



ASIA-EUROPE
FOUNDATION



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Asia in the eye of Europe

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French Institute of International Relations (Ifri)



Media outlet	Type of Media	Position
Le Monde	Daily newspaper	Editorial Director
Le Figaro	Daily newspaper	Chief Editor - International Section
Libération	Daily newspaper	Journalist - Asia desk
Le Parisien/ Aujourd'hui en France	Daily newspaper	Chief Editor - World
La Croix	Daily newspaper	Deputy Chief Editor
RFI	Radio	Journalist
France Info	Radio	Journalist - International Section
TF1	Television	Section Chief - World and Defense
France 2	Television	Chief Editor - Reports and Investigations
Le Point	Weekly Magazine	Chief Editor - International Section
L'Express	Weekly Magazine	Chief Editor - International Section



How is Asia covered?



- French media outlets rely on networks of local correspondants

- China without exception
- Japan and India also common, with larger outlets including S.E. Asia

- Special preparations will be made for large events, depending on interest of readers, anticipated importance and outlet



- In reacting to events in Asia, French outlets work within existing structure (special envoys, no new hires)
- No special budget allocated for Asia (international budget)
- Asia must compete with global events



VALUES:

- **No uniformity, nor distinct pattern of value structure by media type or political bent**
- **Some did identify human rights as a point of interest, with attention in Asia focused on oppressive regimes and dissidents**
- **Pertinence to French public a key driver**



EDITORIAL APPROACH

- **No officially formulated policies**
 - Pertinence of news
 - objectivity
 - searching for original angles (value added, important vs e-media)



Reactive or Proactive?

- Most outlets claim both
- Most claim to lean more reactive (radio, TV, L.C., Libé), others more proactive (weeklies, L.M.), while others strive for balance (L.F.).
- More “popular” daily media (L.P., radio or TV) are most reactive.



SELLING ASIA

- Not exceptionally difficult, but depends on topics in France and rest of world
- Asia is still seen as far away, but closer than 10-15 years ago (Le Point)
- Economy and Islam related topics in Asia generate interest; obscure topics harder to sell (Le Monde)
- China always in top-10, rest of Asia doesn't always generate much interest (La Croix)
- A 'far away from my concerns' aspect mixed with curiosity, fascination and fear (France 2)



INFO FROM GOV'Ts?

- Most outlets generally sour on « institutional information »
- Few said they would consider press releases, but may glance at them
- Le Monde: What is really needed is an honest exchange of views





Elites' Personal perceptions on Asia

ASIA AS A GREAT POWER?

Not Asia, but Asian actors are largely economic powers

- **China** (all identified as economic power, some as military power, one included « societal », though usually avoids political responsibility)
- **India** (a rising economic power, some identified as cultural power – potential for soft power)
- **Japan** (economic power, cultural significance for some in Europe)
- One reference to **S.E. Asia**, but only individual countries that should be given more attention (Indonesia, Thai, Phs)

ZERO notion of Asia as a political power

One alluded to potential, but many explained complexity of internal divisions

Example: Inability of Asia to support Singaporean candidate to IMF





Importance of Asia for France:

Today: 3.59

Tomorrow: 4.4

Most importance issues for France

Economy

- China's economy; trade and market access for French companies; unfair competition with China; impact on French employment; innovation

China

- China's growing presence in the world (particularly in Africa)

Afghanistan

- French troops on the ground, must be concerned

Other security/Defense issues

- nuclear (2) and conventional (1)
- terrorism

Cultural understanding (1)



Little knowledge of 8th ASEM summit

- exception, Le Monde (press contacts +)

Little knowledge of ASEM in general

- general admission that summits “can’t hurt” but that impact on France is minor to very minor
- no interest seen in press covering such events
- one observation: France is more directly impacted in forums where it stands on its own, not with EU
- difficulty of EU to find common ground on foreign policy, coupled with disunity in ‘Asia’ will keep impact of ASEM to a minimum

3 images of Asia ...all over the map...



Demographic gigantism	Economic effervescence	Political archaism
Huge population	Extremely powerful economy	Splendid landscapes
Demographic weight	Economic weight	Political weight
Contradictions	Economic power	Innovation
Huge population	Dynamism	Innovation
Future	Dynamism	Youth
New world balance	Diversity & world unity	Stability/Instability
Japan	Angkor Wat	Distance (far away)
Chinese power paradox	Attractive cultural diversity	My own ignorance
Food	Customs	Resilience
Power	Nationalism	Intransigence

ADDITIONAL OBSERVATIONS

Disagreement or discomfort with concept of “Asia”

China clearly the dominant topic of conversation when speaking of “Asia”
- India, Japan a bit less, others hardly at all



RECOMMENDATIONS

Governments:

more open and free exchange of views through dialogue

- press releases and top-down information ineffective

ASEF:

People-to-people exchanges are effective (press dialogue and exchanges)



This is the end of the presentation, thank you!