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Original Article

Power Politics and Securitization: The Emerging Indo–Japanese Nexus in Southeast Asia

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Abstract

China's ascent has led to its securitization by its neighbouring states, particularly given its precarious maritime claims in the highly strategic Indo-Pacific basin. Such a development in the region has allowed India and Japan to forge closer strategic partnerships in Southeast Asia. This article utilizes securitization theory to analyse the emerging Indo–Japanese nexus, wherein Japan's increasing desecuritization and India's non-securitization in Southeast Asia have allowed the region to emerge as a common strategic vantage point for Indo–Japanese interests to convene. The securitization of China, coupled with India and Japan's common interests in safeguarding the freedom of navigation and deterring unilateral changes to the status quo, contributes to the emergence of this nexus. Furthermore, the emerging nexus provides states of Southeast Asia a hedging option as China's increasing assertion of its territorial claims. Japan's Security Diamond policy and India's Act/Look East policy will also be analysed to showcase the emergence of the Indo–Japanese nexus.

Key words: securitization theory, India, Japan, Southeast Asia, hedging

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1. Introduction

The rise of China in the 21st century presents a number of opportunities as well as challenges to the Indo-Pacific regional order. While the opportunities remain plentiful in the economic sphere, the challenges that accompany China's rise have the potential to undermine the stability of the region. China's increasingly assertive maritime policies have been of particular concern. These policies clash with the established normative order as well as the interests of a number of pivotal states in the Indo-Pacific region. The South China Sea (SCS) has become the arena in which these divergent interests have clashed. This development has been the result of three factors. The first is the strategic importance of the SCS as a sea lane through which half of the world's shipping tonnage traverses (Rahman & Tsamenyi 2010). A critical dimension of this sea lane is that energy-starved countries in Northeast Asia, like Japan, import over 80 per cent of their oil and gas (Rahman & Tsamenyi 2010), while exporting nearly 70 per cent of their goods via the SCS (Pajon 2013). Therefore, despite not possessing any territorial claims in the SCS, Japan finds itself increasingly engaged in the ongoing dispute between China and the Southeast Asian maritime claimants.

The second includes the potential economic benefits of oil and gas reserves found in the SCS. Coupled with steady growth of energy demands, and the stagnation of domestic oil production in the Indo-Pacific, there is growing incentive for states in the region to push their

existing claims and secure large parts of the SCS to enhance their production ('South China Sea' 2013). Hence, states like India, which do not have territorial claims in the SCS, have become involved in the region through its cooperation with Vietnam on oil and gas exploration (Vu & Nguyen 2014).

The third is the increasingly assertive Chinese policies that have led to a deterioration of regional stability in recent years. This has resulted in greater securitization of China in the Indo-Pacific and an increase in defence spending by all states in the region (Maestro 2015). Furthermore, the common securitization of China has facilitated the hedging strategies of a number of states in the Indo-Pacific. States like Japan and India, which had little security engagement with Southeast Asian states, have found a strategic opening to enhance their security roles in the region at the expense of China. Given the strategic importance of Southeast Asia as the gateway between the Indian and Pacific Oceans, Japan and India will be expected to continue benefiting from current securitization and desecuritization trends. As China increasingly asserts itself in the region, Japan and India, with their common securitization and strategic concerns regarding the rise of China, have forged closer ties, this in turn is leading to the emergence of an Indo-Japanese nexus. This nexus aims to socialize China not only through normative and economic efforts but more specifically by demonstrating that there are pivotal actors in the region that have the material capacities and willpower to challenge China's assertiveness.

2. Theory and Organization

The aim of this study is to evaluate how the securitization of China allows Japan and India to increase their political, economic and military presence in Southeast Asia. China's securitization is an important process to understand because it performs a legitimizing role for the greater security engagement of extra-regional states in a region that has traditionally been wary of external actors. Neither Japan nor India is geographically

located within Southeast Asia; however, they remain geographically proximate, and their common securitization of China has allowed these states to join in the ongoing securitization processes in Southeast Asia.

Securitization theory highlights the process through which security threats are constructed. This process is initiated by speech-acts that elevate non-politicized or politicized issues to the security realm (Williams 2003). What makes a speech-act 'a specifically "security" act, a "securitization," is its casting of an issue as an "existential threat" which calls for extraordinary measures beyond the routines and norms of everyday politics' (Williams 2003). In other words, securitization speech-acts elevate referent objects to the realm of security by identifying threats, increasing the sense of urgency and raising the possibility to take actions beyond established norms. Securitization processes, as developed by the Copenhagen School, involves three main components: first, a referent object that is seen to be existentially threatened and has legitimate claim to survival; second, a securitizing agent that initiates the securitizing speech-act by declaring a referent object to be existentially threatened; and third, functional actors that can shape the dynamics of a sector (Buzan & Wæver 1998). However, recent contributions have highlighted the important role that the audience plays in these processes. The audience is critical because it is the interaction between the securitizing agent and the audience that ultimately causes the process to succeed or fail (Balzacq 2011). In other words, securitization is 'intersubjective' because it is neither a question of an objective threat or a subjective perception of a threat. Instead, securitization of a subject depends on an audience accepting the securitization speech-act (Coskun 2011). Desecuritization, on the other hand, is the process in which a threat is no longer perceived as a threat, 'or at least not a threat that is existential' (Salter 2008, p. 324). This process can lead the demotion from securitized status to a politicized status, but more importantly, to the normalization of relations. The audience, of course, remains a key component of this process. Lastly, a

non-securitized status is not a status that is not explicitly addressed by securitization theory. In effect, it is a non-event. However, as this paper contends, a non-securitized status is a condition that facilitates inter-state relations.

Securitization processes are important because they reveal the state's threat perception and consequently inform its alignment preferences. It is in this context that the paper argues that the securitization of China by its Southeast Asian neighbours has facilitated greater security engagement by Japan and India in the region. Japan and India present compelling case studies for a number of reasons. The first is that both states have active policies in which the other plays a crucial role. For Japan, it is the Democratic Security Diamond, whereas for India, it is the Look East followed by a new approach titled the Act East policy. Secondly, as mentioned previously, Japan and India's growing security engagement in Southeast Asia is motivated and facilitated by China's assertive foreign policy in the region. Together, these events pave the way for the emergence of an Indo-Japanese nexus with the implicit goal of limiting China's influence in the Indo-Pacific region and countering its more recent assertive posture towards its neighbours.

3. Securitization of China

Despite China's pivotal role as the driver of economic growth in East Asia, its assertive policies in its maritime periphery have undermined much of the goodwill that it had generated under its 'Peaceful Rise' policy at the turn of the 21st century. Although China's assertive policies are not necessarily new (Johnston 2013), beginning in 2009, China not only increased its assertive rhetoric but also matched it with actions (Maestro 2015; Matsuda 2014). This development, coupled with existing grievances emanating from territorial disputes, has led to the successful securitization of China. While China is not the only securitized state in the Indo-Pacific region, this study emphasizes that the

securitization of China is unique because it has been widely accepted by a significant number of its neighbours.

Within this context, it is possible to understand how China and South Korea can successfully securitize Japan domestically yet fail to do so internationally. This is largely the result of the grievances that China and South Korea continue to voice over Japan's past actions and current normalization process, which have found little resonance with other states in the Indo-Pacific region because of Japan's self-imposed restraints since the end of World War II. Outside of China and South Korea, few states legitimately see Japan as posing an existential threat. Therefore, China and South Korea's securitization of Japan have been successful with their respective domestic audiences but has failed to gain resonance with international audiences. The same is the case for India. Apart from Pakistan, no major state actively securitizes India's aspirations. Politicization of India's role in South Asia is commonplace, but none of the smaller states in the region perceive India as an existential threat.

The securitization of China, however, has found resonance beyond the domestic arenas of the states that have initiated this process. As a result, China and its assertive policies have become the referent object of securitization. The securitizing agents in this case are China's neighbours as well as extra-regional states like India. The target audiences are both domestic and international. Ultimately, the success of this securitization is predicated on the resonance between the securitizing speech-act, the context in which it is made and how these are internalized by the audience. By identifying the securitizing speech-acts made by China's neighbours, one can assess what is being securitized and why, as well as by whom. Lastly, the predisposition of the audience to a given securitization or desecuritization speech-act can be assessed by evaluating poll data reflecting the public's perception of another state and its actions.

China's securitization can be observed from a number of key states in the Indo-Pacific region. Below are examples of the securitizing

language aimed at China, although the list is far from exhaustive. Consistent with securitization theory, statements were selected from agents that have the means to initiate securitization processes, including heads of states/governments or other cabinet members that represent state interests. For example, the Japanese Ministry of Defense has regularly identified China as a threat in its white papers because of its assertive policies. Its most recent white paper states that China ‘continues to act in an assertive manner, including coercive attempts to change the status quo, and is poised to fulfil its unilateral demands high-handedly without compromise’ (‘Defense of Japan 2015’ 2015). In addition to this, Japan’s Prime Minister, Shinzo Abe, has likened the relationship between Japan and China to that of England and Germany on the eve of World War I, indicating his belief that the two powers are on the verge of a serious conflict (Perlez 2014). Former Philippine President, Benigno Aquino III, echoed Abe’s statements by comparing China’s assertive actions to Nazi Germany, essentially making a parallel between the former’s claims in the SCS and the latter’s claims in the Sudetenland (Bradsher 2015). Likewise, former Vietnamese Prime Minister, Nguyen Tan Dung, expressed his concerns with China’s assertive policies in the SCS stating that ‘China’s actions violate international law’ and that Vietnam was ‘determined to oppose China’s violations’ (Mogato & Ruthwitch 2014). Even Indonesia, which has attempted to remain a ‘neutral arbiter’ in the disputes and does not see itself as a claimant in the SCS, has begun to take China’s moves in the region seriously enough to begin upgrading its military capabilities in the Natunas Islands whose exclusive economic zone falls within Chinese claims (Parameswaran 2015; Schonhardt 2015). Indonesian President Joko Widodo has gone on record supporting a peaceful solution to the SCS dispute while stating that China’s nine-dashed line in the SCS has ‘no basis in any international law’ (Kapoor & Sieg 2015). Lastly, India’s Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, despite efforts to maintain stable relations with China, has warned against China’s assertive

policies stating that ‘the present does not accept an expansionist attitude. Times have changed, China should give up its expansionist attitude and adopt a developmental mindset’ (‘Narendra Modi Dares China, Asks it to Give Up “Expansionist” Plans’ 2014).

The effectiveness of this securitization is facilitated by the convergence of consensus regarding China’s actions between securitizing agents and the audience that they are addressing. In this case, it is the perceived threat that China’s actions pose to international norms such as freedom of navigation and unilateral efforts to change the status quo. In addition to this, the threat perceived from China’s actions can be observed in polls conducted by the Pew Research Center, thus revealing the prerequisite context that is necessary for a securitizing agent to successfully securitize a referent object (Balzacq 2011). The survey conducted in 2013 and 2014 indicates that nearly every state in the Indo-Pacific region is concerned about territorial disputes with China, its expanding military capabilities and its unilateralism (‘Attitudes towards China’ 2013; ‘How Asians View Each Other’ 2014). This view remains largely unchanged in the 2015 version of the same survey and indicates that domestic sentiment is conducive for the successful securitization processes initiated by key agents (Stokes 2015). Furthermore, these developments show a demonstrable shift in public perception regarding China after it become more assertive in its maritime periphery compared with the generally favourable perception that it enjoyed during the first decade of the 21st century (‘Views of China and Russia Decline in Global Poll’ 2009). As a result of the common securitization of China, there has been a convergence of interests which, as this study argues, has facilitated greater security engagement by Japan and India in the region.

4. Southeast Asian Agency

Southeast Asia has had a long history of foreign interventions by great powers. It has been this history of intervention and

colonialism that has fostered a culture of wariness towards extra-regional powers (Weatherbee 2015). In fact, one of the main motivations for the creation of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) through the Bangkok Declaration in 1967 was to ensure regional and domestic stability free from external interference (Weatherbee 2015). Indonesia in particular has been a staunch advocate of ASEAN members' ability to preserve national and regional security without the need to rely on extra-regional powers (Turnbull 1993). However, cognizant of their material limitations and the limited success of socializing China into the established ASEAN order, Southeast Asian states have accepted America's role as security guarantor in the region (Twining 2016) and have effectively desecuritized Japan, thus allowing Tokyo to play a regional security role that would have otherwise been denied in the past (Garcia & Breslin 2016).

4.1. *The Limitations of Socializing China*

The re-emergence of China as a great power in the Indo-Pacific motivated nearly every state in the region to attempt to socialize China into the existing normative order (Goh 2007; Johnston 2008). ASEAN was among the principal players in this socializing effort, particularly as the Chinese military modernization was perceived as being destabilizing for the region. While the success of this effort can be seen from China's membership and active participation in nearly every major institution in the Indo-Pacific region, this success has remained limited to the economic sphere. Politically, and militarily, China has shown a mixed record of acceptance of the existing normative order, and its ongoing operations in the SCS has laid bare the limitations of the socialization of China (Jho & Chae 2014). This disparity has been the result of two key factors: (i) the political divisions among ASEAN members and (ii) the material limitations of these states to compel China to accept the existing order.

The intra-ASEAN division has become a weak point, which Beijing has effectively

exploited. Because only the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei and Indonesia maintain territorial and maritime disputes with China, ASEAN, as an entity, has been hesitant to allow the SCS issue dominate Sino-ASEAN relations lest it negatively impact their economic ties to Beijing (Parameswaran 2016). On two occasions, 2012 and 2016, Cambodia has hindered the drafting of a joint statement regarding China's actions in the SCS. Furthermore, Laos and Myanmar, along with Cambodia, have been implicated in giving China information about other ASEAN member's position vis-à-vis China's assertive policies in the region, further complicating the possibility of presenting a unified front to China (Khoo 2016). Ironically, one of the reasons for expanding ASEAN to include these states was the fear that they would fall into China's sphere of influence and lead to the division of Southeast Asia (Khoo 2016).

Nevertheless, despite of the internal divisions, ASEAN members remain collectively wary of China, although to varying degrees. This is added to the fact that China's actions have done little to dissipate ASEAN member's concerns regarding its rise (Ba 2006). Even states that have been perceived as falling within China's sphere of influence have recognized that their overdependence on China has negatively impacted their economic and political interests (Khoo 2016). As a result, while China continues to be an important economic player, its political and military assertiveness in the region has prompted key ASEAN states to securitize China, while simultaneously desecuritizing Japan, thus allowing, and even promoting, Tokyo's greater political and military involvement in Southeast Asia. In addition, India's non-securitized status, its great power potential and existing disputes with China makes it a natural partner for Southeast Asian states looking for economic, political and military diversification. In other words, the securitization of China facilitates the hedging strategies of a number of ASEAN members (Chung 2004) and legitimates the involvement of extra-regional states in a region, which as previously

indicated, has been traditionally wary of outside powers.

4.2. Japan as a Desecuritized Actor

Although Southeast Asian countries share similar collective memories of Japanese occupation and war crimes with their Northeast Asian counterparts, Japanese policy since the end of World War II has gone a long way to dissipate animosity towards Japan and thus desecuritize its status among Southeast Asian countries. In other words, although grievances remain, particularly regarding the perceived lack of Japanese contrition concerning their occupation of Southeast Asia, the youth in Southeast Asian states, unlike their Northeast Asian counterparts, do not regard Japan as a threat and have come to view it as an important player in the development of the region (Mun 2015). Furthermore, they have come to accept Japan's political and military normalization and view its greater political engagement in Southeast Asia as a positive development (Garcia & Breslin 2016; 'ASEAN Study' 2014).

The positive response to Japan's normalization process is critical to understand how Japan has been effectively desecuritized by Southeast Asian states. This desecuritization signals that Southeast Asian states no longer perceive Japan to be a threat and that its efforts to politically and militarily normalize in order to play a more proactive security role in the region are not seen as threatening but is in fact perceived as a positive development. Furthermore, it is possible to observe this desecuritization process by analysing the speech-acts made by key political figures in the region. There have been a number of current and former Southeast Asian government officials' statements that have expressed support for greater Japanese security engagement in Southeast Asia, as well as expressed their desire for deeper defence cooperation with Tokyo. For example, former Philippine President, Benigno Aquino III, has argued that a Japanese government that is empowered to assist others would be able to more effectively contribute to collective

defence efforts in the region (Reynolds & Takahashi 2014). Similarly, current Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte has stated that the Philippines and Japan are 'committed to ensure the freedom of navigation and overflight in these waters', adding that the two partners have 'bilateral and multilateral venues at our disposal to ensure that commitments and responsibilities are complied with under international law' (Lacorte 2016). Vietnamese Party General Secretary, Nguyen Phu Trong, has also called for greater 'defence and security' collaboration from Japan, as the former's disputes with China over the SCS increases (Nguyen 2015). In addition, former Indonesian Defense Minister, Purnomo Yusgiantoro, supported Japan's efforts to increase its security profile in the region as its normalization process evolved ('Indonesia, Japan to Start New Era of Military Cooperation' 2013), and its current President, Joko Widodo, has sought greater security cooperation from Japan and has expressed support of Abe's 'Proactive Contribution to Peace' policy ('Japan Signs Defense Pact with Indonesia, offers \$1.6b Loan' 2015; 'Japan-Indonesia Joint Statement: Towards Further Strengthening of the Strategic Partnership Underpinned by Sea and Democracy' 2015). In fact, there appears to be unanimous support for Shinzo Abe's 'Proactive Contribution to Peace' policy among Southeast Asian countries ('ASEAN Study' 2014). This policy not only calls for greater engagement between Japan and developing countries in the economic realm but also possesses a security component in which Japan presents itself as an actor that is capable and willing to engage in military-to-military cooperation with other states in order to promote peace and stability (Abe 2015).

The successful desecuritization of Japan by Southeast Asian states is the direct result of two key factors: (i) positive economic and political relations between ASEAN and Japan since World War II and (ii) the simultaneous securitization of China by key ASEAN states and Japan as Beijing becomes increasingly assertive in its dealings with its neighbours especially in the SCS. Common securitization

of China is critical because it provides common ground for legitimizing greater Japanese security roles in Southeast Asia, something that would have otherwise been denied in the past. Consequently, Japan's 'Vientiane Vision' initiative, which aims to institutionalize Japan–ASEAN defence cooperation through shared principles of international law, and supporting capacity building efforts in intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance, would not be possible if Japan did not enjoy a desecuritized status among Southeast Asian states ('Vientiane Vision: Japan's Defense Cooperation Initiative with ASEAN' 2016). In fact, this initiative is the culmination of years of engagement between Japan and ASEAN members, which has resulted in defence cooperation agreements, as well as consensus building regarding their perspectives on China's actions in the region. In other words, Japan and key Southeast Asian states have successfully externalized their securitization of China and have arrived at a shared understanding of the type of threat that China poses to the established regional and international normative order (Garcia 2016).

4.3. *India as a Non-securitized Actor*

Unlike Japan, India did not need to go through a process of desecuritization. In fact, its status as a non-securitized actor in Southeast Asia fosters confidence as a viable security partner. India's role during the postcolonial Cold War period helped shape Southeast Asia perception. During the beginning of the Cold War, India postured itself as a neutral power, championing the cause of decolonization and self-determination for states in the Global South. It undertook initiatives such as the Asian Relations Conference in 1947 and the Asia–Africa (Bandung) Conference in 1955, which subsequently paved way for the emergence of the non-aligned movement (Naidu 2010). Thus, the initial links between India and Southeast Asia in a postcolonial context remained unproblematic. Furthermore, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's emphasis on a morally grounded approach to international

relations and a neutral foreign policy posture fostered non-securitization of India. In other words, India's interactions with Southeast Asian states were never politicized and consequently, securitized. Thus, it never needed to be desecuritized given that it was and continues to play the role of a non-securitized actor in Southeast Asian affairs.

However, Southeast Asia as a region was not monolithic in its relations with India. The involvement of extra-regional powers such as the United States and China in Vietnam and the intensification of the Cold War divided Southeast Asia along ideological lines (Naidu 2010). These divisions, however, did not lead to the politicization or securitization of India. Not only was India constrained in Southeast Asia by the involvement of the United States, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and China, its intense rivalry with Pakistan in South Asia limited its extra-regional engagements. Furthermore, India's underperforming economy and its regional security concerns further limited its engagement with Southeast Asia and thus were not perceived as a state capable of projecting its military power in the region.

India's engagement with Southeast Asia is a recent one. The opening up of the Indian economy under the stewardship of Prime Minister Narasimha Rao and Finance Minister Manmohan Singh, beginning in 1991, ushered a more outward-looking policy orientation (Mehrotra 2012; Yong & Mun 2009). India's growing engagement with ASEAN, which later became subsumed under the umbrella term of its Look East policy, was primarily driven by prospects of economic collaboration. Thus, India's engagement with Southeast Asia in the post-Cold War period has been gradual and non-threatening, emphasizing the importance of economic linkages and exchange. This economically driven partnership contributes to confidence building and inculcates a political environment that is devoid of securitization of India by Southeast Asian states.

The tumultuous Sino–India relationship and non-securitization of India in Southeast Asia provide a suitable context for Indo–Southeast Asian security partnerships. Furthermore,

India's naval preponderance in the Indian Ocean makes it an attractive strategic partner for the region. The geopolitical proximity of India and its non-securitization makes it the ideal hedging partner in Southeast Asia, specifically within the contemporary context of rising Chinese pressures and influence in the region. Several Southeast Asian leaders have used speech-acts to assert India as a viable security partner for the region's countries. At the ASEAN–Indian Commemorative Summit in 2012 in New Delhi, the erstwhile Vietnamese Prime Minister Tan Dung Nguyen called upon India to 'back ASEAN and China in fully and effectively implementing the Joint Statement marking the 10th anniversary of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the East Sea (i.e. the South China Sea) and support the ASEAN in implementing its Six-Point Principle on the East Sea (South China Sea) to ensure the settlement of disputes by peaceful measures in line with international law, especially the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea' (Mishra 2013). While not directly addressing China as a threat, PM Nguyen sought to invite India as a multilateral participant, reaffirming Vietnam's non-issue with India's security engagement in the region.

Other states in Southeast Asia have showcased growing security arrangements with India. India and Singapore released a joint official statement in 2016 reaffirming 'support for security, safety and freedom of navigation and over flight, and unimpeded commerce, in accordance with international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS' ('India–Singapore Joint Statement during the Visit of Prime Minister of Singapore to India' 2016). Singapore's delegation added that it 'welcomed and highlighted the vital role that India played in the regional architecture, especially through its participation in and support for ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting Plus (ADMM Plus), East Asia Summit (EAS), and Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM)' ('India–Singapore Joint Statement during the Visit of Prime Minister of Singapore to India' 2016). In 2016, the President of the Republic of Indonesia Joko

Widodo and the Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi released a joint official statement that 'reiterated their commitment to respecting freedom of navigation and over flight, and unimpeded lawful commerce, based on the principles of international law, as reflected notably in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)' ('India–Indonesia Joint Statement during the State Visit of President of Indonesia to India' 2015). Regarding the SCS, 'the two sides stressed the importance of resolving disputes by peaceful means, in accordance with universally recognized principles of international law including the UNCLOS'. Both sides 'agreed to increase the frequency of defence exchanges, training and joint exercises, including among Special Forces'. As evident in the joint statements between India and several Southeast Asian states, there is emerging naval security collaboration, particularly the reaffirmation of United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which directly relates to China's territorial claims in the East and SCSs. Thus, India's non-securitization in Southeast Asia and its increasing willingness to engage with the states of the region validates its growing security roles in the region ('India–Indonesia Joint Statement during the State Visit of President of Indonesia to India' 2015).

5. The Emerging Indo–Japanese Nexus

The Indo–Japanese nexus represents a convergence of interests primarily galvanized by the common securitization of China and its assertive actions in the Indo-Pacific region. The emergence of this nexus is an important development for the Indo-Pacific region because Japan, a great power, and India, a regional power with great power potential, have become centrepieces for each other's vision of regional security and stability. Furthermore, as will be discussed next, the fact that these states have accepted their respective roles in each other's regional policies suggests that there is greater unity in this nexus than what ASEAN has been able to manage regarding China's assertiveness. Lastly, unlike

ASEAN, Japan and India possess greater material capabilities that if used effectively, are more capable of balancing China's overwhelming power in the region and thus, possibly deter it from further challenging the established normative order. Southeast Asia represents the pivot area in this nexus as a result of its strategic position as the gateway between the Pacific and Indian Oceans, but more importantly, because the securitization and desecuritization processes in the region have resulted in the convergence of interests between Southeast Asian states and the participation of extra-regional states like Japan and India. In other words, Southeast Asian states retain significant agency in the emergence of the nexus simply because it is their acceptance of extra-regional state involvement in regional affairs that facilitates the emergence of this nexus.

The emergence of this nexus is a result of a number of regional dynamics, all in which China and its assertive actions are the primary referent object of securitization. The first dynamic is the hedging strategies of Southeast Asian states which, as explained previously, appear to be breaking away from traditional opposition to the security participation of extra-regional actors within the region. This dynamic is the result of the securitization of China by key Southeast Asian states in light of its assertive policies, as well as the recognition that ASEAN's socialization of China has had limited success because of the material limitations of these states to compel China to accept the existing normative order. The second dynamic is the result of Japan's normalization, which while initially promoted by the United States and domestic nationalist elites has been accelerated as a result of Tokyo's securitization of Beijing's actions in the East and South China Sea. The third dynamic is the result of India's greater engagement with ASEAN members, initially for economic reasons, but increasingly for political reasons in order to demonstrate its ability to project power beyond South Asia. This demonstration of power projection by India is seen as an important strategic goal, particularly as China has demonstrated

its own ability to project into South Asia and the Indian Ocean (Malik 2016; Brewster 2014).

5.1. *Abe's Security Diamond and Modi's Act East Policy*

A relationship complicated because of the Cold War, both India and Japan have recognized the need for a strategic partnership in the Indo-Pacific in an era of a rising, assertive China. This recognition began in the signing of the 2008 India–Japan Joint Security Declaration, which set the course for further strategic partnership (Brewster 2014). The declaration included cooperation in the creation of a new Asian security order, a point that is increasingly promoted by both countries. Both states are committed to the need to keep the sea lanes of communication (SLOC) secure in the Indian Ocean region, as the area is of strategic importance for India given it is the country's maritime backyard. Japan's primary concerns regarding the SLOC derive from ensuring secure transportation of its energy supplies from the Middle East (Khurana 2007). Additionally, both India and Japan foresee security concerns regarding China's assertive actions in the Indo-Pacific region. In essence, the emerging Indo–Japanese nexus is a part of the new security framework the two governments aspire to formulate following the 2008 Declaration, which is driven by the common security of the SLOC and galvanized by the common securitization of China. This nexus coincides with the growing role that Japan and India play in each other's vision for regional security.

Additionally, domestic factors in Japan and India have significantly bolstered security arrangements between the two countries. Both Japan and India have witnessed the rise of governments in which security and the challenge of China's rise has been an important component. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe¹ of Japan, in 2006, had declared that 'a strong India is in the best interest of Japan and a strong

1. First tenure as PM is from 2006 to 2007; second tenure as PM is from 2012 to present

Japan is in the best interest of India'. ('Confluence of the Two Seas' 2007). The declaration was made as an effort by Japan to further include India in the affairs of the Pacific Ocean, particularly in the backdrop of China's rise, in an aptly named speech delivered by Abe at the Indian Parliament in 2007 called the 'Confluence of the Two Seas'. Furthermore, signalling a growing collaboration between the two states, Abe's statement was an affirmation of his attempts at normalizing Japan's security policy in the region.

India's position within Japan's renewed security strategy is predicated on concerns China and the vigorous foreign policy efforts by Prime Minister Abe. His initiation of the Quadrilateral Security Cooperation in 2007 involving Japan, the United States, India and Australia laid the foundations for closer strategic relations between these states (Kliman & Twining 2014). Abe's second term, beginning in 2012, elevated India's position within Japan's strategic framework. He ran on the platform of what would later be named the Democratic Security Diamond, which firmly entrenched major democratic states within the new Japanese led framework. India's inclusion in this framework showcases Japan's interest in involving the country in what was previously an 'East Asian affair'. India's credential as the world's largest democracy made it an apt player in Japan's Democratic Security Diamond policy and validated its role in this new framework. In 2012, Shinzo Abe declared that 'Japan is a mature maritime democracy, and its choice of close partners should reflect the fact', signifying that India was a natural partner in the new security framework (Panda 2015). Abe added that 'peace, stability, and freedom of navigation in the Pacific Ocean are inseparable from peace, stability, and freedom of navigation in the Indian Ocean', thus introducing the strategic rationale for India's role in Japan's foreign policy (Abe 2012). Furthermore, Abe has found an ally in Narendra Modi, who is part of the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party that shares the centrality of state security as a fundamental aspect of its policy outlook and thus welcomes

India's role within the Japanese vision of regional security (Chellaney 2014).

A similar development has occurred with India's approach to Japan. Initially, the Look East policy was an attempt to diversify India's historically limited role in South Asia. Since the 2013 election of Narendra Modi, India's foreign policy extended to more rigorous relations with Japan apart from the initial emphasis on Southeast Asia. Termed the Act East policy, the Modi administration intensified relations with Japan, ASEAN and Australia along with the Look East policy's focus on Southeast Asia (Domínguez 2014). The Act East policy coincides with Modi's proactive international diplomatic efforts, a fact demonstrated by his visits to all of the neighbouring states of India (bar Pakistan) and Japan being the first country outside of South Asia where he made a foreign trip. Modi considers Japan an integral part of India's Look East and Act East policy ('Japan is at the Heart of India's Look East Policy: Narendra Modi' 2014). Furthermore, Modi thanked Prime Minister Abe for being an active member of the Act East policy, indicating that Japan has also welcomed its role within India's vision for regional security ('India–Japan Joint Statement during the Visit of Prime Minister to Japan' 2016). During his Japan trip in 2014, Modi made a joint declaration with Abe titled the Tokyo Declaration for India–Japan Special Strategic and Global Partnership. Both Prime Ministers emphasized that Japan and India were Asia's oldest democracies ('Tokyo Declaration for India–Japan Special Strategic and Global Partnership' 2014), which is consistent with Japan's Democratic Security Diamond policy. As part of the Joint Declaration of 2014, both Modi and Abe highlighted the need to entrench India's northeast with Southeast Asia for the development and stability of the whole region ('Tokyo Declaration for India–Japan Special Strategic and Global Partnership' 2014).

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's official trip to Japan in November 2016 can also be seen in the context of the emerging Indo–Japanese nexus. The India–Japan joint statement, published on 11 November 2016, substantially

expanded areas of Indo–Japanese collaboration. The major areas of agreement included nuclear cooperation, counterterrorism, coordination on regional issues and defence industry cooperation (Panneerselvam 2016). The joint statement further asserts the need to adhere to international law and norms pertaining to the SCS, indicating mutual consensus of their threat perception of China and the threat its actions are perceived to pose to these international norms. Furthermore, Japan's willingness to cooperate with India on nuclear security, a state that China has refused entry to the Nuclear Suppliers Group, demonstrates a significant convergence of interests and an effort to pursue a long-term strategic partnership. Thus, the language of cooperative measures between India and China signal the strengthening of the nexus vis-à-vis China.

As both Abe and Modi increasingly use securitizing speech-acts regarding China's assertive actions in the Indo-Pacific, they are steering the course of their respective countries towards greater strategic convergence, and thus, the emergence of an Indo–Japanese nexus (Perlez 2014; 'Narendra Modi Dares China, Asks it to Give Up "Expansionist" Plans' 2014). The nexus is underpinned by a normative and strategic agenda that focuses on ensuring the freedom of navigation and the containment of unilateralism in the Indo-Pacific region. The securitization of China by key Southeast Asian states has facilitated the emergence of this nexus by performing legitimating role on the strategic aspirations of Japan and India in a region that has been traditionally wary of outside actors.

6. Conclusion

The common securitization of China by Japan and India, as well as key Southeast Asian states, has begun to change regional dynamics. Rather than force its smaller neighbours to acquiescence to its demands, China has effectively created a dilemma for itself. On the East, it has galvanized a largely dormant Japanese foreign security policy; its self-imposed limitations have slowly begun to dissipate as it actively pursues greater

security roles in Southeast Asia in an effort to deter China's assertive policies in the region. To the South, China has exposed the limitations of ASEAN's socialization efforts and has effectively promoted the emergence of hedging strategies in Southeast Asia. In other words, China's assertive actions, and its consequent securitization, validate for Southeast Asian states the participation of extra-regional states such as Japan and India in local security affairs, something that China sees as detrimental to its interests. To the West, China's penetration into the Indian Ocean in recent years has spurred a more active foreign policy in India. India's strategy is primarily predicated on the diversification of economic partnerships as well as signalling to the Chinese that India is also capable of projecting power in Southeast Asia. The convergence of interests between Japan and India in Southeast Asia has led to the emergence of a nexus where like-minded partners are seeking the strengthening of strategic and economic partnerships with the explicit goal of safeguarding the freedom of navigation and deterring unilateral changes to the status quo. The Indo–Japanese nexus remains in its infancy, but nonetheless, it is an important development for Indo-Pacific affairs. This nexus, with Southeast Asian validation, represents a capable vessel for socializing China into the existing regional order, not only through existing and evolving norms but also by demonstrating the limitations of China's material power.

The emergence of this nexus is facilitated and validated by Southeast Asian states and their common securitization of China. What is important about this dynamic is that there are multiple, simultaneous processes that are playing a role in the emergence of this nexus. On one hand, there has been the desecuritization of Japan, which has led to its de-politicization, resulting in normalization and the formation of close strategic partnerships. On the other, India's non-securitized status allows it to become an immediate, and ready, strategic partner in Southeast Asian security dynamics because no desecuritization and de-politicization

processes needed to be undertaken. In other words, the agency of Southeast Asian states is an important variable in the emergence of the Indo–Japanese nexus.

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