

Different Beds, Same Dream: Taiwan-India Security Relations in China's Shadow

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Abstract

This paper analyzes the security relations between Taiwan and India under the influence of the China factor. Impeded by Beijing's "One China" principle, the Taiwan-India relations cannot but be limited to civilian or unofficial levels, leaving security relation issues unaddressed. India's "Act East" policy has so far succeeded in Northeast and Southeast Asian regions; however, Taiwan has been omitted from it. Despite inclusion of India in Taiwan's "New Southbound" policy, security is no concern in the policy. Similarly faced with ever-growing China threats, both Taiwan and India need to prevent Beijing's dream of rejuvenation from becoming a nightmare for their national security. Therefore, the "New Southbound" policy should cover security issues to explore possible areas of cooperation. The "Act East" policy should make Taiwan part of India's international strategic connectivity network.

Keywords: India, Act East Policy, New Southbound Policy (NSP), security environment, extended neighborhood

異床同夢：中國陰影下台灣與印度的安全關係

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摘 要

本文旨在分析中國因素的陰影之下台灣與印度的安全關係。在北京「一中原則」的阻撓下，目前台印兩國僅侷限在民間或非正式層次的關係，這也致令雙邊安全關係無法發展。印度的「東進政策」在東南亞與東北亞地區可謂成功，惟未涵蓋台灣；而台灣的「新南向政策」儘管將印度納入其範圍，該政策本身卻未處理安全議題。台、印同樣面臨中國威脅，也都努力避免中國復興大夢最終不會成為自身的國安惡夢。因此，「新南向政策」應該涵蓋安全議題，以尋求更多可行的合作領域；而「東進政策」則應關注台灣，使其成為印度國際戰略網絡的一部份。

關鍵詞：印度、東進政策、新南向政策、安全環境、延伸週邊

I. Introduction

Since the advent of its flagship “Act East” policy in 2014, India’s international presence has been enhanced. The policy can be traced back to its forerunner, the 1991 “Look East” policy. Under the “Act East” policy, India has sought to expand its strategic reach from Southeast Asia further to the Asia-Pacific region. For example, India established strategic partnerships with two major Northeast Asian countries, Japan and South Korea. The United States, perhaps in response to India’s willingness to embed itself within the broader Asia Pacific region, set forth the “Indo-Pacific Strategy” to reorganize its attention to the vast area ranging from the western US to the western India. All these events represent shared recognition of India’s strategic importance and the achievement of India’s “Act East” policy.

India’s achievement in “Act East” was not overlooked by Taiwan either. The Tsai Ing-wen government of Taiwan put forth in 2016 its own flagship initiative, the “New Southbound” policy, to strengthen Taiwan’s economic and trade relations with eighteen Indo-Pacific countries, a list which includes India. However, security is not an issue that the policy tackles. Indeed, Taiwan and India are geographically distant, and there have been rare interactions in recent history. The Indian government’s adherence to the “One China” policy has impeded diplomatic and security relations between the two countries.

This paper argues that respectively through these two flagship policies, both Taiwan and India are trying to shape a favorable international security environment for themselves. Nevertheless, with security issues neglected by the “New Southbound” policy, and Taiwan omitted from India’s “Act East” policy, the rationality of both policies has to be questioned. Since Taiwan and India share the same security environment, the two flagship policies will not be complete without addressing mutual security concerns, especially regarding China. The authors use “Different beds, same dream” (異床同夢), the reversed version of the old Chinese adage “Same bed, different dreams” (同床異夢), to describe Taiwan-India security relationship, implying that despite the geographical remoteness, both

Taiwan and India desire to get rid of China's pressure and thus deserve further possibility of cooperation.

II. "Security Environment" and "Extended Neighborhood"

As discussed later, Taiwan's "New Southbound" policy and India's "Act East" policy are efforts to improve both nations' own international security environment. "International security environment" can be defined as the international environment which concerns a nation's security interests. "International security environment" is no novelty when analyzing a nation's security or external security relations. For example, the entirety of Chapter III of Japan's *National Security Strategy* (entitled "Security Environment surrounding Japan and National Security Challenge") addresses Japan's security environment.¹ The Taiwanese National Security Council's 2006 *National Security Report* also devotes the entirety of Chapter Two (entitled "Taiwan's New Security Environment") to elaborating Taiwan's security environment.²

Shaping or creating a favorable international security environment is important for a nation's security interests. Takashi Inoguchi considers that there are three major approaches for a nation to achieve security: self-strengthening (自強), making alliances (同盟), and creating a favorable environment (環境整備). According to Inoguchi's definition, self-strengthening pertains to "enhancing national power and security through improving economic or military power." Making alliances means the "promise of military cooperation on the premise of facing a common enemy." Creating favorable environments refers to "getting favorable responses from other countries through diplomacy, economic cooperation or policy coordination, in order to stabilize international security

¹ Cabinet Secretariat of Japanese Government, "National Security Strategy," December 7, 2013, Cabinet Secretariat of Japanese Government, <https://www.cas.go.jp/jp/siryou/131217anzenhoshou/nss-e.pdf>. (in Japanese)

² National Security Council of Taiwan, "Taiwan's New Security Environment," *National Security Report 2006 (2008 revision)* (Taipei: National Security Council of Taiwan, 2008). (in Chinese)

environment.” While self-strengthening and making alliances are relatively direct and potentially provocative approaches to countering threats or enemies, creating favorable environments emphasizes such non-military approaches as diplomacy and economics, and is therefore more indirect and moderate than the former two.³

In the Indian context, the concept of “security environment” is sometimes also termed as “neighborhood” or “extended neighborhood.” David Scott notes that “India’s security environment extends from the Persian Gulf to the Straits of Malacca across the Indian Ocean, including the Central Asian region in the North West, China in the North East and South East Asia;” such a security environment is “none other than India’s extended neighborhood.”⁴ This term is also adopted by Indian government officials, who may differ in how “extended” India’s neighborhood is though. For example, Anil Wadhwa, the then-East Secretary of the Indian Ministry of External Affairs, once used the term in a speech to refer to Southeast Asia, West Asia, and Central Asia, but not including Northeast Asia, yet still underscoring the role of “other Asian players like China and Japan” in engaging with India’s extended neighborhood.⁵

Here Taiwan-India security relations can be understood from the viewpoint of “international security environment” and “extended neighborhood.” Taiwan can be defined as part of India’s extended neighborhood; that is, part of India’s security environment.

III. A Brief Overview of Taiwan-India Relations

Taiwan and India lost their formal ties since the founding of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) in 1949, to which India switched its

³ Takashi Inoguchi, *International Political Economy* (Tokyo: Yuhikaku Publishing, 1982), pp.24-29. (in Japanese)

⁴ David Scott, “India’s ‘Extended Neighborhood’ Concept: Power Projection for a Rising Power,” *India Review*, Vol. 8., No. 2, May 2009, pp. 107-143.

⁵ “Keynote address at 6th IISS-MEA Dialogue on 'India’s extended neighborhood: Prospects and Challenges,” Institute for Defence Studies and Analysis, March 4, 2014, https://idsa.in/keyspeeches/6thIISSMEADialogue_secretaryeast.

diplomatic recognition from the Republic of China (ROC).⁶ The bilateral relations have so far been confined only to such “low-politics” areas as trade, culture and education, science and technology, etc. The Taiwan and India governments agreed in 1995 to establish representative offices in New Delhi and Taipei, in the names of the “Taipei Economic and Cultural Center in India” (TECC) and the “India-Taipei Association” (ITA). Since then, Taiwan and India have developed non-political relations.

In the economic field, the Taiwan-India bilateral trade volume reached 6.36 billion US dollars in 2017, ranking India as Taiwan's 16th largest trade partner. India ranks 14th in Taiwan's export market share.⁷ Taiwan and India also signed the “Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement” and “Customs Mutual Assistance Agreement” in July 2011.⁸ Taiwan kept on listing India in their own “Global Export Promotion Program” with a focus on the fields of machinery, textiles, electronics, green energy, and automotive components promotion.⁹ In the fields of educational and cultural exchanges, based on the “Mutual Recognition of Higher Education Degrees” MOU signed in 2010, more than 1,400 Indian students are pursuing masters and doctoral degrees, or learning Chinese Mandarin in Taiwan in the academic year of 2017.¹⁰ Indian students in Taiwan numbers 2,398 in 2018.¹¹

Contrary to the stable progress in civilian affairs, there have only been rare instances of interaction between Taiwan and India in the realm of

⁶ For clarity, the authors use “Taiwan” to refer to “Republic of China” while using “China” to refer to “People's Republic of China.”

⁷ “India's Trade Relations with Taiwan,” *TAITRA Global Trade Source*, <https://www.taitraesource.com/total01.asp?AreaID=00&CountryID=IN&Item=w05>. (in Chinese)

⁸ Taipei Economic and Cultural Center in India, “Taiwan India Relations,” Taipei Economic and Cultural Center in India, June 13, 2018, https://www.roc-taiwan.org/in_en/post/39.html. (in Chinese)

⁹ “Moving Southward: 27 million dollars of business chance in South Asia everyday through TAITRA,” *Central News Agency*, September 29, 2016, <http://www.cna.com.tw/postwrite/Detail/201167.aspx#.W4T5SegzaUk>. (in Chinese)

¹⁰ Taipei Economic and Cultural Center in India, “Taiwan India Relations,” Taipei Economic and Cultural Center in India, June 13, 2018, <https://www.roc-taiwan.org/in/post/43.html>. (in Chinese)

¹¹ Taipei Economic and Cultural Center in India, “More Indian students come to Taiwan for study,” Taipei Economic and Cultural Center in India, February 12, 2019, https://www.roc-taiwan.org/in_en/post/3585.html.

security. An examination of Taiwan's National Defense Reports released for the past ten years finds almost no mention of India except in the one published in 2017, which was merely a short introduction of the threat to India's security environment, and was not about Taiwan-India security relations.¹² In fact, the asymmetry between practical and security areas has characterized Taiwan-India relations, and has created problems for the international strategic profiles of both countries.

IV. India's "Act East" Policy and Taiwan

The "Act East" policy is conceived as India's external policy towards the Asia-Pacific region. It can be traced back as far as 1991 when the then-Rao government of India launched the "Look East" policy. Put forth at a time when economic development was an imperative for India, "Look East" focused on promoting trade and investment activities with Southeast Asia. The policy later proved to have successfully yielded not only economic but also diplomatic and even security results.

In the economic field, the volume of India-ASEAN trade has risen from 65 billion US dollars in 2015 to 70 billion US dollars in 2017. In the political area, India became a full dialogue partner of ASEAN, and it began to participate in ASEAN Summits in 2002. Since 2003, India even started to engage in such security issues as anti-terror activities and joint military exercises.¹³

Under "Act East" policy, Southeast Asia has generally remained vital, but relations with the farther Northeast Asia are being emphasized. In this regard, it is noteworthy that the "Act East" policy has also borne fruit with Japan and South Korea. In 2015, India and South Korea pushed their

¹² Ministry of National Defense, R.O.C., "National Defense Report 2017," December 2017, p.24, Ministry of National Defense, R.O.C., <https://tinyurl.com/vr4f5v5>.

¹³ Chi-shin Chang, "India's Foreign Policy: From 'Looking East' to 'Acting East'," *International and Public Affairs*, Vol. 4, July 2016, pp.75-76, Nanhua University Institutional Repository, <http://nhuir.nhu.edu.tw/retrieve/53378/5041000403.pdf>. (in Chinese)

relationship up to “Special Strategic Partnership” from “Long-term Cooperative Partnership for Peace and Prosperity” of 2004.¹⁴ In 2017, India and Japan elevated their relationship further to “Special Strategic and Global Partnership” from the 2006 “Global and Strategic Partnership.”¹⁵

On the one hand, for Japan and South Korea, India can offer opportunities of trade and investment and more importantly, of reducing dependence up on China, when China's sanction is no long-forgotten memory. Beijing's halting exportation of rare earth to Japan after the 2010 Senkaku ship collision incident, and the boycott of South Korean products in China after Seoul's accepting the deployment of Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) radar system, are two instances in recent past. Understandably, diversifying economic dependence has been a strategic imperative for Seoul and Tokyo. On the other hand, for India, the two Northeast Asian countries' business influx can strengthen momentum for “Act East” policy. Currently there are roughly 500 South Korean firms in India, and cooperation between South Korea and India can be explored in the future in such fields as shipbuilding, medical devices, aerospace industry, etc.. In Japan's case, when Prime Minister Modi visited Japan in 2014, leaders of both countries agreed to common goal of doubling Japan's direct investment and the number of Japanese companies in India by 2019.

From the concept of “creating favorable environments,” it can be said that India has successfully created favorable security environments in Northeast and Southeast Asia under “Act East” policy. Geographically, Taiwan is even closer to India than Japan or South Korea, and Taiwan's geostrategic importance has been highly emphasized by the international

¹⁴ Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, “India-Republic of Korea Joint Statement: Towards a Strategic Partnership,” January 25, 2010, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, <https://mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/3301/IndiaRepublic+of+Korea+Joint+Statement+Towards+a+Strategic+Partnership>; Press Information Bureau, Government of India, “India - Republic of Korea Joint Statement For Special Strategic Partnership,” May 18, 2015, Press Information Bureau, Government of India, <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=121821>.

¹⁵ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, “Japan-India Relations,” September 25, 2017, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, <https://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/india/data.html>.

community for being part of the first island chain of the Asia-Pacific region. Nevertheless, one finds that the path of “Act East” ---moving through Southeast Asia and reaching Northeast Asia---bypasses Taiwan entirely. This is an important missing link in the “Act East” policy.

V. Taiwan's “New Southbound” Policy and India

For Taiwan's part, Taiwan takes India seriously as an important friend in international society. Before her inauguration, Ms. Tsai Ing-wen, the then-presidential candidate, announced at a diplomatic banquet that the future Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) government would strengthen Taiwan's relations with ASEAN and India. Later, the elected DPP government adopted the *New Southbound Policy Guidelines* at the Meeting of External Economic and Trade Strategy as “part of Taiwan's total trade strategy”. The goal of the “New Southbound” policy is to promote Taiwan's international trade and investment, and to shape a people-centered economic development strategy at the same time through building up society-to-society relations with those target countries. The policy targets eighteen countries, spanning from Southeast Asia, South Asia, Australia and New Zealand. India is doubtless the strongest in economic and military terms among the five South Asian countries targeted. India was also designated as one of the six priority countries for the “New Southbound” policy;¹⁶ James Huang, chair of the Taiwan External Trade Development Council even calls India the “jewel” in Taiwan's external economic strategy.¹⁷

However, one may find no politics- or security-related issues on “New Southbound” policy agenda. Indeed, if “war is the continuation of politics”, then “interstate security relations are the continuation of diplomatic

¹⁶ Then-foreign minister David Lee announced at a policy meeting of DPP on September 19, 2016. “David Lee designated six priority countries for New Southbound Policy,” *The Liberty Times*, September 19, 2016, <https://news.ltn.com.tw/news/politics/breakingnews/1830719>. (in Chinese)

¹⁷ Edward White, “Taiwan turns to India to shake off shackles of China dependence,” *Financial Times*, January 3, 2019, <https://www.ft.com/content/d9f4d9fc-0434-11e9-9d01-cd4d49afb3e3>.

relations.” By this logic, there will be no security dimension in Taiwan-India relations in the absence of diplomatic ties. Moreover, the past “Southbound Policy” was hardly a success and it failed to achieve the policy goal of translating Taiwan’s economic leverage into diplomatic gains, to say nothing of developing security relations. That may explain why the Tsai government is cautious enough not to include security issues in the “New Southbound” policy, making the policy appear somewhat conservative in nature notwithstanding.

That said, the Taiwanese government has been getting abreast with the US in the Indo-Pacific Strategy. As part of its effort, a new “Indo-Pacific Affairs Section” was already established within Taiwan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Ministry declared that the new section would promote the “New Southbound” policy. This is meaningful especial when Pentagon’s *Indo-Pacific Strategy Report* enlists Taiwan as one of the “reliable, capable, and natural partners of the United States,” and stresses ensuring that Taiwan remains secure and free from coercion.¹⁸ However, it awaits to be seen how Taiwan espouses the “Indo-Pacific Strategy” through the “New Southbound” policy when the latter lacks a security dimension.

VI. China as a Separating Factor in Taiwan-India Relations

India’s inattention to Taiwan in security matters reflects its attention to China, which serves as a separating factor in Taiwan-India relations. It is true that the Indian government and the Kuomintang government cooperated in World War II. In this regard, Ramgarh Cemetery in Jharkhand Province is an enduring symbol of bilateral military cooperation. Unfortunately, after recognizing the PRC on December 30 of 1949, India lost the diplomatic foundation for interacting with Taiwan, and India’s relations with Taiwan had to be limited to civilian or unofficial levels. The establishment of

¹⁸ U.S. Department of Defense, “Indo-Pacific Strategy Report: Preparedness, Partnerships, and Promoting a Networked Region,” June 1, 2019, U.S. Department of Defense, <https://media.defense.gov/2019/Jul/01/2002152311/-1/-1/1/DEPARTMENT-OF-DEFENSE-INDO-PACIFIC-STRATEGY-REPORT-2019.PDF>.

representative offices in 1995 can be viewed at best as Taiwan's practice of "pragmatic diplomacy" in the post-Cold War era, as well as India's attempt to further enhance its contacts with Northeast Asian nations. Interestingly, the 1994 "Southbound Policy" launched by then-Lee Teng-hui administration of Taiwan did not cover India on the policy agenda.

Beijing has still shown no sign of ease towards Taiwan-India relations which carry political implications, regardless of which political party is in power in Taiwan. For instance, Beijing lodged a protest against Taiwan's then-vice president Tun-yi Wu's stopover in India in April 2014. Another instance is the Indian government's cancellation of a visit by the Indian delegation to the inauguration ceremony of the Taiwanese president-elect in 2016.¹⁹

The retarded development of Taiwan-India relations can also be attributed to the complexities of the post-war India-China relations besides Beijing's "One China" principle. On the one hand, India's loss in the Sino-India War of 1961 was unavoidably to leave New Delhi cautious about challenging Beijing. New Delhi has also long suspected that Beijing has been behind the Maoist rebels in India, and the Doklam standoff from June to August of 2017 re-sparked India's sense of crisis towards an assertive China. Nevertheless, on the other hand, India has developed rigorously commercial relations with China; China has already become India's largest trading partner. With these factors in New Delhi's calculation, it is difficult for India not to avoid heightening tension with Beijing and risking business interests in China in order to develop relations with Taiwan.

VII. China as a Linking Factor in Taiwan-India Relations

Ironically, aside from the separating effect, the China factor also has a linking effect to Taiwan-India relations too. India's perception of the China

¹⁹ Chi-feng Liu, "India's 'Act East' Policy Lacking Taiwan: Examining cleavage in Taiwan's political, economic and social relations," *Wealth Magazine*, No. 537, September 6, 2017, The News Lens, <https://www.thenewslens.com/article/78860>. (in Chinese)

threat has persisted for strategic reasons. Putting negative historical legacies such as Tibet or territorial disputes aside, China's expansion of influence in South Asia and Beijing's strategic intention in India's backyard has worried New Delhi. In recent years, these instances have included China's "String of Pearls Strategy" and "Belt and Road Initiative". The US-coined "String of Pearls Strategy" connects dots on the map of the Indian Ocean into a line surrounding India, placing India within the perimeter of China's political influence or military presence. The Belt and Road Initiative, in New Delhi's eyes, is like two lines respectively tying up India from both land and sea. The two-month confrontation between the Chinese PLA and Indian troops at Doklam (Bhutan) in 2017 has further worsened the already negative national sentiment towards each other.

Despite the fact that India has long supported non-alignment in its external relations, China's strategic reach in South Asia has prompted India to pursue potential allies and to build up strategic partnerships. India's aforementioned establishment of strategic partnerships with Japan and South Korea is rightly justified by India's strategic anxiety. It is obvious that India has looked and acted eastward with the intent of countering China or, at least, balancing against China's pressure.

Meanwhile, it should be noted that although Japan and South Korea have official relations with China, both their respective China relations may not be constantly stable. Issues like sovereignty, history and maritime energy have long stayed unresolved and surfaced sporadically between Japan and China. South Korea has, at various times, been at odds with China over the North Korean nuclear problem and the US-South Korea military alliance issues. Increasing Chinese military presence surrounding Japan and South Korea has put the latter two countries on alert.

Japan has been willing to maintain low-key interactions with Taiwan concerning national security considering Taiwan's geopolitical significance. This is illustrated by the 2004 intrusion into Japanese territorial waters by a

Chinese nuclear submarine, of which information was provided by Taiwan²⁰. Another illustration is the designation of the Taiwan Strait as part of the “common strategic goals” of Japan and the US in the *Joint Statement of US-Japan Security Consultative Committee* of 2005.²¹ Indeed, the geographical traits of Taiwan and the rivalry across the Taiwan Strait have factored heavily in the strategic calculations of such neighboring countries as Japan or South Korea.

We have argued above that there are factors originating in China that separate India from closer relations with Taiwan. It is true that both countries are geographically distant, and such national traits as population, land area, economic size, social systems, etc. are very dissimilar. However, the two countries face a common challenge, China, and both are attempting to escape from Chinese influence or pressure. In this sense, relations between Taiwan and India may be described connotatively as “Different beds, same dream” in China's shadow. While Taiwan and India are both connected with China in terms of security and economics respectively, both countries share the same dream of getting rid of China's shadow. Taiwan has for decades dreamt of living without China's military threat. India dreams of moving outward and developing further without China's pressure. Without China's shadow, Taiwan and India can freely share democratic values and work together to commit to human rights, rule of law, and open society. From this viewpoint, it can be said that the perception of the Chinese threat is pushing Taiwan and India together. China is thus becoming a linking factor connecting Taiwan and India.

VIII. Southeast Asia and the Security of Taiwan and India

With China expanding its influence in many parts of the world, Taiwan

²⁰ This was revealed by then President Shui-bian Chen. Tai-lin Huang, “Chen claims Taipei told Japan about Chinese submarine,” *Taipei Times*, November 20, 2004, <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2004/11/20/2003211789>.

²¹ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, “Joint Statement US-Japan Security Consultative Committee,” February 19, 2005, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, <https://www.mofa.go.jp/region/n-america/us/security/scc/joint0502.html>.

and India are not the only two countries in China's shadow, neither are they the only two sharing the same dream. When Taiwan and India gloom, Southeast Asia at their borders can hardly escape China's shadow due to geographical proximity.

Southeast Asia is gaining international attention not only for its remarkable economic performance in past decades but also for its gradual transformation into a regional flashpoint. Maritime disputes concerning the South China Sea have emerged sporadically, and Beijing's "small sticks" are threats big enough in the eyes of disputing countries. The decision of those countries to enhance defense relations with extra-regional powers well represents their sense of crisis. For example, Malaysia and Japan in 2015 elevated their bilateral relationship up to "strategic partnership", and the former has received support from the latter in improving its maritime security.²² The Philippines and Japan also elevated bilateral relations to "strategic partnership" in 2011 and signed in 2016 a defense equipment cooperation agreement,²³ which is the first of its kind with Asian countries and was preceded only by the US, UK, Australia and India. Even Indonesia, a non-claimant to South China Sea islands but at odds with Beijing over fishing right in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) surrounding the Natuna Islands, has beefed up its security.

In addition, when it comes to India-Southeast Asian relations, China again exerts a separation effect as it does in Taiwan-India relations. For instance, India's planned investment in Indonesia's Sabang Port, which is near the Strait of Malacca, has triggered China's protest. Chinese state-owned *Global Times* warned India that China will not "turn a blind eye to possible military cooperation between India and Indonesia at Sabang."²⁴

²² "Japan gives Malaysia two patrol boats," *Reuters*, November 16, 2016, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-japan-malaysia-idUSKBN13B0X4>.

²³ The Philippine Government, "The Philippines and Japan sign defense agreement," March 3, 2016, GOV.PH, <http://www.gov.ph/2016/03/03/ph-jp-sign-defense-agreement>.

²⁴ Weijia Hu, "Investment in Indonesia's Sabang port will be test of India's diplomatic wisdom," *Global Times*, May 28, 2018, <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1104493.shtml>.

A Southeast Asia situated between Taiwan and India is geographically part of both of their neighborhoods, and arguably part of their respective security environments with vital strategic implications. On the one hand, if Southeast Asia falls to Chinese dominance, notably with the South China Sea becoming China's inner sea or the Malacca Straits being controlled by Beijing, India's connectivity with Japan or South Korea will be geopolitically disconnected by Southeast Asia. The implementation of the "Act East" policy would face daunting challenges then. On the other hand, if China successfully absorbs Taiwan, then the Taiwan Strait would definitely become China's inner sea. India's move eastward would be faced with China's shadow before reaching Japan and South Korea.

From this perspective, Taiwan is rightly part of India's "extended neighborhood." In the same vein, it can be argued that Taiwan and India are not as remote as the map indicates, neither should they be mutually irrelevant as history has shown. This also justifies Taiwan's inclusion of India into its "New Southbound" policy, and it may also rationalize India's consideration of Taiwan's strategic value.

India needs to rethink why the US and Japanese governments finally decided not to give up maintaining substantial relations with Taiwan even after establishing diplomatic relations with China in last century. If the US and Japan cannot afford overlooking Taiwan's strategic importance, how can India allow Taiwan to be the missing link in the "Act East" policy? If the situation and development of Cross-Strait relations can influence to a great degree the stability of the Northeast Asian region, how does Taiwan not factor into India's calculations with the "Act East" policy? The "Act East" policy should make Taiwan part of India's international strategic connectivity network and remain concerned about Taiwan's security situation.

IX. Seeking Possibilities within Impossibilities: a soft power approach

Owing to China's opposition, it is currently impossible for Taiwan and India to build up security relations in military sense. However, there should be the possibility of opportunities for those non-traditional or less

military-oriented security issues for Taiwan and India to pursue together without challenging Beijing's "One China" policy. In this regard, Taiwanese scholar Tien-Sze Fang examines Taiwan-India security relations from the "comprehensive security" perspective. Besides suggesting deploying an Indian military attache in Taipei as an effort for traditional security cooperation, Fang also points out three non-military areas with security implications: economy, culture and education.

In terms of economics, Fang indicates that despite bilateral trade and investment remaining insignificant, Taiwan and India have much room in such areas as auto components, information and communication technology, food processing, distribution and retail, and so forth. In the cultural realm, Fang considers that Buddhism may add religious intimacy to Taiwan-India relationship; he also emphasizes that free democracies with strong civil societies can play a part in improving bilateral relations. In the field of education, Fang suggests that the Taiwanese government make good use of Taiwan's Mandarin Language Centers in India to project Taiwan's soft power and to build up connections with the Indian military through providing language training.²⁵

It is true that the above fields are not usually thought to be related to security in the military sense. However, with China's aggressively-expanding soft power and creation of economic dependence in regional countries, China is posing a threat on those non-traditional security fronts along with its looming military presence in the region. Therefore, it is increasingly necessary to treat these issues as national security concerns for Taiwan and India.

Indeed, when China is increasing its influence in both traditional and

²⁵ Tien-Sze Fang, "India-Taiwan Relations: A Comprehensive Security Perspective," *Indian Defence Review*, Vol. 30, No. 4, October-December 2015, Indian Defence Review, <http://www.indiandefencereview.com/news/india-taiwan-relations-a-comprehensive-security-perspective>; Tien-Sze Fang, "Mandarin Teaching in India and New Southbound Policy," *Opinion*, April 6, 2016, <https://opinion.cw.com.tw/blog/profile/52/article/4103>. (in Chinese)

non-traditional security fields, India has to consider seriously enhancing cooperation with friendly countries sharing universal values, like Taiwan. Gautam Bambawale, former Indian Ambassador to China has expressed publicly his support for a Taiwan-India free trade pact.²⁶ The expression of support for a stronger Taiwanese-Indian relations is especially meaningful when India's Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) has considering China hurts Indian traders' interests and called on trades across India to boycott Chinese products.²⁷

There has been public voice of dissatisfaction towards China in India so far, urging New Delhi to recalibrate its China and Taiwan policies. For example, a *Times of India* editorial this March, against the background that China repeatedly blocked a proposal to UN Security Council to enlist the Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Muhammed (JeM) chief Masood Azhar as an international terrorist, considers that it is time for New Delhi to stop being overly cautious about China's sensitivity on Taiwan.²⁸ Another editorial of the same paper this January suggests that India should elevate its Taiwan relations when Taiwan government is rigorously trying to engage with India under "New Southbound" Policy.²⁹ Indeed, with the momentum of "New Southbound" Policy, India has become the top destination for Taiwanese companies operating in China to redirect their investment to.³⁰ Taiwan is also becoming one of the favorite countries for Indian students to study and

²⁶ Pei-ju Teng, "Former India ambassador supports trade agreement with Taiwan," *Taiwan News*, August 21, 2019, <https://www.taiwannews.com.tw/en/news/3765805>.

²⁷ "Traders to launch National Campaign on 'No to Plastics & Boycott Chinese Products'," *The Live Nagpur*, August 29, 2019, <https://thelivenagpur.com/2019/08/29/traders-to-launch-national-campaign-on-no-to-plastics-boycott-chinese-products>.

²⁸ "Masood Azhar effect: After India's reset with Pakistan it is time for a reset with China," *Times of India*, March 15, 2019, <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/blogs/toi-editorials/masood-azhar-effect-after-indias-reset-with-pakistan-it-is-time-for-a-reset-with-china>.

²⁹ "Don't be scared: India should ignore Chinese blandishments and enhance ties with Taiwan," *Times of India*, January 4, 2019, <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/blogs/toi-editorials/dont-be-scared-india-should-ignore-chinese-blandishments-and-enhance-ties-with-taiwan>.

³⁰ Hsin-fang Lee, "Taiwanese firms in China looking to southbound nations," *Taipei Times*, August 19, 2019, <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2019/08/19/2003720750>.

scholars to do research in.³¹ The recent establishment of The Indo-Taiwan Joint Research Center on Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning symbolizes the growing bilateral academic ties.³² All these developments represent possibilities for Taiwan and India to strengthen foundation for further cooperation.

X. Conclusion

In this paper, we have argued that Taiwan and India constitute part of their own security environments, yet do not appear on each other's strategic radar. The two countries have not been able to replicate the cordial, pragmatic relations that Taiwan has with other big powers that are democracies, especially those with the US and Japan. However, Taiwan's security relations with the US has proved that developing bilateral security relations does not necessarily require official diplomatic relations. The afore-mentioned Taiwan's provision of the Chinese submarine intruding into the Japanese territorial waters serves as another example of Taipei's pragmatic interaction with a country without diplomatic ties on a security issue.

Since China has been expanding its influence around the globe, Taiwan and India are now both in China's shadow. When China is carrying out its grand dream of Chinese rejuvenation, Taiwan and India are trying to prevent the Chinese Dream from turning into a nightmare for their own national security. To this purpose, creating and expanding favorable security environments is the very endeavor that Taiwan and India are making respectively through the "New Southbound" and "Act East" policies.

Besides, Taiwan understands India's non-alignment principle; thus, a Taiwan-India military alliance is not Taiwan's expectation. However, opportunities should be sought for both countries to exchange experiences

³¹ Duncan DeAeth, "Taiwan aims to be 1st choice for Indian students studying abroad," *Taiwan News*, September 18, 2018, <https://www.taiwannews.com.tw/en/news/3532449>.

³² "Joint R&D center opening highlights growing Taiwan-India academic ties," *Taiwan Today*, July 29, 2019, <https://taiwantoday.tw/news.php?unit=2,6,10,15,18&post=159547>.

and conduct dialogue with a view to gradually build up common ground for both countries' security concerns. For this, the "New Southbound" policy should cover security issues to explore possible areas of cooperation.

In fact, with China as a daunting obstacle to building up military relations in a hard-power sense, there is still room worth exploring for soft-power approaches for Taiwan and India. For both countries, enhancing trade and investment in each other means reducing their economic dependence on China. Promoting cultural and educational exchanges provides a chance for an alternative (and probably objective) understanding of China, which is of help to India's future strategic calculations involving China. To do this, a comprehensive concept of security as Tien-Sze Fang suggests is needed for the Taiwanese and Indian governments to elaborate and advocate together in the future.

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