

Observatoire de l'Asie du Nord-Est

Synthèse réalisée pour le compte de la Délégation aux Affaires Stratégiques

selon une procédure adaptée n°2004/037

Summary

Asia continues to experience conflict and rivalry, despite growing multilateral ties, as seen by the competition between nations to provide aid following the Tsunami disaster on December 24 2004. This is especially the case for Northeast Asia, which lies between China, a country whose growth and ambitions are unsettling at a strategic and economic level, and Japan, whose desires to assert its regional role is tied to history and future regional equilibrium. Despite the reluctance of its neighbours, Tokyo has firmly asserted its progressive and normal powers, central to the development of their military capabilities, which have received larger approval than its candidacy to membership of the UN Security Council, so long as Germany, Brazil and India remain within the G4. The twelve notes of analysis that have been created this year under the framework of the Analysis of Northeast Asia, were created to follow these developments, and to analyse how the Chinese- Japanese rivalry will help define the position of other regional and outer regional powers.

Japan aspires for normality, increasing multilateral engagement and continues in favour of maintaining peace. Peking also seeks to develop involvement and visibility beyond her traditional zone of influence, by increasing its ties with the African continent, seeking to strengthen its diplomatic, as well as its economic and energy ties with Africa (note 2 and 4). Faced with the emergence of China, and tensions that were violently manifested in April 2004, Tokyo has fostered a growing alliance with the United States, despite opposing views

on numerous issues. This has translated into Japanese participation of Iraqi operations, and has embarked its first stages of an antimissile defence program. The "common strategic interests" by definition, that specifically mentions peaceful solutions on the issue of Taiwan, so that the questions of North Korea continues to heavily weigh in on the strategic orientations of Japan.

Ties between Tokyo and Taiwan are constrained but have subscribed to the framework of reinforcing the Japanese-American alliance. However, Japanese politics have equally pursued active relationships with Southeast Asia, (note 6) Russia and the European Union. Nevertheless, Tokyo's advocacy has been guided by its mission to defend its interests, such as the possibility of raising the embargo on selling weapons to China, as is the case of the European Union, or the diversification of energy options, as is the case of Russia.