

NOTE

East China Sea

A Correspondent writes :

THE BITTER MARITIME territorial disputes between China and Japan continue, as China quarrels with the South-East Asian Nations, over the regional giant's claims over its "ancestral waters". On 23 Nov 2010, North Korea shelled a border island, Yeonpyeong, belonging to South Korea, killing two civilians and two marines. South Korean military counter attacked with artillery fire, but refrained from using air power for fear of escalating the clash.

The largest ever US-Japan war game is taking place off the tense Korean peninsula. There are simultaneous USA–South Korean naval, manoeuvres–exercises in the Yellow Sea, designed as a show of force to Pyongyang, after the North Korean regime's deadly artillery strike against South Korea. Along with officially pacifist Japan, the US has displayed giant military fire power dubbed "Keen Sword" in southern Japanese waters consisting of 60 warships, 500 aircraft and 44000 troops.

Beijing continues to support a close relationship with Pyongyang. Party and military elements in China, are generally favourable to close ties with Pyongyang. China has been seeking to reduce US influence in the South China Sea. Since the recent efforts by Washington for closer regional engagement and the declared US policy of return to Asia, the frequency of clashes in the Korean Peninsula has accelerated. South Korea has become more obsessed with the military alliance with USA. Beijing has been trying to prod North Korea towards the type of economic measures, that have driven China's economic success. □□□