

Under the discerning eye of Alexandre Adler

To an unprecedented change in Asia



In the course of history, some events seem inexorably determined. The epoch-making growth of Asian societies, initially under the guise of Japanese hypergrowth, today with the Chinese onslaught towards an original combination of high technology and mass affluence in its great cities, both events seem to present us with a kind of “manifest destiny”, where Asia seems on the verge to conquer the first place economically and even culturally on the world scene; nevertheless, such staggering results are never achieved through a straight path, without encountering serious obstacles. But always, after some turning points which seem initially paradoxical, a sort of inner necessity comes to prevail, negating the first unfavorable impressions of some events that have occurred in the midst of that wide inner current of growth.

Such seems to be the case with North Korea of Kim-Jong-un, which could be described as one of those “necessary hazards”, as well as the surprise election of Donald Trump’s in America, which no doubt began by paralyzing the American executive, and so allowed to break definitely and brutally the cumbersome process of the reset of a Tokyo-Washington understanding that should have been adopted at the end of the Obama presidency, so as

to create in the Pacific area one ultimate obstacle to a Chinese paramount influence.

Looking furthermore superficially at the North Korean plight, one gets an even more alarming impression, when taking into account the state of preparedness of the local intercontinental missiles, loaded with nuclear warheads, not excluding a tragic regional outcome. Although, beyond this gorish scenario, everything is effectively in place for a very different outcome, which implies the fall of the current North Korean regime, but also the entry on a more conspicuous scene of Chinese power, which, not so astonishingly, should be tolerated by the US, where the military wield the main role, irrespective of what Trump thinks or does on his own. Finally, the foundering of the anti-Chinese strategy of the Japanese conservatives make more and more fragile the ascendancy of their current leader, prime minister Shinzo Abe.

As a matter of fact, it is already two years ago that the American strategic Establishment has already agreed in discreet talks to let China have its own way in North Korea, accepting implicitly the new pro-Chinese industrial undertaking of South Korea in the process, and thus avoid any direct military solution which costs would be fairly unbearable for Washington, be these commitments involve, at one stage or another, the political, military, or economic basic interests of the United States. Only the murders by Kim-Jong-un, first of his uncle and then of his own brother, exiled in south-east Asia, have retarded the implementation of such a political solution, that sounds perfectly rational for all players involved. If China has not yet explicitly moved against Kim-Jong-un, although encouraging without less and less qualifications the North Korean army to move against its leader, probably beginning even to help in some sabotage measures, there is one reason for the apparent delay of the Chinese official reaction. One has simply to consider the schedule of Xi Jinping’s own political coup, which will be due at the end of October 2017, with the communist party current congress in Beijing.

That internal coup shall involve an indefinite prolongation of Xi’s mandate and a profound recasting of the collective leadership, where the chief economist Wei Qingzheng is already earmarked for the role of vice-leader. That ascendancy of the Chinese central government is explicitly approved, against Trump, by the most authoritative American military leaders, as well as the present South Korean government. Even in Japan, the risks involved by Kim’s adventurism seem now too serious, to elicit, the traditional Japanese antagonism versus China. That change of mind could well lead to a Japanese reversal of its public opinion, under the duress of new Japanese general elections, that could also very well end up with the success of a much more pro-Chinese democratic opposition, that of Ichiro Ozawa. No doubt, at this stage either Marx nor Hegel (which is actually the real founder of that formula) could not abstain to exclaim: “Well done, old mole”

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