaceutical-india.aspx>

⁹ [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(20\)30459-1/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(20)30459-1/fulltext)

INDIA - EU

A PARTNERSHIP IN THE SHADOW OF BEIJING

Author: Dr. Bruno Surdel

5

many drugs and medical equipment as possible should be produced in Europe.¹⁰ During the May 8 Summit leaders discussed also the problems of product deliveries in crisis situations - such as the Covid-19 pandemic. A decision was made to set up a group to work on creating the "resilient supply chains".¹¹

Global governance and challenges in the Indo-Pacific

The EU-India summit contributes to the international efforts in terms of reforming both the global economic order (World Trade Organization) and the political governance: a necessary but difficult reform of the UN Security Council, awaited for decades, especially by large developing countries such as India, Brazil and Nigeria.¹²

India is also playing an increasingly important role in the new security architecture emerging in the Indo-Pacific. The country is part of the Quad Security Dialogue, along with the United States, Japan and Australia. From among the EU nations, France is also working closely with that bloc, and the European Union has vital interests in the region because of its importance both for the global trade and for world stability. Both parties: the EU and India have a vital interest in keeping the Indo-Pacific region free and open, based on the

¹⁰ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2020-002449_EN.html

¹¹ [eu-india-leaders-meeting-joint-statement-080521.pdf \(europa.eu\)](#)

¹² [EU-India leaders' meeting via video conference, Porto - Consilium \(europa.eu\)](#)

INDIA - EU

A PARTNERSHIP IN THE SHADOW OF BEIJING

Author: Dr. Bruno Surdel

6

principles of international law, as was very strongly emphasized at the May 8 summit. This is all the more important as, especially in the last decade, the status quo in that region has been strongly contested by China's new, assertive foreign and defense policies. In this context, the EU and India emphasize the ASEM (Asia-Europe Meetings) cooperation format, closer cooperation with ASEAN - the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, and the Indian Initiative for the Indo-Pacific Oceans.¹³

The partnership between Europe and India also means cooperation in the field of new, strategic technologies, which include the currently developed 5G network. The goal of the two great democratic powers in this respect is to develop common security standards and - in practical terms - limiting the use of equipment produced by Chinese companies in building 5G networks.¹⁴ This is the strategic goal of the United States too - Europe's main ally. In the EU itself, such an attitude towards China results from a shift in relations with that country.

China and the EU have been strategic partners since 2003, but in 2020 the European External Action Service made it clear that "For the EU, China is simultaneously (in different policy areas) a cooperation partner, a negotiation partner, an economic competitor

¹³ [eu-india-leaders-meeting-joint-statement-080521.pdf \(europa.eu\)](#)

¹⁴ <https://telecom.economicstimes.indiatimes.com/news/eu-official-looks-to-align-with-india-on-5g-to-protect-democracy/82145464>

INDIA - EU

A PARTNERSHIP IN THE SHADOW OF BEIJING

Author: Dr. Bruno Surdel

7

and a systemic rival." ¹⁵ Closer cooperation between Brussels and New Delhi in the field of new technologies is crucial for India itself due to the country's ambitions to build its position as a global hub for innovation. In the Bloomberg Innovation Index 2021, India ranked 50; China, however, already 16, while six EU countries reached the top 15, with Germany ranked 4. ¹⁶

The May 8 summit brought also an Indo-European 'response' to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). It is a "Connectivity Partnership" to "promote high-quality infrastructure while taking into account sustainable and crisis-resilient economic growth" - in the EU and India, but also throughout the Indo-Pacific, Central Asia and in Africa, already heavily infiltrated by China. However, unlike BRI, financed largely by Chinese state funds, this project is expected to focus on supporting private infrastructure investment. ¹⁷

Dr. Bruno Surdel

¹⁵ [EU-China Relations factsheet - European External Action Service \(europa.eu\)](#)

¹⁶ <https://www.tbsnews.net/world/india-represents-south-asia-bloomberg-innovation-index-2021-196702>

¹⁷ [EU-India leaders' meeting via video conference, Porto - Consilium \(europa.eu\)](#)

V. For a multipolar world order

EUROPEAN UNION'S RELATIONS WITH ASEAN



CENTRE
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RELATIONS



ASEAN, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, is getting an increasingly important partner of the European Union, both due its dynamically growing economy and the size of the market (approx. 660 million people). Closer cooperation with the organization's 10 member countries may also help Europe expand its political influence in the world's strategic Indo-Pacific region which is struggling with the growing power and assertiveness of China. The challenge, however, is that ASEAN members also succumb to it and do not want to upset relations with their key neighbour.

The Covid-19 pandemic has accelerated the cooperation between the European Union and ASEAN countries. On December 1, 2020, the status of relations was raised to a "strategic partnership"¹ level, and the EU allocated EUR 800 million to combating the economic effects of the pandemic in the Southeast Asian region under the so-called *Team Europe*.²

The relations between both blocks date back to the beginnings of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, founded in 1967. The first ministerial contact took place in 1972³, a formal dialogue was launched in 1977, and in 1980 a cooperation agreement was signed, including mutual granting of the most favored nation⁴ status. The next stage followed the transformation of the European Communities into the European Union (Maastricht Treaty, in force since 1993) and the "great enlargement" to the countries of Central and Eastern Europe (2004, 2007).

In 2007, an agreement was signed on broader political and economic cooperation, as well as in the area of security and development.⁵ In 2012, the EU joined the Treaty on Friendship and Cooperation in Southeast Asia, and after the establishment of the ASEAN Economic Community (2015), it opened its mission with this organization. The EU-ASEAN Action Plan for 2018-2022 was also soon adopted.

The "European Union" of Southeast Asia

For ASEAN, the European Union is a specific model of effective regional integration, although its member countries do not strive for such deep integration. Despite considerable

¹<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/46994/fact-sheet-euasean-strategic-partnership.pdf>

²https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_2242

³<https://euinasean.eu/the-eu-asean/>

⁴https://asean.org/?static_post=external-relations-european-union-nuremberg-declaration-on-an-eu-asean-enhanced-partnership-nuremberg-germany-15-march-2007

⁵https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2007_16_nuremberg_declar.pdf

FOR A MULTIPOLAR WORLD ORDER

EUROPEAN UNION'S RELATIONS WITH ASEAN

Author: Dr. Bruno Surdel

3

cultural, linguistic, religious and historical differences, the EU is still incomparably more homogeneous than the countries of Southeast Asia. This applies in particular to the sphere of ruling-ruled relations, especially the approach to democratic standards, the rule of law and human rights.

One of the foundations of ASEAN is the principle of non-intervention and non-interference in the internal affairs of member states, derived from the Charter of the United Nations. It is interpreted very rigidly, which, of course, is not conducive to the unification of standards and the unification of the framework for action - which is so typical for the European project. This results, inter alia, in the bloc's passive attitude in times of internal crises in any of the Member States.

A striking example of this passivity is the attitude towards the government in Burma/ Myanmar after the military coup on February 1, 2021. Apart from the strong reaction of the Malaysian and Indonesian leaders, the putsch has not been unequivocally condemned by the bloc.⁶ One of the reasons are problems with the rule of law and respect for human rights in most Member States. ASEAN has never had any ambitions to promote democracy, and in its beginnings it was a kind of "club of dictators", established to defend itself against both spread of communism and excessive US interference.

⁶[ASEAN leaders tell Myanmar coup general to end killings \(apnews.com\)](https://apnews.com)

FOR A MULTIPOLAR WORLD ORDER

EUROPEAN UNION'S RELATIONS WITH ASEAN

Author: Dr. Bruno Surdel

4

It is worth noting that Lee Kuan Yew, the longtime prime minister of Singapore - one of the best-governed and richest ASEAN countries - was the main proponent, next to Malaysia's longtime leader Mahathir Mohamad, of the "Asian values" concept. They are opposed to the individualistic values of the West and are based on social harmony, consensus, unity and community. Importantly, Chinese leaders also refer to them indirectly.⁷

The European Union, however, puts values first in international relations. It condemned the coup d'état in Myanmar, imposed sanctions on ten military persons responsible for "undermining democracy and the rule of law in Myanmar / Burma."⁸ Two powerful conglomerates that provide a financial basis for the country's military establishment were also struck, and financing of development projects in that country was suspended too.⁹

The European Union also reacted strongly against human rights violations in Cambodia which became a one-party state in 2018.¹⁰ In August 2020, duty-free and quota-free access to the EU market was partially withdrawn which hit the production key to the country's exports, including clothing and footwear. Thus, the *Everything But Arms Agreement*

⁷ Chang Yau HOON, Revisiting the Asian Values. Argument used by Asian Political Leaders and its Validity; Research Collection, School of Social Sciences, Singapore Management University, 2004.

⁸ [Myanmar/Burma: EU imposes sanctions on 10 individuals and two military-controlled companies over the February military coup and subsequent repression - Consilium \(europa.eu\)](#)

⁹ [EU suspends development funds for Myanmar after army coup | Reuters](#)

¹⁰ [Cambodia is now officially a one-party state - Asia Times](#)

FOR A MULTIPOLAR WORLD ORDER

EUROPEAN UNION'S RELATIONS WITH ASEAN

Author: Dr. Bruno Surdel

6

- a) EU-Singapore (EUSFTA) - entered into force in November 2019¹⁴,
- b) EU-Vietnam - entered into force on August 1, 2020¹⁵.

These agreements provide a solid basis for a future agreement with ASEAN as an organization. According to forecasts, around 2030 the ASEAN Economic Community will become the fourth largest market in the world.¹⁶ Already now, trade and investment cooperation is stimulated by the biennial ASEAN-EU *Trade and Investment Work Program*, under which dialogue takes place at the ministerial, expert and business group levels. It includes, among others the issues of mutual trade facilitation, customs integration, harmonization of standards, and monitoring of statistics and integration.¹⁷

The relations between the EU and Indonesia are particularly noteworthy, the latter being the most populous member state (276 million people¹⁸) and the largest economy of ASEAN, which traditionally has ambitions of leadership in the bloc. Negotiations on the creation of a free trade area have been underway since 2016, and the mutual relations gained an additional formal framework in 2014 when the comprehensive Partnership and Cooperation Agreement entered into force.¹⁹ The EU – Indonesia economic relations are not always

¹⁴[The European Union-Singapore Free Trade Agreement \(EUSFTA\) \(mti.gov.sg\)](https://mti.gov.sg)

¹⁵[EU-Vietnam trade agreement enters into force \(europa.eu\)](https://europa.eu)

¹⁶[The European Union-Singapore Free Trade Agreement \(EUSFTA\) \(mti.gov.sg\)](https://mti.gov.sg)

¹⁷[Joint EU-ASEAN Media Statement \(europa.eu\)](https://europa.eu)

¹⁸[Indonesia Population 1950-2021 | MacroTrends](https://macro.trends.com)

¹⁹[EU-Indonesia Partnership and Cooperation Agreement \(europa.eu\)](https://europa.eu)

FOR A MULTIPOLAR WORLD ORDER

EUROPEAN UNION'S RELATIONS WITH ASEAN

Author: Dr. Bruno Surdel

7

straightforward, and the bone of contention (also in relations with Malaysia) is the issue of palm oil, 84% of which is produced in both countries of Southeast Asia.²⁰ It helps reduce poverty but at the same time contributes greatly to deforestation in Indonesia and Malaysia.²¹

Taking into account sustainable development and the fact that "biodiesel based on palm oil actually causes more greenhouse gas emissions than fossil fuels"²², the European Union decided in 2018 to issue a directive that would de facto reduce the import of palm oil. The European Union countries are Indonesia's second largest - after India - market for the export of palm oil.²³ This situation led to a dispute between Indonesia, Malaysia and the European Union at the World Trade Organization (WTO).²⁴

Strategic Partnership and the European Strategy in the Indo-Pacific

The Strategic Partnership Agreement between the European Union and ASEAN was concluded just two weeks after the signing of the Regional Comprehensive Economic

²⁰<https://ourworldindata.org/palm-oil>

²¹[Palm oil: Economic and environmental impacts \(europa.eu\)](#)

²²[Palm oil: Economic and environmental impacts \(europa.eu\)](#)

²³[20190321_press_release_palm_oil_en.pdf \(europa.eu\)](#)

²⁴[WTO | dispute settlement - the disputes - DS593: European Union - Certain measures concerning palm oil and oil palm crop-based biofuels](#)

FOR A MULTIPOLAR WORLD ORDER

EUROPEAN UNION'S RELATIONS WITH ASEAN

Author: Dr. Bruno Surdel

8

Partnership (RCEP) between 10 ASEAN countries and their largest economic partners: Australia, China, Japan, South Korea and New Zealand. RCEP is the largest trade agreement as of today, involving nearly 2.2 billion people and 30% of global GDP (\$ 26.2 trillion).²⁵ This agreement undoubtedly increases the potential and global attractiveness of ASEAN, giving that bloc a kind of 'centrality' in the Indo-Pacific region.

However, EU's appetite for a more active presence in the Indo-Pacific means competing with China for influence - not just in economic terms, but in the sphere of politics as well. While Brussels would prefer to avoid taking part in the confrontation between Washington and Beijing, it clearly emphasizes that "Asian security is closely linked to European security"²⁶ and that "The EU cannot allow countries to unilaterally undermine international law and maritime security in the South China Sea". Although the name "China" does not appear anywhere, it is clear that it alludes to the Middle Kingdom's 'expansion' at the expense of its neighbours, and the freedom of navigation issues in the basin through which goes around 30% of global trade²⁷ According to the official narrative of Brussels: "Neither ASEAN nor the EU are ready to become part of any 'sphere of influence'.²⁸

²⁵ [ASEAN hits historic milestone with signing of RCEP – RCEP \(rcepsec.org\)](https://www.rcepsec.org/)

²⁶ [Strengthening EU-ASEAN partnership, an urgent necessity - European External Action Service \(europa.eu\)](https://www.europa.eu/press-room/en/infographic-strengthening-eu-asean-partnership-an-urgent-necessity)

²⁷ [Strengthening EU-ASEAN partnership, an urgent necessity - European External Action Service \(europa.eu\)](https://www.europa.eu/press-room/en/infographic-strengthening-eu-asean-partnership-an-urgent-necessity)

²⁸ Ibidem.

FOR A MULTIPOLAR WORLD ORDER

EUROPEAN UNION'S RELATIONS WITH ASEAN

Author: Dr. Bruno Surdel

9

The European Union's position in the Indo-Pacific area and towards its Southeast Asian partners is challenged by the lack of tools for real participation and deficits as regards joint decision-making in foreign and security policy. Therefore, the EU needs to make use of the instruments that the Member States have at their disposal. The most active EU countries in the region are France and Germany.

Dr. Bruno Surdel

VI. Japan - EU

IN SEARCH FOR A NEW SECURITY ARCHITECTURE IN THE INDO-PACIFIC



CENTRUM
STOSUNKÓW
MIĘDZYNARODOWYCH



On May 27, 2021, the European Union and Japan held a virtual summit at which they pledged to enhance cooperation within the framework of their Strategic Partnership. It is particularly important due to growing tensions in the Indo-Pacific, including the East and South China Seas, and in the Taiwan Strait. Both democracies, also parties to the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA), face the challenge of a dynamically growing China which for Europe is a partner, but also an economic competitor and a “systemic rival”. For Tokyo, Beijing is a powerful neighbor which questions the country’s sovereignty over some of its territories in the East China Sea.

On November 23, 2013, Beijing announced its Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ) over the East China Sea which caused concern in Tokyo and in Washington.¹ The concern was all the greater as the ADIZ also covers the airspace over the Senkaku archipelago (in Chinese: Diaoyu), made up of five uninhabited islets and three rocks that Japan recognizes as an integral part of its territory and has them under its control. On the other hand, China and Taiwan consider these islets as part of their territory². The Japanese government issued "protest notes" to Beijing and held consultations with its main ally, the United States.³ The region of the Senkaku archipelago is critical due to the transportation routes of energy resources to Japan and China as well as fisheries and potential oil deposits.

New Era

Since then on, both Japan and the West gradually got to realize that a new era was on track in China's foreign policy and its relations with Japan and the entire Indo-Pacific region. The timing was meaningful. Since November 2012, the Chinese Communist Party has been ruled by Xi Jinping, who in March 2013 took the chairmanship of the People's Republic of China. His signature idea has been a "Rejuvenation of the Chinese Nation", which in international practice translates into an assertive policy towards neighbors and the region.

Almost simultaneously - in December 2012, Shinzo Abe took the prime minister's office in Japan for the second time⁴, with the famous slogan "Japan is back".⁵ Abe, also known for his economic recovery program "Abenomics"⁶, made it clear that Japan remains the

¹ https://www.mofa.go.jp/press/release/press4e_000098.html

² https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/topics_665678/diaodao_665718/t973774.shtml

³ https://www.mofa.go.jp/press/release/press4e_000098.html

⁴ Pierwszy raz funkcję tę sprawował w latach 2006 – 2007.

⁵ https://www.mofa.go.jp/announce/pm/abe/us_20130222en.html

⁶ <https://www.japan.go.jp/abenomics/index.html>

JAPAN - EU

IN SEARCH FOR A NEW SECURITY ARCHITECTURE IN THE INDO-PACIFIC

Author: Dr. Bruno Surdel

3

guardian of global commons, including seas, open enough for all to benefit from⁷. He also announced closer cooperation "with the US, Korea, Australia and other like-minded democracies throughout the region."⁸

Openly voiced concerns of Japan about security and territorial integrity in the East China Sea led to a remarkable declaration by US President Barack Obama on his visit to Japan in April 2014. He made it clear that the US treaty obligations with respect to the security of Japan (treaty of June 1960) are "absolute", "and Article 5 covers all territories under the Japanese administration, including the Senkaku Islands"⁹. The dispute between Tokyo and Beijing results in regular flights of Chinese fighters over Senkaku / Diaoyu airspace, and according to reports from the Japanese government, Chinese ships also enter the country's waters around Senkaku¹⁰. Japan, for its part, has stepped up coast guard and air force patrols.

⁷ https://www.mofa.go.jp/announce/pm/abe/us_20130222en.html

⁸ https://www.mofa.go.jp/announce/pm/abe/us_20130222en.html

⁹ <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2014/04/24/joint-press-conference-president-obama-and-prime-minister-abe-japan>

¹⁰ https://www.mofa.go.jp/region/page23e_000021.html

JAPAN - EU

IN SEARCH FOR A NEW SECURITY ARCHITECTURE IN THE INDO-PACIFIC

Author: Dr. Bruno Surdel

4

South China Sea

The situation in the East China Sea is just part of a larger picture related to Beijing's new, assertive regional policy. Tokyo is increasingly worried about the Chinese expansion in the South China Sea (SCS) where Beijing claims 90% of that critical area¹¹ through which more than 30% of world oil trade flows¹². In Beijing's narrative, "China's sovereign rights over the South China Sea islands have a solid historical and legal basis."¹³ However, those claims were rejected by the award of the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague (the arbitration case filed by Philippines) in July 2016, which also found that "China has violated the sovereign rights of the Philippines in their EEZ by (a) interfering with Philippine fishing and exploring for oil, (b) building artificial islands; and (c) not preventing Chinese fishermen from fishing in this zone"¹⁴. Beijing declared that ruling as "null and void"¹⁵. In reality, this is the large-scale construction of artificial islands that leads to de facto Chinese domination of SCS. It's worth noting that Beijing has been trying to conduct a bilateral dialogue in the region, avoiding multilateral talks, e.g. within ASEAN, as it would strengthen the negotiating position of the Philippines, Vietnam and Malaysia with regard to violating the sovereignty of their territorial waters in the SCS.

¹¹ <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpretor/how-china-bending-rules-south-china-sea>

¹² <https://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.php?id=36952>

¹³ https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/zxxx_662805/t1814210.shtml

¹⁴ <https://docs.pca-cpa.org/2016/07/PH-CN-20160712-Press-Release-No-11-English.pdf>

¹⁵ https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/t1867187.shtml

JAPAN - EU

IN SEARCH FOR A NEW SECURITY ARCHITECTURE IN THE INDO-PACIFIC

Author: Dr. Bruno Surdel

5

Japan's position on the South China Sea is clear. Tokyo rejects Beijing's claims that "the drawing of territorial sea baselines on the relevant islands and reefs in the South China Sea conforms to UNCLOS [1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea] and general international law"¹⁶. The Japanese say that China attempts to limit the freedom of overflight in the disputed basin. In practice, this means that Tokyo carries out missions in the SCS to help maintaining the freedom of navigation, overflights and international shipping which, of course, is met with protests by Beijing.¹⁷ The Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force also conducts military exercises in those waters with the participation of warships and submarines.¹⁸

Tokyo is also working with its partners in the region, for example, providing Indonesia with patrol vessels to help prevent illegal fishing in the country's exclusive economic zone (EEZ)¹⁹. In addition, in March 2021, Japan and Indonesia signed an agreement allowing arms exports to that country²⁰. In terms of wider regional relations, in 2015 Tokyo and Manila raised their cooperation level to an "Enhanced Strategic Partnership", strengthened by agreements on maritime security and defense technology transfer²¹. Furthermore, in October 2020, the new Japanese cabinet with Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga clinched a

¹⁶ Note Verbale, Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations, New York, 19 January 2021.

¹⁷ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-southchinasea-japan-china-idUSKBN26V043>

¹⁸ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-southchinasea-japan-china-idUSKBN26V043>

¹⁹ <https://www.nippon.com/en/news/kd769571787770249216/>

²⁰ <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2021/03/30/national/politics-diplomacy/japan-indonesia-myanmar/>

²¹ https://www.mofa.go.jp/sa/sea2/ph/page4e_000280.html

JAPAN - EU

IN SEARCH FOR A NEW SECURITY ARCHITECTURE IN THE INDO-PACIFIC

Author: Dr. Bruno Surdel

6

deal with Vietnam on the transfer of military equipment and technology, as part of a widening security ties and economic relations.²²

"Quad" and the European Union's role

The deteriorating situation in the Indo-Pacific and a perceived threat of a "Cold War 2.0" prompted in February 2017 Japan, India, Australia and the United States to restart the so-called Quad, a forum for dialogue and cooperation in the field of regional security, launched in 2007 by Tokyo²³. Its objectives are reflected in the Joint Statement of its leaders, "The Spirit of Quad", issued at the first summit on March 12, 2021, in which they committed to "to promoting a free, open rules-based order, rooted in international law to advance security and prosperity and counter threats to both in the Indo-Pacific and beyond." Of particular value is the declaration of support for the " rule of law, freedom of navigation and overflight, peaceful resolution of disputes, democratic values, and territorial integrity"²⁴. which is part of this statement. It can be read as a commentary on the disputes in the East and South China Seas.

²² <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-japan-southeastasia-vietnam-defence-idUSKBN2740C0>

²³ https://www.mofa.go.jp/press/release/press4e_001789.html

²⁴ <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/03/12/quad-leaders-joint-statement-the-spirit-of-the-quad/>

JAPAN - EU

IN SEARCH FOR A NEW SECURITY ARCHITECTURE IN THE INDO-PACIFIC

Author: Dr. Bruno Surdel

7

The European Union does not participate in the Quad but its strategy fits in with the objectives of that forum. This is especially visible in the cooperation between Brussels and Tokyo. On January 25, 2021, Motegi Toshimitsu, Japanese Minister of Foreign Affairs, attended the EU Foreign Affairs Council, an unprecedented event in the history of that body. He presented Japan's position on the situation in the Indo-Pacific ²⁵.

Japan is among the countries with which the EU carries out its project "Enhancing Security Cooperation in Asia and with Asia". It covers cooperation with Asian partners in cybersecurity, maritime security, crisis management, and counter-terrorism ²⁶. The European Union and Japan are linked by the Strategic Partnership Agreement, concluded in July 2018 together with the Economic Partnership Agreement ²⁷. Its principles were strongly emphasized again at the 27th EU-Japan Summit, held in a virtual mode.

On 27 May 2021, leaders of Japan and EU decided to "enhance cooperation for a free and open Indo-Pacific" which is unconstrained by coercion ²⁸. It was also announced that both sides would intensify their cooperation with ASEAN and the South Asian and Pacific island countries. The statement was an allusion to the Chinese expansion in the region. In this context, a clear declaration was made. Tokyo and Brussels expressed "serious concern"

²⁵ https://www.mofa.go.jp/press/release/press1e_000168.html

²⁶ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/49921/eu-japan-2021-05-final.pdf>

²⁷ https://www.mofa.go.jp/erp/ep/page22e_000707.html

²⁸ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/49922/eu-japan-summit-may-2021-statement.pdf>

JAPAN - EU

IN SEARCH FOR A NEW SECURITY ARCHITECTURE IN THE INDO-PACIFIC

Author: Dr. Bruno Surdel

8

about the situation in the East China and South China Seas and their "strong opposition to any unilateral attempts to change the status quo and increase tensions." Importantly, both parties also highlighted the issue of stability in the Taiwan Strait²⁹. Nowadays, it is gaining more and more attention due to the statements by the Chinese leader Xi Jinping, who, on the occasion of the recent centenary celebrations of the Chinese Communist Party, once again mentioned the "reunification" of Taiwan with China³⁰.

It is worth noting that in the field of security in the Indo-Pacific, there have been some joint initiatives of Quad members and some European countries, which may lead in the future to an extension of this initiative to, for example, France. In April 2021, a French Navy-led La Pérouse exercise took place in the Bay of Bengal, involving Japan, the US, Australia and - for the first time – India³¹. The drills took place after the first Quad leaders' summit³².

Bilateral cooperation between Japan and Germany is also gaining momentum. On April 13, 2021, the foreign affairs and defense ministers of both countries held their first meeting in a "2 + 2" format. Such talks have been also held between Tokyo, Paris and London. Discussed was "the possibility of bilateral cooperation on the occasion of the deployment of the German Navy frigate, including joint exercises as well as monitoring and

²⁹ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/49922/eu-japan-summit-may-2021-statement.pdf>

³⁰ <https://www.reuters.com/world/china/chinas-xi-pledges-reunification-with-taiwan-partys-birthday-2021-07-01/>

³¹ <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetailm.aspx?PRID=1709626>

³² <https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/International-relations/Indo-Pacific/France-to-lead-Quad-naval-drill-in-Indo-Pacific-challenge-to-China>

JAPAN - EU

IN SEARCH FOR A NEW SECURITY ARCHITECTURE IN THE INDO-PACIFIC

Author: Dr. Bruno Surdel

9

surveillance activities against illicit ship-to-ship transfers by North Korea-related vessels"³³. The frigate "Bayern" on its six-month mission, which will start in August 2021, will enter Pacific waters and make calls at Japanese ports³⁴. However, it will not enter the South China Sea before visiting the port of Shanghai in China, which may call into question the entire symbolism of the mission - despite possible exercises with the Japanese navy³⁵.

Dr. Bruno Surdel

³³ https://www.mofa.go.jp/press/release/press4e_002994.html

³⁴ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-japan-germany-diplomacy-idUSKBN2BR0R1>

³⁵ <https://www.chathamhouse.org/2021/05/germanys-indo-pacific-frigate-may-send-unclear-message>

VII. Pakistan

ECONOMY IN THE SHADOW OF POLITICS



CENTRE
FOR INTERNATIONAL
RELATIONS



Nuclear arsenal and strategic location make Pakistan a key country in the security architecture of the region as well as an arena of competition between the United States and China. Economic situation hinges much on political events and international problems such as the prolonged conflict with India about Kashmir. Of great importance are also relations with Afghanistan from which the USA and Allied forces have just withdrawn paving the way for its takeover by the Taliban.

Pakistan is a nuclear power with a young, dynamically growing population of about 220 million people.¹ From 1947 on, when the partition of British India into two independent states was agreed according to the religious criterion, Pakistan and the Indian Union have had very poor relations. Both countries accuse each other of hostility and have armed themselves for years. They also acquired nuclear weapons. The tensions have yet increased as a result of the war in the eastern Pakistan and the creation of an independent Bangladesh which was supported by India (1971). According to the estimates by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), in 2020, Pakistan spent for defense USD 10.4 billion which makes as much as 4% of the GDP of that country. For comparison, in 2011, its defense spending amounted to 3.3% of GDP while in 2011-2020 had increased by 55%.²

Taliban and Afghanistan

The conflict between the West and the Taliban became a serious factor of destabilization in Pakistan. Its government had joined Washington's "War on Terror" which produced not only millions of refugees but also infiltration of the Taliban movement (in particular in tribal areas) as well as actions of extreme groups - including terrorists - on an unprecedented scale. On the other hand, the pro-West, former President of Afghanistan, as well as the USA and India accused the government in Islamabad and its special services for active collaboration with the Taliban, also during their current offensive in Afghanistan. Islamabad allegedly has been maintaining open supply lines, providing medical assistance

¹ <https://datacommons.org/place/country/PAK>

² SIPRI Factsheet, April 2021.

PAKISTAN

ECONOMY IN THE SHADOW OF POLITICS

Author: Dr. Bruno Surdel

3

to the wounded fighters and sending thousands of armed individuals to Afghanistan to fight government forces.³

The authorities in Islamabad blame Americans for chaos in the country as "the military solution" adopted by Washington was unrealistic and counterproductive. In Prime Minister Imran Khan's view, simultaneously with the abandonment of the military strategy, USA has lost its power of persuasion towards Taliban and thus the tools to negotiate a real political solution. The Taliban movement interprets the deal with Washington and the withdrawal of allied forces as a victory over the West. Pakistan always saw a political settlement between various factions and the participation of Taliban in the government as the only viable – even if extremely difficult - solution for Afghanistan. The worst case scenario for Islamabad is a civil war in Afghanistan with the participation of the Pashtuns from Pakistan who may support their Afghan brethren. Actually these are Pashtuns who feed the Taliban ranks.

Islamabad estimates that the conflict in Afghanistan through its catastrophic impact on Pakistan's economy cost this country about 150 billion USD. In the human dimension, there have been 70,000 victims, including those who were killed in terrorist attacks.⁴ That

³ <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/no-imminent-threat-of-collapse-of-afghan-govt/articleshow/84770761.cmsm>

⁴ U.S. 'really messed it up' in Afghanistan, says Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan; PBS NewsHour, 28 lipca 2021; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZcloQwf8qJg>

PAKISTAN

ECONOMY IN THE SHADOW OF POLITICS

Author: Dr. Bruno Surdel

4

is why Pakistan favored the involvement of the Taliban in the new Government of Afghanistan, and now opposes any military bases on the Pakistani soil from which the West might be supporting an armed opposition against the "Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan" - as the Taliban call their political project. This approach may make Pakistan a serious player in stabilizing the situation in Afghanistan after the Taliban takeover of Kabul.

Pandemic

Pandemic has had a huge impact on Pakistan's economy that anyway grew too slowly (an average of 2% according to the estimates of the World Bank⁵) in the last two decades, in order to provide new jobs for about 2 million people who enter the market every year⁶. The measures taken by the government to fight Covid-19 included primarily a lockdown. They and reduction in exports as well as lower inflow of remittances from Pakistanis working abroad led inevitably to a reduction in economic activity in the country. World Bank estimates⁷ that in the financial year 2020 all those factors had made GDP shrinking by

⁵ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/pakistan/overview>

⁶ <https://gandhara.rferl.org/a/pakistan-failing-economy/31272373.html>

⁷ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/pakistan/overview>

PAKISTAN

ECONOMY IN THE SHADOW OF POLITICS

Author: Dr. Bruno Surdel

5

1.5%. However, already before the pandemic - in 2019 – Pakistan's GDP growth⁸ slowed down to 3.3% from 5.7% in 2018.

Due to the prolonged difficult economic situation and attempts to introduce reforms, Pakistan concluded an agreement with the IMF for a loan⁹ of USD 6 billion in July 2019. However, it was conditioned by a "decisive fiscal consolidation", increasing the efficiency of tax collection and finding additional sources of revenues. The pandemic has significantly hindered the implementation of the arrangements, so the government has been trying to negotiate a relaxation of conditions by the IMF¹⁰. At the turn of 2020 and 2021, there were some signs of economic recovery, e.g. an increase in industrial production by 14% between July 2020 - May 2021, as well as record remittances which amounted to USD 29.4 billion. The problems, however, have not disappeared. Among them is a galloping inflation and a foreign trade deficit of USD 30 billion. In addition, the current account deficit reached USD 632 million on a monthly basis (data for July 2021).¹¹

⁸ <https://gandhara.rferl.org/a/amid-pandemic-pakistan-looks-for-economic-opportunity/30592462.html>

⁹ <https://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2019/07/03/pr19264-pakistan-imf-executive-board-approves-39-month-eff-arrangement>

¹⁰ <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/international/world-news/pakistan-seeks-easing-of-tough-conditions-on-6-billion-imf-loan-shaukat-tarin/articleshow/82407839.cms>

¹¹ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2311426/pakistans-economy-whats-next>

PAKISTAN

ECONOMY IN THE SHADOW OF POLITICS

Author: Dr. Bruno Surdel

6

Relations with the European Union

The European Union is Pakistan's second largest trading partner. In 2020, the EU accounted for 14.3% of the country's total trade and 28% of Pakistani exports.¹² Economic relations between the European Union and Pakistan are defined by the Cooperation Agreement, concluded in April 2004¹³. However, the "Strategic Engagement Plan" (SEP), adopted in June 2019, became the essential document for the partnership of both parties in various areas¹⁴. It established a "Security Dialogue" covering counter-terrorism, non-proliferation and disarmament. Within the SEP, Pakistan and the EU also agreed to work together to promote "democracy, the rule of law, good governance and human rights"¹⁵. However, SEP does not create legal obligations for the parties under national or international law. On the other hand, the document included also the containment of illegal migration and cooperation in the field of readmission - issues of particular importance to Brussels.¹⁶ It is worth noticing that since the US intervention in Afghanistan in 2001, Pakistan itself has become home for three million refugees.¹⁷

¹² <https://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/countries-and-regions/countries/pakistan/>

¹³ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32004D0870&from=EN>

¹⁴ <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-7857-2019-INIT/en/pdf>

¹⁵ Ibidem.

¹⁶ <http://www.radio.gov.pk/25-06-2019/pakistan-eu-sign-strategic-engagement-plan>

¹⁷ <https://reliefweb.int/map/pakistan/pakistan-overview-afghan-refugee-population-30-april-2021>

PAKISTAN

ECONOMY IN THE SHADOW OF POLITICS

Author: Dr. Bruno Surdel

7

In terms of trade, Pakistan benefits from the so-called Generalized System of Preferences (GSP+).¹⁸ It is a special "incentive arrangement" introduced by the EU for low-income countries, provided that 27 international conventions on human rights, labor rights, environmental protection, sustainable development and good governance are effectively implemented. GSP+ grants Pakistan a zero duty rate on two-thirds of all product categories exported to EU countries¹⁹. This system is extremely important for Pakistan, given that about 78% of Pakistani exports enter the EU at preferential rates. This is the case for around 80% of textiles and clothing, and these goods represent more than 80% of Pakistan's exports to the EU²⁰. As a result, Pakistan's exports to the EU have increased by over 47.25% since 2013, and the export of textiles - by as much as 66.6%²¹.

At the same time, on April 29, 2021, the European Parliament issued a resolution in which "calls on the Commission and the European External Action Service (EEAS) to immediately review Pakistan's eligibility for GSP+ status" due to human rights violations – among other things.²²

¹⁸ <https://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/countries-and-regions/development/generalised-scheme-of-preferences/>

¹⁹ <https://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/countries-and-regions/countries/pakistan/>

²⁰ <https://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/countries-and-regions/countries/pakistan/>

²¹ Shahroo Malik, EU-Pakistan Trade Relations: The Role of GSP Plus Status and Pakistan's Enhanced Access to EU Markets, Strategic Studies, Spring Issue, Vol. 40, Number 1; Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad, 2020; p. 1.

²² https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2021-0157_EN.html

PAKISTAN

ECONOMY IN THE SHADOW OF POLITICS

Author: Dr. Bruno Surdel

8

Relations with China

The roots of Pakistan's good relations with China go back to 1963 and the border agreement between the two countries on the part of Kashmir administered by Islamabad²³. In terms of economic cooperation, a breakthrough came with the launch by Beijing of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in 2013 - the flagship project of the Chinese leader - Xi Jinping. In 2015, BRI's extension became the so-called CPEC or the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor.

The project covers the construction of infrastructure (a network of roads, railways and pipelines), exploitation of ore mines, and the creation of special economic zones. The value of investments under CPEC declared by Beijing is USD 60 billion²⁴. One of the key elements is the strategically located port of Gwadar on the Arabian Sea which links this region to the northwestern province of China - Xinjiang, which is to facilitate the transportation of resources from the Persian Gulf countries to the Middle Kingdom. For the region, the investment is to bring development, modernization and much needed jobs under

²³ Rudra Chaudhuri, The Making of an 'All Weather Friendship'. Pakistan, China and the History of a Border Agreement: 1949–1963
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/07075332.2017.1298529>

²⁴ <http://cpecinfo.com/china-is-the-most-reliable-and-all-weather-friend-of-pakistan/>

PAKISTAN

ECONOMY IN THE SHADOW OF POLITICS

Author: Dr. Bruno Surdel

9

the "Gwadar Smart Port City Master Plan"²⁵. However, the project itself also met with resistance.

Gwadar is located in the Balochistan province, where the local separatist movement "Baluchistan Liberation Army" operates which targets not only Pakistanis but also the Chinese²⁶. Consequently, in order to protect CPEC, the Government of Pakistan established a "Special Security Division" (SSD) in 2017, made up of nine military battalions and six civilian units, totaling 13,700 people²⁷. The agreement on two other key Chinese projects in Pakistan was concluded during the pandemic - in June 2020, and is estimated to be worth USD 11 billion. These are two hydroelectric plants²⁸ in Islamabad-administered Kashmir, and the modernization of railroads in Pakistan²⁹.

The CPEC has also become a new front for rivalry between the US and China. Washington criticizes Chinese investments in Pakistan, as well as the entire BRI, claiming that "CPEC relies mainly on Chinese workers and supplies, even in the face of rising unemployment in Pakistan."³⁰

²⁵ <http://cpec.gov.pk/project-details/63>

²⁶ <https://www.dw.com/en/why-chinese-investment-is-stoking-anger-in-pakistans-balochistan-province/a-54188705>

²⁷ https://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ani/pak-establishes-special-security-division-for-cpec-117012200390_1.html

²⁸ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1567481>

²⁹ Ibidem.

³⁰ <https://gandhara.rferl.org/a/pakistan-is-new-frontline-in-chinese-us-rivalry/30295435.html>

PAKISTAN

ECONOMY IN THE SHADOW OF POLITICS

Author: Dr. Bruno Surdel

10

Pakistan at a strategic crossroads

The lightning speed at which the Taliban captured the neighboring Afghanistan puts Islamabad in a new strategic position. On the one hand, it potentially strengthens its influence in the region, but on the other, it may lead to instability in Pakistan itself. The already powerful radical religious movements will gain in strength as they strive to establish in Pakistan a socio-political system similar to the one envisioned by the "Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan". Millions of refugees trying to enter Pakistan will complicate the already difficult economic situation of the country. Islamabad is trying to balance its budget with loans from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and aid packages from Beijing and Saudi Arabia. However, the only solution for Pakistan are serious structural reforms, both in the economic and fiscal spheres, as well as making the State more effective which is conditioned by a real fight against corruption. The current security situation of the country and the social conditions of its population, are not conducive to launching necessary long-term reforms of the State and its institutions. Most likely, therefore, little will change in Pakistan in the coming years in terms of economic governance, military dominance, and how the institutions work. Further stagnation is a realistic scenario.

Dr. Bruno Surdel

VIII. Afghanistan

EMIRATE 2.0



CENTRE
FOR INTERNATIONAL
RELATIONS



On August 31, 2021, the last US troops left the Kabul airport, bringing a close to the longest war in US history. For the Taliban – whom the Americans had removed from power 20 years ago – this was an occasion to celebrate the victory over the US and the end of the Western occupation, which they equate with the restoration of sovereignty. For Europe and America, it is loss of face, but also a question how to define relations with Afghanistan under the Taliban rule.

Afghanistan has never been a fully centralized country, and efforts to centralize state power under both the Soviet and American occupation have not brought lasting results. The government in Kabul did not control all of Afghanistan's territory.

The project called "The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan" may mean the return of the brutal rule as we know it from the 1990s and the ruthless violation of civil liberties and human rights, especially women's rights. On the other hand, the Taliban face an enormous challenge of economic ruin and the poverty of most of the population. In order to function as a State, they also need recognition of at least some regional and global powers, including Russia and China. This offers some hope for more pragmatism and less extremism than in the past.

The causes of the defeat of the West

In 2001, the primary goal of the US invasion of Taliban-ruled Afghanistan was the destruction of al-Qaeda network, which had located its headquarters and training center in that country. The Taliban refused to extradite Osama bin Laden and paid for it not only by the loss of power in Afghanistan, but also by an almost total annihilation.¹

Washington and its allies, however, failed to do what Francis Fukuyama described as absolutely essential to the survival of any country: they failed to build institutions independent of the West, not only financially, but most importantly in terms of sustainability and credibility in society.² The institutions built by the West in Afghanistan existed solely thanks to its funds and the presence of intervention troops. So when the West decided to withdraw, they necessarily had to collapse along with the state it created.

¹ <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2021/08/31/remarks-by-president-biden-on-the-end-of-the-war-in-afghanistan/>

² Francis Fukuyama, *State-Building: Governance and World Order in the 21st Century*; Cornell University Press, 2004.

AFGHANISTAN

EMIRATE 2.0

Author: Dr. Bruno Surdel

3

Allied troops, NGOs, and organizations affiliated with Western governments often acted as the main employer in a given area, and - worse – were buying peace by distributing funds among tribal leaders. Money for security and the illusion of stabilization - that type of corruption perpetrated by the West was a seed of the government's collapse and contributed much to the fall of the entire system established by the Americans in Kabul in 2001. Unconditional funding, supporting local pro-government warlords, and turning a blind eye to their crimes against the population, the lack of security on a daily basis – all those factors aroused resentment among the inhabitants and contributed significantly to the resurgence of the Taliban movement in Afghanistan.³ In the socio-political conditions that were created, there could be no question of loyalty to the State - its institutions themselves were associated with the culturally foreign West. In this respect there are certain parallels with the pre-revolutionary Iran. The difference, however, is fundamental: In 2020, President Trump signed a pact with the Taliban that excluded the pro-American government in Kabul which proved to be the nail in the coffin of a quasi-democratic State which was being created by the Allies for twenty years in Afghanistan. Both the army and the tribal leaders playing a central role in the local socio-political system drew the only possible conclusion from the US deal with the Taliban: the country was handed over by Washington to the Taliban.

³ <https://www.spiegel.de/international/world/the-trillion-dollar-illusion-the-entirely-predictable-failure-of-the-west-s-mission-in-afghanistan-a-0193fa9c-aa6f-4719-84de-01ead3aefc66>

AFGHANISTAN

EMIRATE 2.0

Author: Dr. Bruno Surdel

4

Therefore, there was no reason to fight for the pro-Western government in Kabul, as it no longer enjoyed the real support of the United States, and thus the protection of its troops and financial assistance. In addition, the number of military forces declared by President Joe Biden (300,000) was greatly exaggerated. In fact, the number of active soldiers may have been around 120,000-180,000 and has been undermined in the last two years by numerous desertions, including Afghans joining the Taliban. The rest of the money the Allies spent on security and defense was an "insurance policy" paid to tribal leaders in return for relative loyalty. However, even those existing forces - still serious in theory, after all - were largely dependent on the logistical, technical, training and military support of the Allied troops. The police and other security forces, on the other hand, were largely corrupt - to an even greater extent than the army - and their combat readiness was rather low.⁴

These circumstances help to understand the success of the Taliban's lightning offensive, the military's lack of will to fight, and the collapse of the government epitomized by President Ashraf Ghani's 'escape' from the country. The failure of the pro-Western political system resulted from the weakness of the State created by the US and Europe and not from the strength of the Taliban.

⁴ The Reasons for the Collapse of Afghan Forces By Anthony H. Cordesman; Working Draft: August 17, 2021, Centre for Strategic and International Studies.

AFGHANISTAN

EMIRATE 2.0

Author: Dr. Bruno Surdel

5

The Future of Afghanistan

The Taliban is not uniform. It's made up of numerous factions and groups, not necessarily harmoniously cooperating with each other. This is already clearly visible in the discrepancies in the declarations of the central leadership and the practice of individual local commanders. All this weakens the stability of the government but also makes it difficult to exercise real control over the country.

One of the most radical and influential groups in the Taliban movement is the so-called The Haqqani Network (HN), founded by the leader of the clan Jalaluddin Haqqani from Paktia Province, who fought both the Soviets and US troops. During the US occupation, the Haqqani Network had its headquarters in Pakistan, in northern Waziristan.⁵ HN's founder's sons, Sirajuddin and Anas, are part of the top Taliban leadership, and the group maintains close ties with Pakistan's secret services, allowing Islamabad to have a significant impact on the policies of the new government in Kabul.⁶

On the other hand, however, a possible civil war in Afghanistan may cause instability in Pakistan itself. The Taliban movement consists mostly of Pashtuns and they are one of the ethnic groups in Pakistan as well. It is, therefore, an interconnected system, and Islamabad

⁵ https://www.dni.gov/nctc/groups/haqqani_network.html

⁶ <https://www.understandingwar.org/report/haqqani-network>

AFGHANISTAN

EMIRATE 2.0

Author: Dr. Bruno Surdel

6

is primarily concerned with stopping the armed conflict that has been going on for almost two generations.

Brussels and Washington also expect - although it is not openly spoken of for obvious reasons - that the Taliban regime will solidify and that they are in power to take effective control of the entire country. It is about two things: eliminating the common enemy, which is the Islamic State of Khorasan province (IS-K) and ensuring general security in Afghanistan, and on the other hand - preventing possible waves of refugees. Therefore, a tactical cooperation between the West and the Emirate is necessary - despite mutual hostility.

Overwhelmingly, IS-K is made up of ex-Taliban, disillusioned by the less extreme interpretation of the Islamic Sharia law their parent movement now preaches compared to that practiced in the 1990s. Another motive for powering the ranks of IS-K by extreme-minded jihadists is the specific Taliban nationalism, their "Afghanness" and "local" character, which definitely distinguishes the Emirate from the Islamic State.

In its declarations, the Taliban wants to reassure the world that Afghanistan will not again become a training base and safe haven for terrorist groups planning attacks on targets in America or Europe. Of course, the question remains whether the Taliban will really want to

AFGHANISTAN

EMIRATE 2.0

Author: Dr. Bruno Surdel

7

eliminate groups such as IS-K or foreign jihadists, and if they are capable of doing that in the first place. There may be as many as 10,000 foreign fighters in Afghanistan.⁷

IS-K, like the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIL), is an internationalist movement that does not recognize national borders or cultural differences. Also, while the Taliban itself is known for persecuting the Hazara Shiite ethnic minority, IS-K wants to destroy the Shi'ite branch of Islam as such, even if it means the physical elimination of the Shi'ite population in Afghanistan.⁸

Another serious problem - directly affecting such regional powers as China and Russia – is a possible exodus to Afghanistan of fighters of Tajik, Uzbek or Uyghur origin from the Syrian province of Idlib. Their possible activity in Central Asia may destabilize that region. There are serious reasons for this - a growing aversion towards non-Syrians and non-Arabs within the main Islamist group in Idlib which is Hayat Tahrir ash Sham (HTS).⁹ Such a development might lead to further the chaos in Afghanistan and an increase of IS-K's power in a situation where the Taliban need to govern the country and produce at least a minimal economic recovery. The problems of the Emirate may mean an influx of recruits and the strengthening of the “Islamic State”.

⁷ <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/08/are-syrian-jihadis-ready-take-fight-afghanistan>

⁸ [Afghanistan: Taliban responsible for brutal massacre of Hazara men – new investigation | Amnesty International](#)

⁹ [As Syria's foreign jihadis eye Afghanistan, new challenges arise for Moscow - Al-Monitor: The Pulse of the Middle East](#)

AFGHANISTAN

EMIRATE 2.0

Author: Dr. Bruno Surdel

8

The horrible terrorist attack at the Kabul Airport (HKAP) on August 26, 2021 is a clue as to how IS-K intends to act in Taliban-ruled Afghanistan. Paradoxically, this does not necessarily work against the Emirate, as repeated attacks will force the West to tactically support the Taliban in its struggle with the Islamic State. However, such cooperation may not be possible for ideological reasons on the part of the Emirate. If so, there is another way to act. President Joe Biden's declaration as well as the American drone strikes on the likely masterminds of the August 26 attack show that the USA is ready to make limited strikes on targets in Afghanistan without consulting the Taliban government.

Lessons for the West

One of Europe's fundamental concerns are possible new waves of refugees which may cause - as was the case in the past - political destabilization in the EU through the rise of populists to power, and threaten the European project itself. Currently, Afghans fearing the Emirate are trying to flee to Pakistan and Iran. Through Iran, however, the road leads to Turkey and the European Union. Turkey, struggling with almost four million Syrian refugees, is, of course, not interested in such a development. But if there is a larger influx of refugees in the future, Ankara will not hesitate to send them to the European Union and will

AFGHANISTAN

EMIRATE 2.0

Author: Dr. Bruno Surdel

9

put pressure on Brussels. This happened after the 2015 refugee crisis and led to a deal between the EU and Turkey, based on which the EU contributed 6 billion euros for refugee centres in Turkey in return for which Ankara kept irregular migrants on its territory.¹⁰

For the above-mentioned reasons: security and a possible mass irregular migration to Europe, the Emirate probably does not have to fear a long-term freezing of foreign development aid, and even less of humanitarian aid. The West cannot afford it. Europe - whether it wants it or not - must find a way to have its humanitarian and aid NGOs present in the Taliban-ruled Afghanistan. And, unfortunately, it cannot hope for exerting a significant influence on the human rights situation in that country. This opportunity got lost in the 2001-2021.

The United States, on the other hand, drew one fundamental lesson from the twenty-year occupation ('forever war') of Afghanistan. Joe Biden, in his address to the nation, clearly stated that for the USA the era of building or transforming states in other parts of the world by means of large military operations has come to a close.¹¹ It is doubtful, however, that that statement will stand the test of time. The fact remains, however, that Washington's

¹⁰ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_2487

¹¹ <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2021/08/31/remarks-by-president-biden-on-the-end-of-the-war-in-afghanistan/>

AFGHANISTAN

EMIRATE 2.0

Author: Dr. Bruno Surdel

10

involvement in Afghanistan has cost the US taxpayer two trillion dollars, or \$ 300 million a day for 20 years.¹²

Possible Role of Beijing

For the Taliban itself, the biggest challenge right now is re-starting the economy and State institutions. The income from opium and internal and external customs duties and taxes is only sufficient to satisfy rudimentary needs. Also, Taliban wants to eliminate opium for religious reasons, and in the past they have shown greater effectiveness in this respect than the pro-Western government in Kabul.

The geopolitical vacuum left by the US and its Allies may be filled by other powers competing with Washington. The most likely candidate is China, which - as mentioned above - is concerned about the prospect of jihadism being exported across the Afghan-Chinese border to Xinjiang Province. It is therefore not surprising that Foreign Minister Wang Yi met one of the top Taliban leaders, Mullah Baradar on July 28, 2021 in Tianjin. The Taliban has pledged that "they will never allow any force to use Afghan territory to act to the detriment of China."¹³ It is about the Islamic Movement of East Turkestan (ETIM),

¹² Ibidem

¹³ https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/zxxx_662805/t1895950.shtml

AFGHANISTAN

EMIRATE 2.0

Author: Dr. Bruno Surdel

11

which, in the words of Wang Yi, "poses a direct threat to China's national security and territorial integrity." ¹⁴ This is a sine qua non condition that Beijing places on the new government in Kabul. The Chinese make economic assistance and aid or investments in Afghanistan dependent on compliance with it. The investments themselves - including those under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) – are anyway a distant prospect as Beijing must make sure that the Emirate can provide security on its territory. In this respect, therefore, China can play a constructive role in Afghanistan.

Dr. Bruno Surdel

¹⁴ Ibidem.

IX. AUKUS

AMERICAN COMPETITION WITH CHINA AT THE EXPENSE OF EUROPE'S SECURITY?



CENTRE
FOR INTERNATIONAL
RELATIONS



On September 15, 2021, United States, Australia and the United Kingdom announced the creation of a new partnership to work for security and deepening ties in the Indo-Pacific region. The so-called “**AUKUS**” is also intended to strengthen a peaceful and rules-based international order. The pact’s flagship project is the construction of nuclear-powered submarines for Australia.

The news of AUKUS sparked outrage in Paris, as Australia canceled a USD 40 billion worth contract with France to build a fleet of conventional submarines. The European Union expressed its solidarity with Paris, and **China condemned** the new pact, arguing that it would harm peace and stability in the region. The establishment of AUKUS, on the one hand, strengthens the voices in favor of the “strategic autonomy” of the European Union, and on the other, indicates a growing concern about Beijing’s policy towards Taiwan and the entire Indo-Pacific region.

The US, UK and Australia share a long tradition of close political, economic and security cooperation. The community of culture, tradition and language cannot be overestimated in this respect. A clear example is the so-called "Five Eyes" - an agreement on the exchange of intelligence information. Its origins date back to the Second World War and it brings together the above-mentioned countries as well as Canada and New Zealand.

“Anglo-Saxon” alliance to counter a rising China

The very basis of Australian-American security relations is the ANZUS Treaty, concluded in 1951. Since 2007, both countries and Japan are also connected by the so-called Quad, a forum for dialogue and cooperation in the field of regional security, launched in 2007 by Tokyo and renewed in February 2017 ¹.

AUKUS is not a completely new quality, but it significantly strengthens the existing ties between its participants and is an expression of "realpolitik" on the part of Canberra, Washington and London. That pragmatism is based on a cold calculation to rely on partners with whom one can cooperate without collision in building new security architecture in the Indo-Pacific.

The center of the world is definitely shifting towards the Indo-Pacific. The certainty of cooperation and effective communication between partners is critical now, when the situation in the wider Pacific Ocean region becomes increasingly tense. Although the declaration of the new pact does not mention China, Beijing's foreign policy seems to be its fundamental *raison d'être*.

¹https://www.mofa.go.jp/press/release/press4e_001789.html

AUKUS

AMERICAN COMPETITION WITH CHINA AT THE EXPENSE OF EUROPE'S SECURITY?

Author: Dr. Bruno Surdel

3

Australia - after years of relatively good relations with China, which resulted in the signing of a free trade agreement (ChAFTA) in 2015² - adopted a more assertive approach. The change was caused by Beijing's attempts to instrumentalize the Chinese Diaspora in Australia, and alleged cyber attacks³. Relations between the two countries have deteriorated during the Covid-19 pandemic due to Canberra's support for international efforts to investigate the origins of the coronavirus. This was badly received by the Chinese government which imposed economic sanctions on Australia and “indefinitely” suspended key economic dialogue with the country⁴.

The issue of Taiwan

AUKUS member states are also concerned about China's assertiveness in the South China Sea of which Beijing is claiming 90%, and about its increasingly aggressive behavior towards Taiwan. On the occasion of the 100th anniversary of Chinese Communist Party, President Xi Jinping stated that "Resolving the Taiwan issue and achieving full unification of China is a historic mission and unshakable commitment of the Party", and those who try

² <https://www.dfat.gov.au/trade/agreements/in-force/chafta/Pages/australia-china-fta>

³ [Australia joins international partners in attribution of malicious cyber activity to China | Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs Minister for Women \(foreignminister.gov.au\)](#)

⁴ <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/china-lobbies-australia-parliament-joining-regional-trade-pact-2021-09-10/>

AUKUS

AMERICAN COMPETITION WITH CHINA AT THE EXPENSE OF EUROPE'S SECURITY?

Author: Dr. Bruno Surdel

4

to meddle in China's affairs "will find themselves on a collision course with a great steel wall"⁵.

Those strong statements were followed by action. Beginning on October 1 - the PRC's national holiday - the country's air force carried out four days of massive flights over the Taiwanese air defense identification zone (ADIZ)⁶. In addition, also in early October, the Chinese military conducted drills in Fujian, on the other side of the Taiwan Strait, including a beach landing and attack. The Taiwanese minister of defense stated that the situation is the most difficult one in 40 years, and Beijing will be ready for a possible invasion of the island as early as 2025⁷.

Australia, as a middle power with limited defense capabilities compared to Beijing, must take into account the changing security landscape in the Indo-Pacific. This is what AUKUS is to help strategically, and in military terms - a new deal with Washington and London for the construction of at least eight nuclear-powered submarines, as well as wider and even closer cooperation in the field of military technology, AI and intelligence exchange⁸.

The Australian government and experts claim that the advantage of nuclear submarines over their conventional diesel versions is based on the fact that “nuclear-powered

⁵[Full Text: Speech by Xi Jinping at ceremony marking CPC centenary \(www.gov.cn\)](http://www.gov.cn)

⁶[Taiwan won't start a war with China, defence minister says | Reuters](https://www.reuters.com)

⁷[Taiwan says don't get too close as China defends military drills | Reuters](https://www.reuters.com)

⁸<https://www.pm.gov.au/media/australia-pursue-nuclear-powered-submarines-through-new-trilateral-enhanced-security>

AUKUS

AMERICAN COMPETITION WITH CHINA AT THE EXPENSE OF EUROPE'S SECURITY?

Author: Dr. Bruno Surdel

5

submarines do not have the same constraints as conventional submarines in terms of weapons storage, speed and endurance. They can remain completely submerged for months, limiting detection by adversaries⁹. "However, the first submarines of that type will leave Adelaide in southern Australia where they are supposed to be built, only around 2040, and the now aging Collins-class ships that Australia currently has must be replaced in the meantime. One possible solution is to lease Los Angeles-class ships from the United States or British Trafalgar-class submarines¹⁰. Only then will Australia not be left with a "strategic gap" for the next 20 years¹¹.

The European context of AUKUS

France reacted to the news of a new pact with fury. Foreign Minister Le Drian described Canberra's decision to cancel the contract with French Naval Group to build 12 conventional submarines as a "stab in the back" and the US role in the affair as "betrayal"¹². French ambassadors were also temporarily recalled from both countries. The contract was highly lucrative, with an estimated value of USD 40 billion, but it was not only its loss that

⁹ <https://www.foreignminister.gov.au/minister/marise-payne/media-release/australia-pursue-nuclear-powered-submarines-through-new-trilateral-enhanced-security-partnership>

¹⁰ <https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/can-australia-get-second-hand-nuclear-submarines-the-uk-option/>

¹¹ <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-09-17/aus-strategically-naked-under-submarine-deal/100469254>

¹² [France's Le Drian asks Europeans to 'think hard' about alliances amid submarine spat \(france24.com\)](https://france24.com/en/france/le-drian-asks-europeans-to-think-hard-about-alliances-amid-submarine-spat/)

AUKUS

AMERICAN COMPETITION WITH CHINA AT THE EXPENSE OF EUROPE'S SECURITY?

Author: Dr. Bruno Surdel

6

caused Paris's anger. It was also difficult for France to accept that the negotiations - which lasted several months - were kept strictly secret. Paris took it as "a breach of trust between the allies"¹³, while the French Ambassador to Australia described as "childish" explanations by Canberra that it could not inform France about the ongoing negotiations¹⁴.

French authorities tried to "Europeanise" the issue of the canceled contract, however, with limited success. Josep Borrel - the EU's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security - regretted that Europe was not involved in talks on the new pact and the submarine contract, but also called for 'not to dramatize' and not to question 'relations with the United States which have improved a lot with the new administration'¹⁵. Ursula von der Leyen - president of the European Commission - described the treatment of France as "unacceptable"¹⁶, noting that friends and partners should take into account their perspectives and interests¹⁷. The German foreign minister, Heiko Maas, reacted in a similar vein, saying that the decision to create AUKUS was "sobering", while the United States must consult its allies on such important strategic decisions. In his opinion, there can be no

¹³[In escalation over submarine deal, France recalls envoys from U.S. and Australia | Reuters](#)

¹⁴<https://www.france24.com/en/asia-pacific/20211008-french-ambassador-says-australia-childish-to-keep-us-submarine-deal-secret>

¹⁵https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/senegal/104215/indo-pacific-remarks-high-representativevice-president-press-conference-joint-communication_en

¹⁶[Ursula von der Leyen on Twitter: "Today's meeting with @ScottMorrisonMP of AU on #AUKUS was a starting point of discussions. Important to understand all dimensions of the ongoing debate. Friends and partners take into account each other's perspective and interests. https://t.co/ol1q1SHdHE" / Twitter](#)

¹⁷[EU chief: Treatment of France 'not acceptable' - CNN Video](#)

AUKUS

AMERICAN COMPETITION WITH CHINA AT THE EXPENSE OF EUROPE'S SECURITY?

Author: Dr. Bruno Surdel

7

more fait accompli politics¹⁸. At the same time, the most important European politicians made it clear that closer cooperation between the US and Europe in the Indo-Pacific region is necessary, and that the transatlantic alliance is of key importance to global security¹⁹.

But the issue of the new pact and the "disregard" of Europe by the US strengthened voices in favor of the so-called strategic autonomy, the EU's ability to undertake military action independent of Washington. However, in Europe, there is lack of unity in that respect. In addition, because of Brexit, the very strategic capabilities of the EU have been limited. Britain - like France - is both a permanent member of the UN Security Council and a nuclear power. Germany - for political and historical reasons – is not expected to fill the gap.

Indo-Pacific nations divided

The ASEAN nations have not reacted consistently to the formation of a new strategic alliance in their region. Philippines' Foreign Minister Teodoro L. Locsin "welcomed" the creation of AUKUS on the grounds that "ASEAN member states, individually and collectively, do not have the military capability to maintain peace and security in Southeast

¹⁸[German foreign minister urges EU-US cooperation in Indo-Pacific | News | DW | 23.09.2021](#)

¹⁹[European defence: the quest for 'strategic autonomy' | Financial Times \(ft.com\)](#)

AUKUS

AMERICAN COMPETITION WITH CHINA AT THE EXPENSE OF EUROPE'S SECURITY?

Author: Dr. Bruno Surdel

8

Asia"²⁰. However, Indonesia took a very reserved stance, expressing its "deep concern over the ongoing arms race and the projection of power in the region" and "urging Australia to maintain its commitment to peace, stability and security in the region in accordance with the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation"²¹. Malaysia took a similar position²².

Interestingly, New Zealand - a close ally of Australia – took a different stance. Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern assured that "she does not expect absolutely any changes in the already strong relations with the United States, Great Britain and, of course, Australia", however, according to New Zealand law, Australian nuclear-powered submarines will not be allowed to enter the territorial waters of that country.

Meanwhile, Gerry Brownlee – the government spokesman for foreign affairs and spy agencies, expressed his concern that New Zealand might be excluded from AUKUS's sensitive information exchange because of the new pact - despite its participation in the Five Eyes group. Paradoxically, however, the country may take advantage of its absence from the accord in the context of maintaining robust trade and diplomatic relations with China²³.

²⁰ <https://dfa.gov.ph/dfa-news/statements-and-advisoriesupdate/29484-statement-of-foreign-affairs-teodoro-l-locsin-jr-on-the-australia-united-kingdom-united-states-aukus-enhanced-trilateral-security-partnership>

²¹ https://kemlu.go.id/portal/en/read/2937/siaran_pers/pernyataan-mengenai-kapal-selam-nuklir-australia

²² <https://www.bnnbloomberg.ca/malaysia-says-aukus-alliance-may-lead-to-arms-race-provocation-1.1653955>

²³ <https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/political/451641/new-zealand-a-winner-in-aukus-agreement-but-risks-remain-experts>

AUKUS

AMERICAN COMPETITION WITH CHINA AT THE EXPENSE OF EUROPE'S SECURITY?

Author: Dr. Bruno Surdel

9

Europe wants to strengthen its position in the region

France considers itself a Pacific power as it has overseas territories there in which 7,000 soldiers are stationed. It also has the ability to move more troops to the region if necessary. The 2017 French Defense and National Security Strategy clearly shows the growing importance of the Indo Pacific both for France itself and for international security²⁴. This is also apparent from the 2019 political report "France and Security in the Indo-Pacific" published by the French Ministry of Defense. It was all the more painful for Paris not to be included in Washington's regional calculations. Simultaneously, the French president Emmanuel Macron hopes for a greater strategic role for the European Union in the Pacific Ocean²⁵.

The new "EU Strategy for cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region"²⁶ is such a vision of a more assertive European approach, as it envisages an increased presence of the EU Member States' navies in the region in order to protect maritime communication lines and freedom of navigation²⁷. However, that strategy was published on September 16 and thus only a day

²⁴La stratégie de défense française en Indopacifique (defense.gouv.fr)

²⁵Macron to pitch greater EU role in Indo-Pacific after AUKUS crisis | Reuters

²⁶EU Strategy for Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific - European External Action Service (europa.eu)

²⁷https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/jointcommunication_2021_24_1_en.pdf

AUKUS

AMERICAN COMPETITION WITH CHINA AT THE EXPENSE OF EUROPE'S SECURITY?

Author: Dr. Bruno Surdel

10

after the announcement of the AUKUS pact, which imposed a completely different context on Europe already on the day of publication.

Charles Michel - President of the European Council, referring to both the EU strategy and the new alliance, expressed his conviction that "AUKUS's Security Partnership further demonstrates the need for a joint EU approach in a region of strategic importance"²⁸. This also means cooperation with QUAD²⁹ as well as "increasing the capabilities of partners in the Indo-Pacific region to ensure maritime security" and strengthening relations with ASEAN - the Association of Southeast Asian Nations³⁰.

Therefore, the theses of the EU's new Indo-Pacific Strategy do not assume any reduction of cooperation with Washington in that region. However, the nature of these relations will depend on the US. The AUKUS crisis clearly shows the preferences of the United States - not only in the Indo-Pacific - and they are not beneficial for the European Union nations. Europe has just begun to fully understand that Washington's strategic interests have irrevocably shifted to the Indo-Pacific region, with unpredictable ramifications for the EU security, including Poland.

Dr. Bruno Surdel

²⁸ <https://twitter.com/eucopresident/status/1438484514137911306>

²⁹ https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/senegal/104215/indo-pacific-remarks-high-representativevice-president-press-conference-joint-communication_en

³⁰ https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/jointcommunication_2021_24_1_en.pdf

X. Israel and Arab countries

ONE YEAR AFTER THE ABRAHAM ACCORDS



CENTRE
FOR INTERNATIONAL
RELATIONS



The **Abraham Accords** were concluded on September 15, 2020 between the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Israel. Embassies were opened, unrestricted trade, direct flights and tourist exchange began. However, the purpose of those agreements was not just to initiate a new chapter in difficult mutual relations, but above all building new security architecture in the troubled Middle East. For President Donald Trump's US diplomatic team – which contributed decisively to the Israeli-Arab rapprochement – the deal was to become a foundation for lasting peace and stabilization, and a way to stop Iran's expansion in the region. After a year and with a new administration in Washington, these hopes have only partially come true.

Less America - more Russia and China

The key process that is currently taking place in the Middle East is scaling down of US military and political involvement. This is clearly seen in Syria as well as in Iraq and Afghanistan. Such a policy has been pursued by subsequent American administrations - Barack Obama¹, Donald Trump and now Joe Biden. It is related to the migration of Washington's strategic interests towards the Indo-Pacific as a consequence of the shift of the global center to East and South Asia in connection with the dynamic growth of China's economic, political and military power².

The second important aspect of that phenomenon is a global energy transformation: the role of crude oil and other fossil fuels, and thus of the Middle East, is diminishing. However, this does not mean the complete absence of the United States, which still has military bases in Qatar, Bahrain or Saudi Arabia and pursues a multi-dimensional policy in the region. Among the critical issues for the US is Israel's security and preventing Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons, so the Americans are keeping nearby adequate military forces and infrastructure for a possible rapid response.

One of the consequences of the ongoing scaling down of the US involvement in the Middle East is a more intense Russian presence which is clearly visible since Moscow's intervention in Syria in September 2015. Despite the fact that Kremlin's successes have been possible mainly due to the space created by the Americans rather than coming from its real power, Russia now controls parts of the Mediterranean which has a direct impact on the situation of the European Union.

This does not mean, however, that Moscow can replace Washington. Arab countries are cooperating with Russia because of the will to strategically diversify, including diversifying

¹ [FACT SHEET: Advancing the Rebalance to Asia and the Pacific | whitehouse.gov \(archives.gov\)](https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2012/07/26/12-0726-fact-sheet-advancing-the-rebalance-to-asia-and-the-pacific)

² [Biden's Pivot to Asia amid China's Expanding Influence | Reality of Aid](https://www.realityofaid.org/2021/05/12/biden-s-pivot-to-asia-amid-china-s-expanding-influence/)

ISRAEL AND ARAB COUNTRIES

ONE YEAR AFTER THE ABRAHAM ACCORDS

| Author: Dr. Bruno Surdel

3

the supply of military technology. At the same time, however, they are not trying to limit their partnership with the US which is still seen as the number 1 player.

Abraham Accords

Since the so-called Arab Spring (2011), the Arab countries of North Africa and the Middle East are undergoing a political, economic and social transformation. In part, it is also a result of generational changes, a technological revolution, and the exponential growth of social networks. A similar process is underway in Sudan and Iraq. Societies call for changes in the ossified political and social system, and face a fierce response from the military and civilian establishment

Simultaneously, there is a shift visible in foreign policy of the Middle Eastern countries, caused by the withdrawal of the US and the need to build new security architecture in the region. One of the most important factors of change is the rapprochement between the regional powers embroiled in an "eternal conflict": Saudi Arabia in alliance with the United Arab Emirates and smaller Gulf States, and Israel. That new alliance perceives the Islamic Republic of Iran as its main adversary which is backed by Qatar and Turkey. The reversal of alliances, expressed in the form of an international agreement (the so-called Abraham Accords) not only means a formal recognition of Israel by the main regional capitals but clearly divides the Muslim world into two rival camps.

ISRAEL AND ARAB COUNTRIES

ONE YEAR AFTER THE ABRAHAM ACCORDS

| Author: Dr. Bruno Surdel

4

The Abraham Accords were the culmination of efforts by the administration of US President Donald Trump to normalize relations between Tel Aviv and Arab nations, in particular the Persian Gulf States with which Washington maintains special strategic ties³. This reconciliation was only a prologue to a kind of domino effect, as at the same time talks were underway with the new government in Sudan and with the Kingdom of Morocco.

In the case of Morocco, the country has been mired in the Western Sahara conflict for decades, with that territory being taken over by force and administered for over 40 years by Rabat. The leaders of the Polisario Front found refuge on the other side of the border. The Polisario has been fighting for the independence of that territory and considers itself the government of the Islamic Republic of the Sahara. Formally, that entity has been recognized as a State by some countries in the world including the African Union which is a very contentious issue for the Moroccan diplomacy. The controversial US decision to recognize Rabat's rights to that territory resulted in an Israeli foreign minister's visit to the country – first since 2003⁴. Several decades of non-recognition of Israel, only behind-the-scenes negotiations, lack of trade and technology, were not beneficial to either side.

³ [In Trumpian Times, Israel and a Gulf State Find Common Ground - Carnegie Endowment for International Peace](#)

⁴ [Israel, Morocco to upgrade relations, open embassies, Israeli FM says | Reuters](#)

ISRAEL AND ARAB COUNTRIES

ONE YEAR AFTER THE ABRAHAM ACCORDS

| Author: Dr. Bruno Surdel

5

Seeking a compromise

In that context, it is worth noting that on August 28 Baghdad was hosting a conference on cooperation and partnership⁵ which saw - apart from the host country - the participation of the most important regional players: Iran, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Qatar, Jordan, Egypt, Turkey, and also France. The meeting, unprecedented in terms of the list of participants, had focused on security issues, the reconstruction of Iraq after decades of wars, foreign investments in the country, climate change, as well as the problems of political and economic partnership, and, most importantly, on a constructive dialogue in the region⁶.

The conference in Baghdad may be interpreted as an attempt to normalise relations between the opposing nations in the region. However, still there are obstacles to a permanent and real rapprochement that are difficult to eliminate, among them fundamental contradictions of strategic interests and a traditional competition for political influence. Iran is not to be expected to relinquish its support for Shi'ite communities in the Sunni-majority Gulf countries⁷. On the other hand, Saudi Arabia will try to gain more influence in Iraq, and in the longer term also in Syria - which is against the interests of Iran and Turkey. Moreover,

⁵ [Baghdad conference to establish cooperation, partnership in region - Al-Monitor: The Pulse of the Middle East](#)

⁶ [Final Communiqué of the Baghdad Conference for Cooperation and Partnership - وزارة الخارجية العراقية \(mofa.gov.iq\)](#)

⁷ [Hosting Emirati general, Israel sees airpower cooperation | Reuters](#)

ISRAEL AND ARAB COUNTRIES

ONE YEAR AFTER THE ABRAHAM ACCORDS

| Author: Dr. Bruno Surdel

6

for security reasons, both the Saudis and the Emirati government will actively support the fight against the Shi'ite (Zaidi faction) Houthi rebels, even without any active support of the American administration⁸.

The Gulf's Arab nations are fully aware of the economic, strategic and developmental benefits that can bring them a normalization of relations with Israel. The dynamism of economic, tourist and military cooperation shows the importance of the reconciliation with Israel and its significance for the entire region. Israeli-Arab cooperation is also essential in view of the progress Iran has made in nuclear technology, which is what everyone is afraid of.

Israel, because of its security, regularly takes action in neighboring Syria against the expansion of the Iranian presence in those areas. It also tries to limit Tehran's influence in the so-called "Shi'ite crescent" from Iraq to Syria to Yemen⁹. On the other hand, however, the evident anti-Iranian nature of the Abraham Accords may prove dangerous for the region because it mobilizes Tehran's allies such as Turkey and Russia. An additional challenge may be the provision of advanced technologies by Israel to Arab authoritarian regimes that enable better surveillance of terrorist groups but also greater control over societies which can be used to strengthen the anti-democratic systems in the region.

⁸ [Biden's broken promise on Yemen \(brookings.edu\)](https://www.brookings.edu/blog/abraham-accords/2020/09/01/biden-s-broken-promise-on-yemen/)

⁹ [Hosting Emirati general, Israel sees airpower cooperation | Reuters](https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/2020/09/01/hosting-emirati-general-israel-sees-airpower-cooperation/)

ISRAEL AND ARAB COUNTRIES

ONE YEAR AFTER THE ABRAHAM ACCORDS

| Author: Dr. Bruno Surdel

7

Lesser importance of the Palestinian question

The Palestinian question is no longer as critical in the Arab world as it had been before the conclusion of the Abraham Accords. The Arab countries no longer make the issue of the Palestinian statehood a precondition for talks with Israel¹⁰. It is remarkable that representatives of the Palestinian Authority were not included in the Israeli-Arab talks, and neither were Jordan and Egypt. That absence speaks volumes about the position of Israel and the Palestinians in the international arena¹¹. However, it may create a false impression among Israeli politicians that the issue of Palestinian statehood is over. It is the more so as Donald Trump administration moved the US embassy to Jerusalem, thus recognizing it as the capital of Israel.

However, the international community, the UN, as well as the European Union, invariably take the position that the only solution for a lasting peace in the Middle East is the existence of two states: Israel and Palestine. There is no real alternative in this respect that could be acceptable to all the countries concerned¹². The question is whether such a position needs to be redefined, especially in the context of a dysfunction of the Palestinian Autonomy.

¹⁰ [The Abraham Accords: An invitation to rethink the Arab-Israeli conflict - Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik \(swp-berlin.org\)](https://www.swp-berlin.org/en/analysis/2020/01/the-abraham-accords-an-invitation-to-rethink-the-arab-israeli-conflict)

¹¹ [The Abraham Accords – Paradigm Shift or Realpolitik? | George C. Marshall European Center For Security Studies \(marshallcenter.org\)](https://www.marshallcenter.org/en/analysis/2020/01/the-abraham-accords-paradigm-shift-or-realpolitik/)

¹² [At the One Year Anniversary of the Abraham Accords: Normalization Agreements in Action - United States Department of State](https://www.state.gov/record/2020/01/20-at-the-one-year-anniversary-of-the-abraham-accords-normalization-agreements-in-action)

ISRAEL AND ARAB COUNTRIES

ONE YEAR AFTER THE ABRAHAM ACCORDS

| Author: Dr. Bruno Surdel

8

The current political structure and the internal situation of the Palestinian Authority prevent it from functioning effectively. In practice, there is no unitary authority and no common political center covering both the West Bank where the Fatah governs, and the Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip¹³. The matter is further complicated by Jewish settlements in the West Bank. Freezing of their construction had not been resolved unequivocally by the famous Camp David accords in 1978¹⁴. It is impossible to predict whether that unfavorable situation will change in the long term. The current ruling coalition in Israel is too diverse to take a decisive action to normalize political relations with the Palestinians¹⁵. Instead, it focuses on the economic strengthening of the Palestinian Territories. This is in line with the attitude of the public, which currently shows little interest in dialogue with the Palestinians.

¹³ **Fatah** - a left-wing Palestinian political and military movement established in 1959, ruling the West Bank, the dominant force in the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO). Its leader was Jasser Arafat until his death in 2004. Since 1988, Fatah has accepted the coexistence of a Palestinian state and Israel with sharing Jerusalem as the capital of both nations. The current leader of Fatah is the president of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas.

Hamas - a radical Palestinian movement that has controlled the Gaza Strip since 2007, recognized by Israel, the US and the EU as a terrorist organization. It was founded in 1987 by Sheikh Ahmed Yassin and, unlike Fatah, it has a decidedly Islamist character, ideologically connected with the Muslim Brotherhood. Its leader is Ismail Haniyeh.

¹⁴ **The Camp David Accords** between Egypt and Israel were signed on September 17, 1978, after difficult two-week negotiations, mediated by US President Jimmy Carter. They made it possible to conclude peace between the two countries in the following year, setting a serious, constructive precedent in Israeli-Arab relations. The issue of freezing the construction of Jewish settlements in the West Bank was not included directly in the text of the agreements, but in a public letter from the Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin to President Carter agreed with Washington. Its wording is ambiguous and interpretation has been since controversial. On the issue of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and attempts to resolve it, see: Jerzy Wójcik: Camp David conference and its aftermath: the Israeli-Palestinian peace process after 2000; Israel-Poland-Europe Forum, Krakow 2013.

¹⁵ [Israel, Morocco to upgrade relations, open embassies, Israeli FM says | Reuters](#)

ISRAEL AND ARAB COUNTRIES

ONE YEAR AFTER THE ABRAHAM ACCORDS

| Author: Dr. Bruno Surdel

9

The Israeli government's priority is foreign policy, in particular Iran's actions, the situation in Syria as well as the strong position of Hezbollah¹⁶ in Lebanon¹⁷.

Dr. Bruno Surdel

¹⁶ Hezbollah - a political, military and social movement in Lebanon, founded in 1982 and supported by Iran. Hezbollah's leader is Hasan Nasrallah, and the movement itself plays a major political role in Lebanon. Hezbollah has been operating against Israel since its inception, and in 2006 the conflict culminated in a 34-day war. This organization actively supports the Bashar Assad regime in Syria by sending its fighters there to fight the rebels. Hezbollah is considered a terrorist movement by the US, UK, Australia, Canada and Israel (among others). The European Union considers only the military division of Hezbollah to be terrorist.

¹⁷ [Why Israel is stepping up its planning, and its rhetoric, for a strike on Iran | The Times of Israel](#)

XI. Taiwan

AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE BETWEEN BEIJING AND WASHINGTON



CENTRE
FOR INTERNATIONAL
RELATIONS



Taiwan is a territory recognized by only 14 countries and Beijing sees it as a “renegade” province that “must be united” with mainland China. Taiwan’s existence depends on the support of the United States, for which Taiwan is “the largest aircraft carrier in the Western Pacific.” But Formosa, as the island was formerly known, is also a technological powerhouse on which global semiconductor supply chains depend. Taiwan’s security has a remarkable impact on the security of the global economy, but also – in line with the European Union’s new Indo-Pacific Strategy – on the European security.

Since Xi Jinping took power in 2012, the People's Republic of China (PRC) has been acting with an increasing assertiveness in the international arena, both on a regional and global scale. It is a peculiar attempt to "collect" those territories that were ever under Beijing's sovereignty. Taking control over them is to constitute the political "legacy" of the present Chinese leader.

In the Indo-Pacific region, the most difficult situation and China's most aggressive actions are visible along the coast and in the Taiwan Strait. In the East China Sea, Beijing announced an ADIZ - Air Defense Identification Zone in 2013, while in the South China Sea there is a constant expansion of the Chinese military presence along with the construction of artificial islands, violating the exclusive economic zones (EEZ) of neighboring countries and their territorial waters sovereignty. China claims 90% of that body of water¹.

The Taiwanese and Chinese

In PRC-Taiwan relations, the situation had worsened in 2016 after Ms. Tsai Ing-wen from the pro-independence Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) won the presidential election. President Tsai was re-elected in January 2020 with the support of 57% of voters², and she gained even greater popularity thanks to her success in managing the Covid-19 crisis. At the height of the pandemic, she enjoyed a 73% support³.

While in power, the pro-independence party has overseen intense changes, which primarily include strengthening the sense of identity of the Taiwanese people. This process was initiated by the chairman of the National Party (Kuomintang), President Lee Teng-hui

¹ [How China is bending the rules in the South China Sea \(lowyinstitute.org\)](https://www.lowyinstitute.org/)

² [Taiwan Elections: Tsai Ing-wen re-elected president with 57% of vote in final tally, says China must stop threats of force, East Asia News & Top Stories - The Straits Times](https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/taiwan/Tsai-Ing-wen-re-elected-president-with-57-of-vote-in-final-tally-says-China-must-stop-threats-of-force-East-Asia-News-Top-Stories-The-Straits-Times)

³ Taiwan president's approval rating reaches all-time high of 73%, 19. Mai, 2020. <https://www.taiwannews.com.tw/en/news/3936547>

TAIWAN

AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE BETWEEN BEIJING AND WASHINGTON

| Author: Dr. Bruno Surdel

3

(1988-2000). He made a fundamental reform of school textbooks, which has had a serious impact on the awareness of the young generation and their perception of the island's identity⁴. According to a survey conducted in Taiwan in September 2020, more than 80% of the residents interviewed identify themselves as “Taiwanese”, regardless of their ethnic origins. At the same time, only 2% of respondents considered themselves “Chinese”⁵.

At the heart of Taiwanese identity are values more than ethnic backgrounds. These include democracy, freedom of expression and the rule of law. In Taiwanese school students are taught about indigenous peoples, European infiltration, migrations from the mainland China, varieties of the Chinese culture (or even various Chinese cultures), the 50-year long Japanese occupation and the evacuation of Chiang Kai Shek to Taiwan after the defeat in the civil war with communists in 1949.

In mainland China, all inhabitants, regardless of ethnicity (officially 55 ethnic minorities), are taught one cultural and historical heritage. Beijing, however, takes into account the changing identity of the Taiwanese as it becomes ethnically independent, and the Chinese government looks for ways to persuade the islanders to unite with the mainland. There have been several attempts of an "opening" in the past. Under Deng Xiao Ping, as China began its reforms, there was an opening in postal, commercial and transport exchanges. In 1987,

⁴ Shih-Shan H. Tsai: Lee Teng-hui and Taiwan's Quest for Identity, Palgrave Macmillan 2005.

⁵ [Only 2% of Taiwanese consider themselves 'Chinese' | Taiwan News | 2020-09-24 18:01:00](#)

TAIWAN

AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE BETWEEN BEIJING AND WASHINGTON

| Author: Dr. Bruno Surdel

4

Taiwan lifted a travel ban for its nationals to visit the mainland China⁶. On the Taipei side, however, the thaw has always been associated with the so-called "3 Noes" stance formulated by President Chiang Ching-kuo in 1979: no for reunification, no for independence, and no for the use of force⁷. That political legacy was taken over by the incumbent President Tsai-Ing Wen, and it is an effective tool to avoid provocations by Beijing.

Beijing, particularly in the last two decades, has also tried the formula of economic opening, creating an investment climate for Taiwanese people and scholarships for the youth⁸. However, this did not meet the Chinese expectations. The young and middle generations of Taiwanese attach great importance to democratic values, despite the undoubted pragmatism that binds all the inhabitants of East Asia, brought up in the Confucian spirit.

⁶ Tourism and reconciliation between Mainland China and Taiwan, Yingzhi Guo, Samuel Seongseop Kim, Dallen J. Timothy, Kuo-Ching Wang; *Tourism Management* 27 (2006) 997–1005.

⁷ Yeong-kuang Ger: Cross-Strait Relations and the Taiwan Relations Act; *American Journal of Chinese Studies* Vol. 22, Special Issue II (September 2015), s. 235-252.

⁸ Daniel H. Rosen (PIIE) and Zhi Wang: The implications of China – Taiwan Economic liberalization; Peterson Institute for International Economics 2011.

TAIWAN

AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE BETWEEN BEIJING AND WASHINGTON

| Author: Dr. Bruno Surdel

5

"One China"

Politically, the real dialogue began in 1991-1992, and it resulted in a consensus saying that there is "one China" but differently understood on both sides of the Strait⁹. However, it should be mentioned that in March 2005, China adopted the so-called anti-secession law in which, in the event of Taiwan's declaration of independence, Beijing reserves the right to apply any measures, including a military intervention. For ordinary Chinese people, Taiwan is part of China. And this is exactly what the mentioned law says: "*Taiwan is part of China. The [PRC] state will never allow secessionist forces seeking "Taiwan independence" to detach Taiwan from China under any name or by any means.*"¹⁰ So the authorities in Beijing are of the opinion that Taiwan is an internal Chinese issue.

Taipei is of a different opinion, but in line with the current government's strategy, there is no need to aggravate the situation, although its rhetoric seems to be gradually departing from the aforementioned "One China" agreement with Beijing. On the other hand, President Tsai's Democratic Progressive Party is not uniform when it comes to striving for independence. A large number of its members wish to maintain the status quo, being fully aware that any amendments to the Constitution would trigger an inevitable, strong reaction from Beijing¹¹. On the other hand, there is a tendency to get rid of the Kuomintang and

⁹ ['1992 consensus' crucial to cross-strait relations: ex-President Ma - Focus Taiwan](#)

¹⁰ [Anti-Secession Law \(Full text\)\(03/15/05\) \(mfa.gov.cn\)](#)

¹¹ [Is the '1992 Consensus' Fading Away in the Taiwan Strait? | RAND](#)

TAIWAN

AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE BETWEEN BEIJING AND WASHINGTON

| Author: Dr. Bruno Surdel

6

Chiang Kai Shek's legacy, and even the name "Republic of China" - only the name "Taiwan" appears on the new passports in English. There is also a hard question of dealing with the legacy of the "Father of Modern China" - Sun Yat-sen¹².

Political system differences are an extremely interesting phenomenon that affects the difficulties in dialogue between both sides. While the central power in Beijing is increasingly authoritarian and is concentrated in the hands of one individual (Xi Jinping), the political power in Taiwan is all the time more rooted in democracy. The strengthening of democratic and separatist sentiments was largely due to the events of the past two years in Hong Kong. The incorporation of this metropolis into the Chinese jurisdiction system broke with the "one country, two systems" principle which was negotiated with the British when they handed over the city to PRC in 1997 and legally guaranteed in the constitution for that autonomous region.

"Chinese dream"

The Chinese policy towards the island is strongly informed by the conviction that the Rejuvenation of the Chinese Nation, announced by President Xi Jinping, cannot be complete without the annexation of Taiwan. On July 1, 2021, celebrating the 100th

¹² [New Taiwan passport available today | Taiwan News | 2021-01-11 13:31:00](#)

TAIWAN

AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE BETWEEN BEIJING AND WASHINGTON

| Author: Dr. Bruno Surdel

7

anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of China, its current chairman stated that "Resolving the Taiwan question and realizing the full unification of China is a historic mission and the Party's unshakeable commitment," and those who will try to meddle in China's affairs " will be on a collision course with a great steel wall"¹³.

Beginning on October 1 - the PRC's national holiday - the country's air force carried out four days of mass flights over the Taiwanese air defense identification zone¹⁴. In addition, also in early October, the Chinese army conducted military exercises in Fujian, on the other side of the Taiwan Strait, including a beach landing and attack¹⁵.

The pandemic had initially weakened China's image, but the excellent results in containing it have ultimately strengthened the government in Beijing. China is on its way to change its development model, shifting from intensive exports and international trade to a growth propelled by the domestic demand, strengthened also by the dynamically growing middle class. The long-term plan developed by the Communist party envisages that by 2035 China will become an innovative power, and by 2049 an economically developed and flourishing

¹³ [Full Text: Speech by Xi Jinping at ceremony marking CPC centenary \(www.gov.cn\)](http://www.gov.cn)

¹⁴ [Taiwan won't start a war with China, defence minister says | Reuters](#)

¹⁵ [Taiwan says don't get too close as China defends military drills | Reuters](#)

TAIWAN

AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE BETWEEN BEIJING AND WASHINGTON

| Author: Dr. Bruno Surdel

8

country. This will be the implementation of Xi Jinping's goal, defined as the so-called "Chinese dream" or "Rejuvenation of the Chinese Nation"¹⁶.

Taiwan is already an innovative nation. This is on that island that about 63% of world's semiconductors is produced, including 90% based on an advanced technology. A phenomenon on a global scale is the Taiwanese company TSMC, which is responsible for 50% of the global production of microchips¹⁷. From this point of view, China's renaissance is not possible without "uniting" Taiwan with mainland China.

US approach

Thus, the future of the island depends on its role in mutual China - United States relations, and in Washington's strategy towards the Indo-Pacific. Washington's official position draws on its agreements with Beijing: the Shanghai Communiqué of 1972, where no deal on Taiwan was clinched; the agreement to establish diplomatic relations of December 1978, and the arrangements of August 1982, where Beijing agreed to American arms exports to Taiwan¹⁸. In 1979, the US Congress also passed the Taiwan Relations Act,

¹⁶Xi Jinping: The Governance of China <http://www.npc.gov.cn/englishnpc/xjptgoc/xjptgoc.shtml>

¹⁷ [2 charts show how much the world depends on Taiwan for semiconductors \(cnbc.com\)](https://www.cnbc.com)

¹⁸ Richard Bush, Brookings Institution, Shelley Rigger, Davidson College: The Taiwan Issue and the Normalization of US-China Relations <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/The-Taiwan-Issue-and-the-Normalization-of-US-China-Relations-Bush-Rigger1.pdf>

TAIWAN

AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE BETWEEN BEIJING AND WASHINGTON

| Author: Dr. Bruno Surdel

9

under which Washington expresses its will to "preserve and promote broad, close, and friendly commercial, cultural and other relations between the US and Taiwan residents".¹⁹

Strategically, since the Korean War the US has seen Taiwan as a sort of a "largest aircraft carrier stationed in the Western Pacific". Nevertheless, the American strategy towards the island in the Chinese context is still the "strategy of political ambiguity". For Taiwan, this means "ambiguity" in terms of security and uncertainty about the nature and scale of Washington's response to a possible Chinese aggression.

The American position has changed somewhat since the Donald Trump administration and now after the Democrats and President Joe Biden took power²⁰. Militarily, it also reverts to the 1951 Island Chain Strategy, which was developed by Secretary of State John Foster Dulles during the Korean War²¹. Taiwan is located in the first island chain while the second island chain covers Okinawa and Guam, where American bases are stationed. The Americans will most likely defend both of these island chains as this may make possible to block the Chinese forces. The control of the seas is essential to the control of land.

For Taiwan, the likelihood of a possible US intervention is increased by American investments in the island, which are becoming more and more substantial. However, the intervention itself - if any - will result from the strategic interests of the United States in

¹⁹ [H.R.2479 - 96th Congress \(1979-1980\): Taiwan Relations Act | Congress.gov | Library of Congress](#)

²⁰ [Why 'Strategic Ambiguity' Trumps 'Strategic Clarity' on Taiwan | Royal United Services Institute \(rusi.org\)](#)

²¹ [China's Reach Has Grown; So Should the Island Chains | Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative \(csis.org\)](#)

TAIWAN

AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE BETWEEN BEIJING AND WASHINGTON

| Author: Dr. Bruno Surdel

10

defending its global maritime hegemony. These goals prompted Donald Trump to fundamentally change the US approach to China. The politics of engagement that has dominated the mutual relations since Nixon and Kissinger has been now replaced by a politics of strategic competition.

Despite the change of administration in Washington, there is a cross-party consensus regarding the policies towards Beijing and Taipei. It is even stronger as the United States is building its new security architecture in the region. In February 2017, Japan, India, Australia and the United States renewed the so-called Quad, a forum for dialogue and cooperation in regional security, launched in 2007 by Tokyo²². And on September 15, 2021, the governments of the United States, Australia and Great Britain announced the creation of AUKUS - a new partnership that is to work for security and deepening ties in the Indo-Pacific²³.

The EU position

The European Union countries have not developed a unified position on Taiwan; there are fundamental differences in this respect even within the Visegrad Group. Viktor Orban's Hungary has strategically allied with Beijing, while official delegations from Taipei are

²² https://www.mofa.go.jp/press/release/press4e_001789.html

²³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-us-and-australia-launch-new-security-partnership>

TAIWAN

AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE BETWEEN BEIJING AND WASHINGTON

| Author: Dr. Bruno Surdel

11

coming to the Czech Republic. In Central Europe, Lithuania maintains the closest relations with Taiwan, where the Taiwan Representative Office was opened in November²⁴. However, there are also some changes in the position of the European Union as a whole.

The new EU Indo-Pacific Strategy, announced in May 2021, mentions Taiwan five times, including in the context of China's military assertiveness in the Strait and its impact on European security²⁵. According to this document, Europe wants to strengthen ties with Taiwan, as it has with South Korea and Japan, with which EU already has international agreements: "*The EU will also maintain its deep trade and investment relations with partners with whom it has no trade and investment agreements, such as Taiwan*"²⁶.

Dr. Bruno Surdel

²⁴ [Taiwan opens office in Lithuania, brushing aside China opposition | Reuters](#)

²⁵ [jointcommunication_indo_pacific_en.pdf \(europa.eu\)](#)

²⁶ [EU thanked for Indo-Pacific cooperation strategy report by MOFA - Taiwan Today](#)



CENTRUM
STOSUNKÓW
MIĘDZYNARODOWYCH

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung

The Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) is a political foundation. In Germany, 16 regional offices offer a wide variety of civic education conferences and events. Its offices abroad are in charge of over 200 projects in more than 120 countries. The foundation's headquarters are situated in Sankt Augustin near Bonn, and also in Berlin. There, an additional conference center, named "The Academy", was opened in 1998. As a think-tank and consulting agency, its soundly researched scientific fundamental concepts and current analyses are meant to offer a basis for possible political action. The Berlin Academy is the national forum of dialogue between the spheres of politics, economy, science, and society.

Centre for International Relations (CIR)

is an independent, non-government analytical centre established in 1996 which deals with Polish foreign policy and the most important issues of international politics. CIR is active in research, education and publishing, organises conferences and meetings, and participates in international projects in collaboration with similar institutions in many countries. CIR creates a forum for debate and exchange of ideas in matters of international politics, relations between states and challenges in the global world. CIR's activities are addressed above all to local-government officials and to entrepreneurs, as well as to officials of the central administration, politicians, diplomats, political scientists and the media.