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Japanese Perspective on the Rise of China and India (2)

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4. American's awakened suspicion of China and increasing trust towards India

(1) US-China: important but ambivalent relations

Different from the US Congress which shows always skepticism and distrust to Chinese Communist Authorities and the military establishment, if not to the Chinese people, the US administrations have sometimes vacillated in their China policies.

The Obama administration started to view China not only as an important stake-holder of the world politics, which is correct, but also as a responsible partner to manage world politics and economy, which has proved to be a premature expectation. President Obama and Secretary of State Hilary Clinton, noticing the above-mentioned China's increased assertiveness and the lack of spirit of cooperation on world and regional affairs, have realized that their hope and expectations have been betrayed.

Instead of engaging herself in positive and constructive manner in her neighborhood and on global and regional issues ranging over North Korea, Myanmar, Iran, Sudan and climate change, China have prevented US and the United Nations from taking appropriate actions on Iran and North Korea and dashed US expectations on Chinese cooperation. China's continued and unrelenting military build-up seems to Americans that China's ambition is not only catching up economically but eventually overtaking the US even in military capabilities.

In the recent state visit of President Hu Jintao, President Obama and his administration which showed utmost hospitality was only poorly rewarded; no positive engagement by China via-a-vis North Korea, deaf ears to the plea for the improvement of human rights situation in China, no concession about Yuan's appreciation. President Hu Jintao was clever enough to pay good lip services but not conceded the substance.

Mr. Obama wisely rejected the insertion into the joint communiqué of a clause mentioning "mutual respect to the other's core interests" on which China insisted, quoting the precedent in the joint communiqué issued on the occasion of Mr. Obama's visit to Beijing in November, 2009.

Apparently the US Congress was frustrated and some lawmakers have hardened their stance. In spite of face-saving remarks on both sides and commercial contracts signed during the visit, the most important result of this visit may be that Americans in general and the Obama administration in particular was awakened to the harsh reality and disillusioned with what is called "G2" .

(2) US-India: ever warming relations

US-India relationship which suffered from Indian nuclear tests in May 1998 was relatively quickly recovered by the Clinton administration as I witnessed during my tenure of Ambassadorship in India. Especially since 2006 when the Bush Jr. administration agreed to provide India with civil nuclear cooperation earnestly coveted by India, the oldest and the largest democracies have enlarged and deepened cooperation in both public and private sectors. In the most recent visit to India in November, 2010, President Obama endorsed for the first time India's candidature to a reformed Security Council of the United Nations.

Increasingly visible Indian's presence whose number is over 2.5 millions in the USA is welcomed by Americans as symbolized by the elections of two governors of Indian origin in Louisiana and South Carolina and the emergence of the India Caucus within the US Congress which counts more than 200 lawmakers.

Currently the peace and stability in the Indian Ocean are guaranteed by both the US Seventh Fleet and the Indian Navy. Their cooperation is encouraged by most countries in East Asia, South East Asia and the Gulf region.

5. Conclusion

In the Asia-Pacific equations, China attracts not only FDI and FII with her economic might, but also increasing suspicion and apprehension about not so much her rise itself but the way of her rising.

China is earnestly expected by changing both their politico-military strategy and actions to improve her regional and international relations; she has to become a power of stability in Asia -Pacific region and a contributor to the peace and stability of the international community.

To the contrary, India is regarded by Asians and Americans alike as a stabilizing power and her larger engagement in Asian and world affairs is welcomed.

One footnote! India's relations with her neighbors are not always smooth, let alone with Pakistan. One caution! India dislikes to be regarded as a pawn of the chess; she is a great

country proud of her long civilization and yet with a mindset inherited from the centuries of Moslem occupation and British colonialism. India can be counted, only if treated with due respect to their sensitivities.

Japan and the US is expected to hasten to put an end to the problem of US marine base of Hutenna and redefine a new alliance strategy to cope with new strategic realities. While reestablishing their mutual trust and alliance relationship, damaged by the Hatoyama administration, both allies should induce China to act peacefully and constructively. At the same time, they should apply sophisticated diplomacies to engage India to prevent China from disturbing peace and stability in the region. (End)

(This is the reproduction of an article written by Mr. HIRABAYASHI Hiroshi, Vice-President of the Japan Forum on International Relations / President of the Japan-India Association, based on his presentation at the workshop held in Tokyo on Feb. 5th organized jointly by the Center for Contemporary China Studies, Keio University and the Council on Foreign Relations of the US.)