

POST-COLD WAR JAPAN'S NATIONAL SECURITY HISTORY UNDER THE LDP AND
THE DPJ

Foreign Policy Developments from 1989 to 2012 with China, North Korea and Russia

By

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Declaration of Originality

I, Simo Santeri Holttinen hereby declare that this thesis is my own work and has not been submitted in any form for the award of another degree or diploma at any university or other institute of tertiary education.

Information derived from the published and unpublished work others has been cited or acknowledged appropriately.

ABSTRACT

Japan has a history of fluctuating security relations with its three neighboring countries People's Republic of China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Russian Federation. The problems with these relations have manifested themselves in various forms. Firstly, in the case of China, Japan has for decades attempted to balance its diplomatic and economic relations, while at the same time dealing with the territorial dispute over the Senkaku islands it currently holds ownership of. Secondly, with North Korea, Japan is dealing with the difficulties caused by its war past and the DPRK's explicit ambitions for a larger nuclear role in the region. Thirdly, with Russia, who it also holds a past of war and territorial exchanges with, Japan has to deal with the Northern Territories dispute which involves four islands north off Hokkaido. This study examines the security policy aspect between Japan and these three countries from historical and political viewpoints. The research uses the case study method for the three countries. It relies on the use of existing literature, and descriptive means to create a comprehensive outlook on the connection between history and policy between the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and Democratic Party (DPJ) eras between 1989 and 2012. After a descriptive historical review of the relations, through a framework of comparing 'security issues' and 'security policies' that were established during each political party's era of dominance, a comparative analysis between the parties' policies was established. This was done towards the goal of determining whether the two parties' policies in the case of security issues have had any major differences after the power shift towards the DPJ in 2009. The findings of the research indicated that the era under the LDP saw little intra-party fluctuation of policies, while the case has been very different during the DPJ's era. The research finds that the actual differences with major policies between the LDP and the DPJ have been overall slight until 2012. Rather, the DPJ's intra-party major policies towards

especially the U.S. security alliance and rising China have seen a 'political pendulum swing' phenomenon from one end of the range to the other during the terms of its three prime ministers Hatoyama, Kan and Noda.

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List of Abbreviations

ACSA	Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement
ASDF	Air Self-Defense Forces of Japan
DPJ	Democratic Party of Japan
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
EAC	East Asian Community
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
EU	European Union
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Association
ICJ	International Court of Justice
JSP	Japan Socialist Party
KEDO	Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization
LDP	Liberal Democratic Party of Japan
LWR	Light-Water Reactor
MSDF	Marine Self-Defense Forces of Japan
NDPO	National Defense Program Outline
NPT	Non-Proliferation Treaty
PKO	Peace-keeping operation
PM	Prime Minister
PRC	People's Republic of China
SDF	Self-Defense Forces of Japan
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

Chapter I: Introduction

Statement of Topic

This is a research on Japan's foreign security policy development in the post-Cold War era towards the People's Republic of China, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Russian Federation.

These three countries have been the main security concerns for Japan after the Cold War, and in many ways have continued to be so until present day. Firstly, this study looks at the issues through the lens of the intertwined history between Japan and the aforementioned countries. Secondly, it proceeds to describe, analyze and compare the specific post-Cold War era major potential flashpoint events and policy directions between the times of Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) dominance until the current era of the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ).

In China's case, Japan has a long-lasting but controversial relationship in regards to the Senkaku Islands (In China called the Diaoyus) whose ownership was returned to Japan by the United States in 1972. Aside from Japan's war past controversies with China, the Senkaku issue has been one of the main causes for diplomatic difficulties between the two countries for decades. This research looks at the relationship between Japan and China with a focus on the Senkaku dispute. The research subsequently proceeds to show how the political climate between these two countries has fluctuated under the LDP and the DPJ especially when it comes to diplomatic difficulties such as the Senkaku issue.

In North Korea's case, the security focus has mainly been based on the threat of its nuclear ambitions. The history of the DPRK's unsuccessful negotiations with Japan and other

powers during events such as the Six-Party talks has repeatedly shown that the situation is yet volatile and should be a major part of Japan's security agenda in the region. The research addresses the difficult history of the Korean Peninsula and Japan from the early 20th century, and proceeds to look at what kind of effect it has to the relations in comparison to the current situation of intermittent negotiations.

Russia and Japan also share a long history which is marked heavily by a series of territorial disputes ranging from their early encounters in the 19th century to present day problems. Namely, the Northern Territories problem (Southern part of the Kuril Islands chain, north of Hokkaido) has continuously been a topic of relevance since the end of World War II, when Russia took the territories over. The research will explain the history of Russo-Japanese relations since the 19th century and their first territorial exchanges, and create a comprehensive view of the issues that have ever since the first exchanges created hindrances between the two countries.

Significance of the Study

Japanese security policy has a wide history of literature today. The significance of this research presents itself in the form of bringing together several aspects of Japanese politics in a comprehensive way that has yet rarely been done before. The fact that the research brings together three major concerns for Japan's security not only from bilateral, but from multilateral perspectives as well, is especially of significance. This gives the reader a chance to look at the origins of Japan's current security problems as well as the course of their development towards the present day situation. In-depth literature on the effects of the DPJ's victory in 2009 is also yet quite limited, and the fact that this study brings together a comparison with the different eras of

the LDP towards the DPJ's victory is important as well. This contribution to the field of Japanese foreign policy on the historical front, and in the political comparison frontier is something that the field needs right now.

Research objectives and scope

The objective of this study is to describe, examine and analyze the change in Japan's security policy by comparing the LDP and the DPJ policies. The study aims to contribute to the current understanding in the area of Japan's security policy with the three major security issues with China, the DPRK, and Russia. With the growing restlessness in the East China Sea (Senkaku Islands), North Korean continuing explicitness of its nuclear ambitions, and the Russian developments on the Kuril Islands chains, the aforementioned topics have a formidable history of published literature.

This research aims to create a binding balance between giving the reader a historical view on the territorial and security issues and explaining the Japanese policies and actions under its two main political parties. This approach is used to bring together what the author sees as the three most pressing security concerns Japan has surrounding it in the 21st century. The research also aims to provide readers both Japanese and foreigners interested in Japanese politics an up-to-date view on the security related issues at hand. Namely, on how Japan's difficult relations and interactions with the three aforementioned countries were during the earlier encounters (circa 19th century) and how they developed to the rather unpredictable state they are at in 2012 especially due to territorial claims.

The study aims to look at the relation between old and present of Japan's relations with its three neighboring countries through the lens of security policy. The chronological focus for the

research is the post-Cold War era, but an additional historical perspective in terms of Japan's relations with the three main countries discussed is provided as well to give a more comprehensive view into the roots of the issues.

Research Questions

The main point of interest in terms of the research questions is "**How have Japanese relations with China, North Korea and Russia developed in the post-Cold War era in terms of Japanese security under the LDP and the DPJ?**". In the case of all three, China, North Korea and Russia, the related research sub-questions are as follows:

1. How does the early history of Japan's relations with its three neighboring countries relate to the current security environment and to the territorial disputes?
2. How were Japan's pre-2009 LDP policies towards the issues with the country, and what were the main security related events that took place during pre-2009 LDP dominance?
3. What were the main security related events during the post-2009 DPJ era, and how were they handled through policymaking?
4. Has the DPJ been able to differentiate its approaches and policies in comparison to the LDP after its victory in 2009?

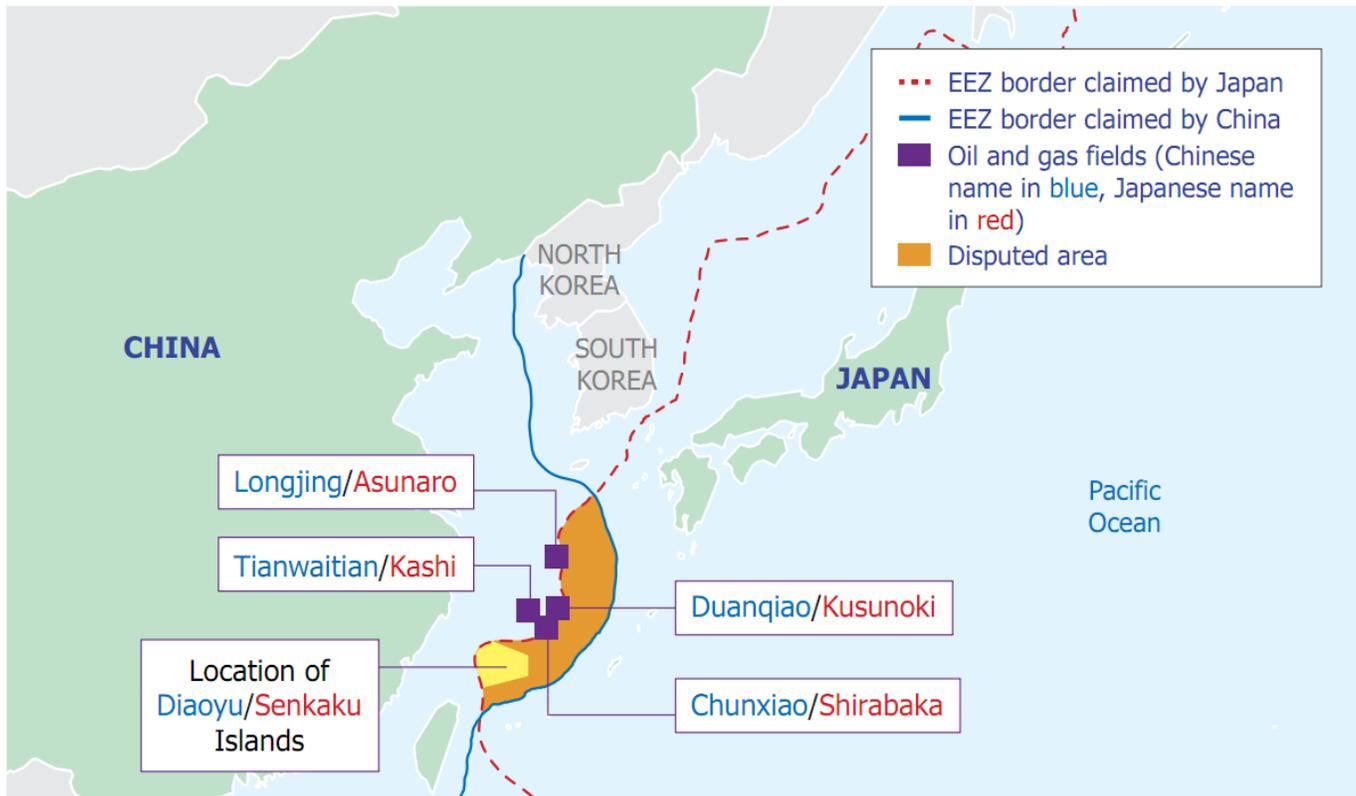
Research questions 2 and 3 are descriptive and mainly addressed in the case studies in the body of the research. They are used to discuss the main research question and research question 4 for final analysis in Chapter V.

Methodology discussion

The study uses the case study method for the three main countries of interest, and it relies on review of the existing literature for empirical contents. Thus the research is descriptive and relies on empirical data and observation of the historical events and related policies. Aside from the focus on the historical aspect in the first half of each case study, a framework of comparison was established to differentiate between security issues and policies that were implemented during a certain prime minister's era. The case studies of Japan's relations with China, North Korea and Russia follow a systematic pattern of first looking at the issues and policies with each country through Japan's political actions. Thus, the pattern looks at the issues and policies of the LDP with each country, which is followed by a similar study through the issues and policies that were a part of the DPJ's era. A comparison between these two is then established for an analysis that concentrates on the prospect for changes that occurred or did not occur.

Chapter II: Sino-Japanese relations

Map 1: Map of the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands



Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration¹

Chapter background

Despite increased economic integration between the People's Republic of China and Japan, the Sino-Japanese relations in the 21st century are yet hindered by disputes of historical, political and geographical importance today. A prominent dispute between China and Japan, which we can see combining all these three factors, is the Senkaku Islands (in China called the

¹ U.S. Energy Information Administration, "Map of the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands," last modified September 12, 2012, <http://www.eia.gov/countries/regions-topics.cfm?fips=ECS>

Diaoyus, in Taiwan *Diaoyutai*) dispute that has prevailed ever since the United States relieved its control over the area back to Japan together with Okinawa in 1972.²

In this chapter the focus will be on what kind of events notable for international security did the Sino-Japanese relations face during the continuing post-Cold War rule of the Liberal Democratic Party of Japan (LDP) and what kind of policies the LDP backed under different eras of its leadership. China's immense growth in the recent years both militarily and economically will also be an issue that is looked upon in relation to the LDP's policymaking. These developments combined have caused Japan to be increasingly on guard security-wise. This effect can be seen especially when it comes to (as of yet) the minor border conflicts Japan has had with China in the past years. These include events such as Chinese fishing boats continuously making their way to Japanese waters, sometimes with some diplomatic repercussions.³ The role of the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) as the current party in power is evaluated in comparison to the LDP after 2009.

History, debate and importance of the Senkaku Islands

Historically speaking the issue of the Senkakus between China (then Qing Empire) and Japan (then Empire of Japan) can be dated back to the time when Japan placed an official marker

² Yoichiro Sato, "Tango without trust and respect? Japan's awkward co-prosperity with China in the twenty-first century," in *The Rise of China and International Security*, ed. Kevin J. Cooney and Yoichiro Sato, (New York: Routledge, 2009), 96, 110.

"U.S. return of Senkakus in '72 upset Beijing, Taipei", *The Japan Times*, September 16, 2012, <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/text/nn20120916a4.html>.

³ Yoko Kubota, "Japan refuses China demand for apology in boat row", *Reuters*, September 25, 2010, <http://uk.reuters.com/article/2010/09/25/uk-japan-china-idUKTRE68N09H20100925>.

on them in 1895, signifying them belonging to Japan as a part of the *Nansei Shoto* island chain.⁴ From these times Japan has carried on with the argument that before it took over the islands, their status fell into the so called category of '*terra nullius*', which is Latin for "no-man's-land". This argument is followed with the logic that there was never any indication that they were under the control of the then Chinese dynasty in power. China disagrees with this, and has come forth with its own interpretation of the issue, arguing that the islands were not of *terra nullius* status at all during this time, referring to historical evidence.⁵

Some, such as Pan would point out the importance of the question whether the Senkakus were a part of the area known as Formosa (present day Taiwan) as being the key to understanding the arguments and justifications from both sides. This is closely connected to the *Treaty of Shimonoseki* of 1895, which ended the First Sino-Japanese War fought between 1894-1895. With this treaty Qing dynasty China yielded the Formosa islands, among other areas, to Japan.

At the end of World War II, the San Francisco Peace Treaty nullified the Treaty of Shimonoseki and effectively moved the administrative right of the Senkaku islands from Japan to the United States. With this Japan also lost its previously colonized areas. Subsequently, the islands were returned to Japan together with Okinawa in 1972 by the United States.⁶

The importance lies in the following: It can be argued that in the case that the Senkakus were to be considered originally a part of Taiwan, they would have to have been returned to

⁴ Scott Simon, "The Senkaku Islands: A Forgotten Flashpoint in the Western Pacific", Centre for International Policy Studies, accessed May 4, 2012, <http://cips.uottawa.ca/the-senkaku-islands-a-forgotten-flashpoint-in-the-western-pacific/>.

⁵ Zhongqi Pan, "Sino-Japanese Dispute over the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands: The Pending Controversy from the Chinese Perspective," *Journal of Chinese Political Science* 12, no. 1 (2007): 77.

⁶ Pan, "Sino-Japanese Dispute ," 73.

Taiwan just as other territories were taken from Japan as well in accordance with the San Francisco Peace Treaty.

The current official stance from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan states:

*Since then [1895], the Senkaku Islands have continuously remained as an integral part of the Nansei Shoto Islands which are the territory of Japan. These islands were neither part of Taiwan nor part of the Pescadores Islands which were ceded to Japan from the Qing Dynasty of China in accordance with Article II of the Treaty of Shimonoseki which came into effect in May of 1895.*⁷

China does not agree with this claim, and argues that the islands were to be yielded as a kind of a package deal to their original owners together with any other areas Japan had to give away by the end of World War II (such as Taiwan and Korea), the San Francisco peace treaty and subsequent decolonization. The official statement on the ownership of the islands from the Chinese government was clarified in a 2012 white paper as follows:

⁷ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, *The Basic View on the Sovereignty over the Senkaku Islands*, accessed November 28, 2011, from Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan: <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/senkaku/senkaku.html>.

*Diaoyu Dao and its affiliated islands are an inseparable part of the Chinese territory. Diaoyu Dao is China's inherent territory in all historical, geographical and legal terms, and China enjoys indisputable sovereignty over Diaoyu Dao. Japan's occupation of Diaoyu Dao during the Sino-Japanese War in 1895 is illegal and invalid. After World War II, Diaoyu Dao was returned to China in accordance with such international legal documents as the Cairo Declaration and the Potsdam Proclamation. No matter what unilateral step Japan takes over Diaoyu Dao, it will not change the fact that Diaoyu Dao belongs to China.*⁸

Interpretation of history: Chinese arguments

In the post-World War II setting of East Asia, the said islands were under the U.S. occupation together with Okinawa and the rest of Japan. In 1972, as the U.S. returned Okinawa to Japan, the 'administrative right' of the Senkakus fell back to Japan as well. Both the Republic of China (Taiwan) and People's Republic of China claimed sovereignty over the islands through official announcements, and neither party has accepted the decision to transfer administrative right to Japan to date.⁹ From China's side, the arguments to the ownership are largely relying on historical reasoning. However, due to the lack of mutually acceptable physical proof it has been

⁸ China Information Office of the State Council, last modified September 25, 2012, http://www.china.org.cn/government/whitepaper/2012-09/25/content_26628166.htm.

⁹ Simon, "The Senkaku Islands."

easy for Japan to brush off these claims and simply continue with the official policy that there is no issue to begin with. Another possible way to solve the issue would be using the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to give a ruling on the issue to reach closure. However, to date this option has not been used yet.

The Chinese historical arguments follow the logic that the islands were a part of China as early as during the Ming Dynasty (14th century) and Qing Dynasty (early 20th century), as well as in 18th century Japanese maps.¹⁰ China also counts itself to the victors of World War II, which would place them in the group of determining victors of the Potsdam Declaration. The Declaration stated that Japanese sovereignty would be limited to the current main islands of Hokkaido, Honshu, Kyushu and Shikoku, and the rest would be decided by the "victors" of the war.¹¹ Now, whether the People's Republic of China should be counted as one of these powers is another separate argument to consider. From one perspective, as China was largely occupied by Japan, it was technically speaking merely liberated by the Allied powers. On the other hand, China's argument in this case is questionable from the point of view that it is well known that it originally never even considered the San Francisco Treaty to be legally binding, as it also denounced the legality of the treaty in 1951.¹² Price writes:

¹⁰ Pan, "Sino-Japanese Dispute," 77.

¹¹ Tsuyoshi Hasegawa, *Racing the enemy: Stalin, Truman, and the surrender of Japan* (Harvard University Press, 2005), 117.

¹² John Price, "A Just Peace? The 1951 San Francisco Peace Treaty in Historical Perspective", Japan Policy Research Institute, accessed November 26, 2011, <http://www.jpri.org/publications/workingpapers/wp78.html>.

On August 16, 1951, the People's Republic of China (PRC) published a statement by Zhou Enlai, Minister of Foreign Affairs, regarding the proposed treaty and conference. The treaty, he stated, violated the United Nations Declaration of January 1, 1942, the Cairo Declaration, the Yalta Agreements, the Potsdam Declaration and Agreement, and the Basic Post-Surrender Policy of the Far Eastern Commission.

From this statement it can be deduced that China had an antagonistic view on the Treaty of San Francisco. This is understandable, as China was completely excluded from it by the U.S., while Taiwan was allowed a separate treaty.

Interpretation of history: Japanese arguments

Firstly, from the Japanese side the official statements of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs argue that the islands indeed were uninhabited and thus fell into the category of "no-man's land" in the past prior to 1895 when the Treaty of Shimonoseki took place. These arguments also heavily rely on legal grounds.¹³ Secondly, the official policy states that the islands are by no reasoning a part of the islands surrounding Taiwan or the Pescadores. This would mean that Japan did not renounce its right to them with the Treaty of San Francisco in 1951 as it did with its other formerly colonized areas. Thirdly, it sees that the islands were officially given back to Japan by the United States together with the return of Okinawa in 1972.

¹³ Seokwoo Lee, "Boundary & Territory Briefing: Territorial Disputes among Japan, China and Taiwan Concerning the Senkaku Islands," *International Boundaries Research Unit* 3, no. 7 (2002): 9.

In 1992 China further pushed forward its official stance of having legal claim to the Senkakus, as it passed a new law called the *Law on the Territorial Sea and Contiguous Zone*, which states in a rather straightforward manner that the islands belong to China.¹⁴ This has been the guideline China's official policy has followed ever since. Japan subsequently headed to give its own comment on the Chinese stance, persisting with its previous statement that the islands are Japanese territory. In its official reply statement the Ministry of Foreign Affairs says:

*There is no doubt that Senkaku Shoto are uniquely Japanese territory, [both] historically and from the point of view of international law, and our country actually controls these[islands] effectively. The present Chinese Act is very regrettable and [we] demand correction.*¹⁵

From this it can be seen that the inherent difficulty with dealing with the issue has been both parties' strong views on the legitimacy of their claim to the islands.

Importance of the Islands: Territory, Economy and Power

What then makes the Senkakus so important to both parties? Their size itself only amounts to some seven square kilometers, and they are uninhabited aside from the occasional lighthouse construction works. However, the strategic and symbolic importance of the islands is very central when it comes to Sino-Japanese relations. From the Chinese side, Japanese

¹⁴ Hyun-soo Kim, "The 1992 Chinese Territorial Sea Law in the Light of the UN Convention", *The International and Comparative Law Quarterly* 43, no. 4 (1994): 894.

¹⁵ Pan, "Sino-Japanese Dispute," 75.

"occupation" of the islands is yet arguably reminiscent of the former Japanese colonization of Chinese territories, and thus is seen as offensive altogether. The Chinese see the Senkakus as an area that Japan has not rightfully returned after its defeat in World War II. In Sino-Japanese relations this kind of an event that does not reach closure can keep the old wounds open, and make them ready to be used in populist political debate. This has been further explained by such as Strecker Downs and Saunders as creating an important opportunity for the Chinese to also fuel nationalist sentiments inside the country, which desperately needs to find unity today.¹⁶ From the Japanese side, for the right wing political entities and interest groups any issue that can deepen the nationalist sentiment in the domestic politics is a stepping stone not to be wasted. Thus, the Senkaku issue has been used for these purposes as well to increase nationalistic right-wing power inside Japan, sometimes through simple populist gimmicks such as when governor of Tokyo, Shintaro Ishihara, announced his plans to attempt buying the islands in 2012.¹⁷

The strategic importance of the islands is evident from their location -- they bring Japan closer to China and vice versa, and are located next to important sea lanes. The territorial importance of the islands is also connected to the economic factors. Some such as Simon have pointed out the criticism over the convenient timing when China started its claims to the islands in the 1970s, as this was right around the time the resource richness of the area was confirmed.¹⁸ The claims to each party's exclusive economic zones (EEZ) are in the end overlapping, and the party that officially controls the islands will be in a highly advantageous position. This comes to especially commercial fishing opportunities, which are vast in the area.

¹⁶ Erica Strecker Downs and Philip C. Saunders, "Legitimacy and the Limits of Nationalism: China and the Diaoyu Islands", *International Security* (1998-1999): 114-115.

¹⁷ Justin McCurry, "Tokyo's rightwing governor plans to buy disputed Senkaku Islands," *The Guardian*, April 19, 2012, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/apr/19/tokyo-governor-senkaku-islands-china>.

¹⁸ Simon, "The Senkaku Islands."

Japan made its declaration of an EEZ according with the Senkaku Islands baseline in 1996, and after this the clashes between Japanese right-wing and Chinese activists have increased dramatically. The Chinese (civilian) side has even gone as far as to start a national movement called *China Federation for Defending the Diaoyu Islands*.¹⁹ The other side of the coin is the natural resource possibilities linked to the islands, as gas and oil deposits are expected to lie in the area around the islands and in the seabed surrounding it. Japan has been actively trying to utilize the self-claimed EEZ area by looking into the natural gas opportunities near the islands, but yet to no concrete avail. Understandably, with the current energy insecurities in the case of both countries, this kind of an opportunity is a driving force expected to fuel claims to the islands. Emmers writes:

*"For resource-poor Japan and now import-dependent China, the suspected oil and gas deposits in the contested area are critical to guarantee their respective energy security."*²⁰

It is also important to consider the importance of the military power distribution in the region. Naval military activities from China's side have increased significantly in the recent years.²¹ This can be seen especially in the East China Sea from China's side, as it has other interests in the area such as the Spratly and Paracel Islands disputes with countries other than

¹⁹ J. Sean Curtin, "New Sino-Japanese strain over disputed islands," *Asia Times Online*, March 27, 2004, <http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Japan/FC27Dh01.html>.

²⁰ Ralf Emmers, *Geopolitics and Maritime Territorial Disputes in East Asia*, (Routledge, 2010).

²¹ Sato, "Tango without trust and respect?," 108.

Japan. China has been consistently testing its boundaries with Japan through sending its fishery and maritime patrol boats into the Senkaku area, but Japan's responses to these provocations have been mild at best as of yet.²²

Japan's China policy under the LDP in the 1990s

In the early 1990s, after the end of the Cold War, Japan's policy towards the People's Republic of China started to see some change from the previous relatively good relations spearheaded by Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka in the 1970s. The advancements such as signing a normalization agreement in 1972 and the signing of a treaty of peace and friendship in 1978 had made things seem very hopeful during the Cold War.²³ However, during the post-Cold War period Japan's economic power in the region saw a significant decline reversing the previous miraculous rise it had seen after the devastation of World War II. This decline manifested itself as the so called Lost Decade. China, on the other hand, saw an opposite trend when it came to its economic prowess becoming increasingly apparent to its neighbors in East Asia.

During the first half of the 1990s, it became increasingly noticeable that a switch away from PM Tanaka's policy of creating bilateral rapport between China and Japan by sacrificing the nationalistic notion was occurring. One of the key events to contribute to such a change was the elections of 1993, when the so called "1955 system" of LDP dominance buckled and was for a

²² "China patrol ships near Senkakus," *Japan Times*, October 25, 2011, <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/text/nn20111025b2.html>.

²³ Jun Tsunekawa, "Introduction: Japan's policy toward China," The National Institute for Defense Studies, 2009, accessed June 9, 2012, http://www.nids.go.jp/english/publication/joint_research/series4/pdf/4-Introduction.pdf.

brief time replaced with the first non-LDP administration since 1955, led by Morihiro Hosokawa of the Japan New Party (Nihon Shintou).²⁴ Jun Tsunekawa writes:

*Ichiro Ozawa, currently the head of the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), split from the LDP and formed the Japan Renewal Party (Shinseito) that helped end the LDP's postwar monopoly on power.*²⁵

Ozawa's views, although yet far more liberal than those of the later more nationalistic elements such as PMs Shinzo Abe and Taro Aso, of normalizing Japan by increasing its military power expectedly did not ease Japan's relations with China.²⁶ Any sign of rise of Japanese nationalism is very much bound to have an adverse effect on its China relations, as China is opposed to any kind of expansion of Japan's military role in the region.²⁷ On the other hand, China's unconditional attitude towards Japan increasing its security role was unsurprisingly met with nationalistic opposition in Japan.

The polarization of Chinese economical growth versus Japanese rising ambitions for a bigger role in the region's hard power politics started affecting the Japanese political realm in the form of the so called China Threat Theory. A school of thinking, which saw that Japanese

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ As described by Michael Green in his book *Japan's Reluctant Realism*.

²⁷ Michael J. Green, *Japan's Reluctant Realism* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 168.

cooperation with China in terms of trade or technology would only contribute to its rise to hegemony, was expanding.²⁸

The Senkakus and President Jiang Zemin's visit

The 1990s and the beginning of China's tremendous rise also saw a new phase in the process of response for the Senkaku islands dispute. With its economic and military growth, China became increasingly bold in its statements for its claim of the islands, clearly wanting to attract more attention to back their case. On the other hand, the growing nationalism on Japan's side partially also affected Japanese counter-responses to these claims.²⁹ These two factors colliding can be seen as one of the first noticeable examples of Sino-Japanese relations deteriorating due to a territorial dispute issue in the 1990s -- something that would keep affecting the relations sporadically all the way to the present days of the 21st century. One of the pivotal moments of this political clash of nationalism and growing might of China was in 1996, when Ryutaro Hashimoto's administration brought the LDP back to power. With this shift the LDP hardliner conservatives did not leave it unclear to anyone that there was an ongoing clash going on between Japan and China regarding the Senkakus.³⁰ Although PM Hashimoto himself did not have a notable reputation of carrying anti-Chinese sentiments, some such as Tsunekawa have suggested that the Japanese government was at the time controlled by anti-China factions. This was at least partially due to the decline of the previous "China school" of experts inside the

²⁸ Robert G. Sutter, *Chinese Foreign Relations: Power and Policy since the Cold War* (Lanham, MD: Roman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2007), 223.

²⁹ Kazuhiko Togo, "Japan's Territorial Problem: The Northern Territories, Takeshima, and the Senkaku Islands," The National Bureau of Asian Research, accessed June 10, 2012, <http://www.nbr.org/research/activity.aspx?id=247>.

³⁰ Tsunekawa, "Introduction: Japan's policy toward China".

Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In the end this made it very unlikely that any amelioration could be expected for the Sino-Japanese relations during their term.³¹

The 1990s also saw some cases of territorial violations from Chinese vessels that are often cited as "research vessels". Unless coinciding with other diplomatic issues most of the time these incidents did not gain heavy emphasis in the media. However, with an example from 1997 when a Chinese research vessel intruded Japanese waters, it can be seen that China's claim to the area was indeed going strong: When warned by the Japanese maritime patrols the Chinese vessels promptly made their case that the waters were indeed Chinese, not Japanese.³²

On the other hand from China's side it did not help the situation in the slightest when then Chinese President Jiang Zemin visited Japan in 1998. The visit was expected by many to be a step in the direction of an era of stability in Sino-Japanese relations. However, the effect of the visit was quite the contrary. Although Jiang Zemin was known to have a strong stance towards the past grievances between Japan and China, namely during World War II, he took the Japanese by surprise when he decided to blatantly address the past issues and even demand a written apology from Japan's side in the presence of the Emperor.³³ Jiang's visit can consequently also be seen as a good example of a sporadic case of giving the Japanese nationalist side more ammunition to use in its efforts for swaying the Japanese public to the conservative side.

³¹ Ibid.

³² "Shimpan Chousasen, Senkaku Fukin wa 'Chuugoku Ryoudo', Kaiho no Keikoku ni Outou" (Chinese research vessel that intruded into Japanese territorial waters replied to the warning of Japan maritime patrol that the Senkaku islands are Chinese territory), *Sankei Shimbun*, April 26, 1997.

³³ Ibid.; Kenneth B. Pyle, "Japan and the Rise of China", in *Japan Rising: The resurgence of Japanese power and purpose* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2007), 331.

The Third Taiwan Strait Crisis

The Senkaku islands dispute heating up and Jiang Zemin's visit were not the only things in the political realm that affected Sino-Japanese relations in the 1990s. Perhaps the most notable one contributing to sudden increasing of suspicion from Japan's side towards China's military ambitions was the 1995-1996 Taiwan Strait Crisis (also known as the Third Taiwan Strait Crisis). With the primary notion that China was attempting to affect Taiwan's political orientation back towards a stronger One-China policy, the PRC started a series of missile tests around Taiwan in 1995.³⁴ Ross states that another aim for the coercion from China's part was hopes of affecting the upcoming 1996 presidential election in Taiwan. These tests happened between July 21, 1995 and March 23, 1996 which conveniently happened to be the day of the presidential election. Although the crisis was brought to a peaceful end with the United States' intervention with its naval force, it did set in motion some expected changes in the LDP's security policy agenda for Japan.

As Japan was right in the vicinity of the events of 1995-1996, it gave Japanese conservatives a tremendously good opportunity to use China as the bogeyman to get the Japanese people to vote for the conservative, anti-China candidates. In that sense, the Third Taiwan Strait Crisis perhaps gave a hefty contribution to the 1996 prospect of return for the LDP with Hashimoto. The collapse of the 1955 system was short-lived, and the LDP was back in power. With this shift the so called "China School" within the Japanese government, a group of China-experts and people with skills to create rapport between Japan and China, started to disappear.

³⁴ Robert S. Ross, "The 1995-1996 Taiwan Strait Confrontation: Coercion, Credibility, and Use of Force," *International Security*, (2000): 87-123.

What followed instead was a policy of increased military cooperation with the U.S.³⁵

Tsunekawa writes:

*In April 1996, U.S. President Bill Clinton and Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto signed the "Japan-U.S. Joint Declaration on Security: Alliance for the 21st Century" and agreed that a continued U.S. military presence is essential for preserving peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region.*³⁶

This was subsequently strengthened with the 1997 "Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation". The content of the document spoke in a clear tone: The guidelines' were meant for Japan-U.S. cooperation in "situations in areas surrounding Japan".³⁷ After the Third Taiwan Strait crisis it was a easy to see the underlying context of sending a clear message to China. This can also be seen as one of the first steps of newly increased U.S.-Japan cooperation that would later on see its peak during the LDP's Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's era from the early 2000s.

³⁵ Tsunekawa, "Introduction: Japan's policy toward China."

³⁶ Tsunekawa, "Introduction: Japan's policy toward China."

³⁷ Hiroataka Watanabe, "Japan in a changing world," *Japan Echo - The Polarization of Education* 29, no. 4 (2002).

Japan's China policy under the LDP in the 2000s

The notable increase in U.S.-Japan cooperation from the latter half of the 1990s saw further growth with the era of Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi who took office in April 2001 and stayed in office until 2006.³⁸ Some such as Packard have even gone as far as to call the years 2001-2006 "extraordinary" for U.S.-Japan relations after Koizumi's departure from office.³⁹ Indeed, right after taking office in 2001 Koizumi announced together with then U.S. President George W. Bush the document called "Partnership for Security and Prosperity"⁴⁰, a statement that showed Japan the cornerstone of Koizumi's policy for his time as Prime Minister: strengthening the U.S.-Japan relations.

Aside from the praise for his achievements with the Japanese economy and structural reforms, PM Koizumi's era was also marked by the continuing trend of worsening of Sino-Japanese relations.⁴¹ On one hand it can be seen that he continued the practice of his LDP predecessors of putting U.S.-Japan relations and the recovery of the Japanese economy as a priority over fixing the past mistakes made with Japan's China policy. On the other hand this significant hedging towards the Japan-U.S. relationship was also increasingly important for securing Japan's status in Asia. Especially with China's yet increasing presence the work done towards the U.S.-Japan alliance could be seen as an important asset instead of a hindrance for Japan's ability to deal with China.

In his January 2004 policy speech he stated the following:

³⁸ George Packard, "The Koizumi-Bush Friendship, 2001-2006: Five Extraordinary Years In US-Japan Relations", *JapanInfo*, Vol. 8 (2006).

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Heigo Sato, "Japan-U.S. Security Relations under the Koizumi Administration: Implications for Bush's Second Term", The National Institute for Defense Studies, 2004, accessed June 10, 2012, http://www.nids.go.jp/english/event/symposium/pdf/2004/e2004_09.pdf, 67.

⁴¹ Tsunekawa, "Introduction: Japan's policy toward China."

Japan-China relations are one of the most important bilateral relationships, and we will develop a future-oriented Japan-China relationship together with the new leadership inaugurated in 2003. The Japan-China economic relationship is getting closer through the expansion of trade and investment. In addition to advancing the relationship in a mutually profitable way, Japan and China will cooperate to resolve issues in the Asian region and worldwide.⁴²

Judging by his policy speech one would have gotten a more hopeful image of his coming China approaches. However, putting aside the importance of the U.S.-Japan relationship the fact that he put emphasis on the increased importance of the economic sector of the bilateral ties was indeed made sense, as putting aside the territorial and nationalistic factors the trade between the two major economies was the one factor keeping things still at a balance.

Due to the neglect for the importance of Sino-Japanese relations it was easy for an individual or the general public to assume that Koizumi was a nationalistic type -- something that can be a crucial factor for gaining support from the electorate. The case, however, was not that simple when looked at more closely. Koizumi actually rarely made any direct statements that

⁴² Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet, *General Policy Speech by Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi to the 159th Session of the Diet*, January 19, 2004, accessed November 15, 2012, http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/koizumispeech/2004/01/19sisei_e.html.

would link him into Japan's rightwing nationalist tradition personally: he instead preferred to speak through acts such as the Yasukuni visits. From one point of view this can be seen as an act of simply feeding the nationalist electorate. In other words it can be seen as being simply a populist and pragmatist approach: a means to an end, which arguably worked as he stayed in office for a longer period of time than any Japanese Prime Minister has after him to date.⁴³

Be it either way (nationalism or pragmatism towards domestic popularity), PM Koizumi's visits to the Yasukuni shrine were seen as one of the most important reasons for the fluctuating level of amelioration between the Sino-Japanese ties during his terms in the office.⁴⁴ The outcome of his actions was the same despite of the reason.

Prime Minister Koizumi, the Yasukuni shrine and nationalism

Koizumi's perhaps most well-known gimmick through which he was able to gain the support of nationalistic Japanese was his continuing, well-covered visits to the controversial Yasukuni shrine in Tokyo from 2001 to 2006. Yasukuni has enshrined, aside ordinary fallen Japanese soldiers, also 14 class-A war criminals from World War II, including Hideki Tojo, Prime Minister of Japan during the war and a general in the Imperial Japanese Army.⁴⁵

Although Koizumi's visits to Yasukuni likely did not directly affect the LDP's China policy, they certainly had a certain effect of Japan having to rely on reactive politics towards China. The visits without exception had a backlash effect towards Japan from the Chinese government's and general public's side. This was due to the fact that China was looking at them

⁴³ Martin Jacques, "Japan's retreat into nationalism: The rise of Shinzo Abe to the premiership of Japan is portent of the growing tension between it and China", *The Guardian*, September 22, 2006, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2006/sep/22/post417>.

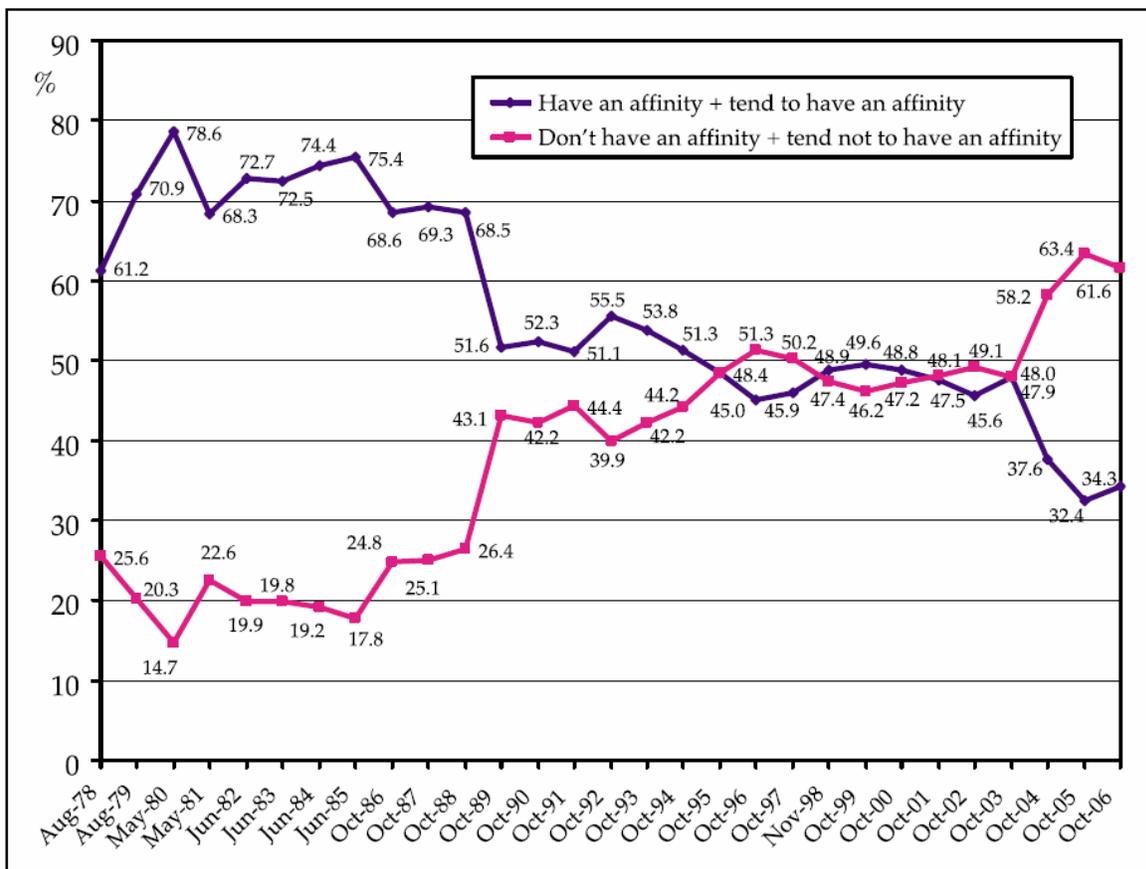
⁴⁴ J. Sean Curtin, "Japan Inc opposes Koizumi's China policy", *Asia Times Online*, December 11, 2004, <http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Japan/FL11Dh01.html>.

⁴⁵ Howard W. French, "Koizumi's shrine visits cast pall over his legacy", *New York Times*, August 18, 2006, <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/08/18/world/asia/18iht-letter.2531681.html>.

with the assumption that it marks Japan's unwillingness to show true remorse over its past. This reoccurring backlash effect culminated to the point of violent anti-Japanese demonstrations in China in 2005.⁴⁶

According to Sutter, Sino-Japanese relations were at the lowest point since 1972 at this time.⁴⁷ Chart 1 shows the trend for Japanese people's affinity towards China between 1978 and 2006, further elaborating on the dire situation of Sino-Japanese relations from the general public's point of view.

Chart 1: Japanese Affinity Towards China (1978-2006)⁴⁸



⁴⁶ Emmers, *Geopolitics*.

⁴⁷ Sutter, *Chinese Foreign Relations*, 217.

⁴⁸ Mindy L. Kotler et al. Cabinet Office, "Gaikou ni kansuru Yoron Chousa" (Public Opinion Poll on Foreign Policy & Diplomacy 2005), annual. Taken from *Chinese and Japanese Public Opinion: Searching for Moral Security*, 2007.

The same year, however, Koizumi seemed to have a will to take Japan's policy on China in a constructive direction as he reiterated the long-awaited apology from Japan's side to China over its past war crimes during Chinese president Hu Jintao's visit to Japan.⁴⁹ Ironically only a few months later Koizumi made his notorious 2005 visit to Yasukuni, which presumably to the Chinese populace spoke an entirely different language than his previous statement of remorse from Japan's side.⁵⁰ Overall, albeit remembered as being popular with his constituency Koizumi's era as Prime Minister was marked with great decrease with Japan's connection to the rest of its Asian neighbors, with the simultaneous gain that Japan's security alliance with the United States had grown significantly. Regarding the LDP's policy towards the alliance with the U.S., Koizumi stated clearly in 2004:

Japan and the United States share fundamental values such as the respect for basic human rights, democracy, and promotion of the market economy. Japan's relationship with the United States is the linchpin of its diplomacy. Our alliance is the cornerstone for peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region. I intend to continue to cooperate with President Bush in striving for peace and prosperity of the world by jointly tackling the issues that the international

⁴⁹ "Japanese PM apologises over war," *BBC News*, April 22, 2005, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/4471495.stm>.

⁵⁰ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, *Prime Minister's Visits to Yasukuni Shrine*, August 29, 2006, accessed June 10, 2012, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/postwar/yasukuni/index.html>.

*community is faced with as we further strengthen the Japan-U.S. alliance in the global context.*⁵¹

Post-Koizumi: A turning point for Sino-Japanese relations

After Koizumi, the LDP continued in power, but a sudden policy change towards China occurred when PM Shinzo Abe took office in September 2006. Unlike Koizumi, Abe was since the beginning known for his nationalist past, and in accordance to this his policies were expected to go for a similar direction with Koizumi's -- at least where China was involved.⁵² Wenran Jiang writes:

*Despite Abe's relatively limited political experience, he was an active advocate of adding more "patriotic contents" to Japan's history textbooks and reducing critical views of Japan's past aggressions against its neighbors. During his inaugural speech to the Japanese Diet, he called for revisions to Japan's constitution and for a strengthening of Japan's military.*⁵³

⁵¹ Sato, "Japan-U.S. Security Relations", 66.

⁵² Justin McCurry, "Japan on verge of electing nationalist Abe", *The Guardian*, September 19, 2006, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2006/sep/19/japan.justinmccurry>.

⁵³ Wenran Jiang, "New dynamics of Sino-Japanese relations," *Asian Perspective* 31, no. 1 (2007): 23

As a surprise move, he decided to take Japan's China policy into a direction of amelioration instead. The first step into this direction was his visit to China in 2006, where he made it official with the Chinese leaders that the aim of the new policy of his cabinet was to find common ground between the two countries and find a way to solve the past problems -- a first step into a positive new direction after Koizumi's era.⁵⁴ However, the Yasukuni shrine visits were still an issue to be addressed. To China's delight, Abe decided to take a new stance with his policy on Yasukuni as well, and did not visit the shrine during his term at all -- something that further contributed to a renewed sense of amelioration with Sino-Japanese relations. This kind of an approach of putting diplomacy with China, Japan's biggest trading partner since 2004, as a priority over pleasing the nationalist constituency gave the recovering Japan-China relations new much needed energy.⁵⁵

Another issue that saw some new careful hopefulness during Abe's term was the dispute over the Senkaku islands. After the beginning of the improvement of ties it seemed that both parties wanted to keep the status quo and attempted to side-step around the issue so that neither side would have to lose face by "giving up", although Japan's official policy on the issue was still unchanged and extremely straightforward. What helped towards a heightened level of communication, however, was the bilateral decision of installing a 24-hour telephone hotline between Tokyo and Beijing in 2007. Both parties were hopeful for this to help avoid an armed clash over the chance of the territorial issue heating up in the future.⁵⁶

Abe's immediate follower, PM Yasuo Fukuda continued on a similar policy path from September 2007. Fukuda's policy towards China has since even been described as having been

⁵⁴ The National Institute for Defense Studies. "East Asian Strategic Review 2007"

⁵⁵ Jiang, "New dynamics of Sino-Japanese relations," 24.

⁵⁶ Martin Lohmeyer, "The Diaoyu / Senkaku Islands Dispute: Questions of Sovereignty and Suggestions for Resolving the Dispute" (MA thesis, University of Canterbury, 2008), 93.

"pro-China", which was welcome after the fluctuating level of relations during the 1990s leadership and more so during Koizumi's era in 2001-2006. Fukuda also continued the newly-found tradition of not visiting the Yasukuni shrine, which Abe had previously established and proven to be a productive political play for Sino-Japanese rapport.⁵⁷ Regarding the Senkaku issue, Przystup states that both parties agreed to work on the East China Sea issues towards a resolution "as early as possible" in 2007.⁵⁸ On his visit to China in December 2007, dubbed as "spring-herald", PM Fukuda and the Chinese leaders further affirmed their will for working towards "common strategic interests".⁵⁹

The LDP's Taro Aso took office in September 2008, and did not differentiate from his immediate predecessors with the newly-established policy of importance for keeping Sino-Japanese relations thawing. On the economic side, in April 2009 he raised the possibility of free trade talks with China, a first time for a Japanese leader to suggest such a direction for the economy.⁶⁰ He also barely managed to side-step around the controversial Yasukuni issue by instead of visiting the shrine sending an offering to it, an act that still managed to stir the pot with China, but not to a degree that an actual visit to the shrine would have for example in the case of PM Koizumi. This was evident from the fact that his upcoming visit to China remained unaffected.⁶¹ Both Abe and Aso were seen as having a less vigorous attitude towards the betterment of Sino-Japanese relations. However, overall Aso's policies during his term managed

⁵⁷ Tsunekawa, "Introduction: Japan's policy toward China," 16.

⁵⁸ James J. Przystup, "Japan-China Relations: Politics on Command, Part 2", *CSIS Pacific Forum*, 2007.

⁵⁹ "Major events in China-Japan relations," *China Daily*, May 27, 2012,

http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2010wentour/2010-05/27/content_9899191.htm.

⁶⁰ Takashi Hirokawa and Toko Sekiguchi, "Japan and China Should Start Free Trade Discussion, Aso Says," *Bloomberg*, April 29, 2009,

<http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=newsarchive&sid=ajRotNc0n4.Q&refer=japan>.

⁶¹ Pranamita Baruah, "Sino-Japanese relations warming up following Aso's Beijing Sojourn", Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, May 22, 2009, accessed June 7, 2012,

http://www.idsa.in/idsastrategiccomments/sinojapaneserelationswarmingupfollowingAsosbeijingssojourn_pbaruah_20509.

to keep the Sino-Japanese relations relatively calm and there were no major setbacks involved in that sector. However, his term was a prelude to a changing situation on the domestic political side in Japan, as the LDP was heading towards a loss in the elections of September 2009.

The Rise of the DPJ and the role of its policy promises

Hatoyama, Kan and Noda

A long-awaited chance in Japan's domestic politics occurred in September 2009 with the landslide victory of the DPJ. With Yukio Hatoyama as the president of the party at the time, the media was drumming for a lot of change on the domestic frontier. At the first glance, the new party's foreign policy seemed to very much follow those of the LDP, aside from its idealistic hopes of creating an "East Asian community" which would help with cooperation and nuclear non-proliferation.⁶² This framework planned to be similar to the European Union (EU) was to be a non-militaristic way of bringing Japan and its neighbors closer together. However, soon after becoming the Prime Minister Hatoyama's ideas about change on an international relations level became more apparent.

In his policy speech in October 2009, he firstly stated his opinion on calling for an equal security relationship between the United States and Japan.⁶³ According to Rathus on the field of Sino-Japanese relations, however, overall few major policies seemed to have changed during his

⁶² "DPJ manifesto targets dramatic changes for Japan," *ChinaDaily*, August 24, 2009, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/world/2009japanelection/2009-08/24/content_8608903.htm.

⁶³ Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet, *Policy Speech by Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama*, October 26, 2009, accessed June 7, 2012, http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/hatoyama/statement/200910/26syosin_e.html.

term in comparison to the previous LDP ones.⁶⁴ Aside from the security arena between Japan and China, one notable change, however, was the beginning of downplaying China's human rights issues since Hatoyama's rise to power (perhaps to appease the Chinese leaders, as Hatoyama was emphasizing the importance of ties with China), an issue that PMs Abe and Aso had previously kept on the table.⁶⁵ What in the end got the most attention during his term, and still persists to be part of the "legacy" that PM Hatoyama left after him, was the confusion caused by his statements regarding the relocation of the American Air Station Futenma in Okinawa. His empty promises to the Okinawan people, such as his pledge to relocate the base within a certain deadline, proved to be a dire mistake eventually leading to his downfall.⁶⁶ He stepped down from the PM's seat in June 2010, having failed to meet the expectations of the Japanese people.

The next Prime Minister to take office was Naoto Kan in June 2010. One of his first tasks was to respond to a Sino-Japanese incident that once again brought up the possibility of worsening relations. In September 2010 a Chinese trawler vessel operating in the vicinity of the Senkaku islands collided with a Japanese Coast Guard vessel, resulting in a diplomatic clash as the Japanese Coast Guard ended up detaining the skipper of the Chinese boat.⁶⁷ The trawler, *Minjinyu 5179*, had been prompted to leave the waters by the Coast Guard vessel *Yonakuni* before the incident, but it had refused inspection from the Japanese, which led to another

⁶⁴ Joel Rathus, "Japan's China policy: No re-adjustment towards Beijing," *East Asia Forum*, February 18, 2010, accessed June 8, 2012, <http://www.eastasiaforum.org/2010/02/18/japans-china-policy-no-re-adjustment-towards-beijing/>.

⁶⁵ Yoichiro Sato, "Japan-China relations under Naoto Kan," *The Interpreter: Lowy Institute for International Policy* July 15, 2012, accessed June 12, 2012 <http://www.lowyinterpreter.org/post/2010/07/15/Japan-China-Relations-under-the-new-DPJ-government.aspx>.

⁶⁶ "Hatoyama axes deadline on Futenma," *The Japan Times*, May 11, 2010, <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/text/nn20100511a1.html>.

⁶⁷ Thomas Anderson, "Naoto Kan and China: Analysis of Foreign Policy," *NewsFlavor*, November 28, 2010, <http://newsflavor.com/politics/international-relations/naoto-kan-and-china-analysis-of-foreign-policy/>.

collision with the patrol boat *Mizuki* as the Japanese were chasing the *Minjinyu*.⁶⁸ Anderson mentions this "resulting in the freezing of all high talks, official visits, and cuts in exports of rare minerals by China to Japan," as well as incidents of Japanese nationalists threatening Chinese tourists in Japan.⁶⁹ Succumbing to diplomatic pressures from China's side, the skipper was released, which showed a glimpse of weakness from Kan's part when it came to dealing with China.

PM Kan gave his first policy speech in October 2010. Taking a step away from Hatoyama's rather appeasing policy with China and possibly affected by the trawler incident, Kan openly dared to say his opinion about the military buildup of the China, calling it to return to being "a responsible member of the international community".⁷⁰ This was referring to its increased activities especially on the naval sector.⁷¹ His words suggested a possible bold change towards returning to a more confrontationalist policy similar to the LDP of the 1990s, especially when it came to the issue of the territorial dispute on the East China Sea. Foreign Minister Seiji Maehara continued along the same lines with a higher level of assertiveness, calling the actions of the skipper "malicious" and stating Tokyo's view that the collision was not an accident.⁷²

With the territorial dispute now having strongly resurfaced, Kan faced a situation of finding compromise where compromise was virtually impossible to find, a situation that his recent predecessors were lucky enough not having to deal with. On one hand, the conservative side of his party was demanding a strong approach towards the dispute, and on the other keeping

⁶⁸ Linus Hagström, "'Power Shift' in East Asia? A Critical Reappraisal of Narratives on the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands Incident in 2010," *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* 5 (2012): 272.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ Prime Minister of Japan and his cabinet, *Policy Speech by Prime Minister Naoto Kan*, October 1, 2012, accessed June 8, 2012, http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/kan/statement/201010/01syosin_e.html.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² Masami Ito, "Maehara blames Senkaku run-in on trawler's 'malicious' skipper", *The Japan Times*, October 6, 2012, <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/text/nn20101006a5.html>.

up the ameliorating of relations in the making for years with China were at stake.⁷³ Similarly with Hatoyama's demise, in the end Kan's most urgent problems eventually appeared in the domestic sector. With the Tohoku earthquake and following Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant disasters of 11 March 2011, all eyes were on him to deal with the situation efficiently. He resigned from the PM's seat in September 2011, largely due to inter- and intra-party pressures and accusations citing his incompetence in dealing with the disaster and its aftermath.⁷⁴

His successor, Yoshihiko Noda had to step into boots that would not fit easily. The domestic sector was very volatile due to the ongoing aftermath of the twin disasters, and the territorial dispute was yet flaring and without a conclusion. Perhaps due to this fact his first policy speech in September 2011 had few statements that could have an enflaming effect towards Japan's neighbors. Instead he chose to use the upcoming 40th anniversary of the normalization of relations between Japan and China as a positive vantage point to start his term with, a move that seemed well planned considering the Sino-Japanese climate of the moment.⁷⁵ In another policy speech made in January 2012, his approach was similar, aiming at a constructive, non-inflammatory approach: no specific nods were made at a possible change with Japan's China policy in terms of the territorial dispute. However, possible future territorial violations from Chinese civilian boats were yet something Japan was on its guard for in light of the previous incident.⁷⁶ In the June 2012 cabinet reshuffle PM Noda switched the Defense Minister to a civilian university professor Satoshi Morimoto. This move surprised many domestically and

⁷³ Sato, "Japan-China relations."

⁷⁴ Justin McCurry, "Naoto Kan resigns as Japan's prime minister", *The Guardian*, August 26, 2012, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/aug/26/naoto-kan-resigns-japan-pm>.

⁷⁵ Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet, *Policy Speech by Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda to the 178th Session of the Diet*, September 13, 2011, accessed June 13, 2012, http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/noda/statement/201109/13syosin_e.html.

⁷⁶ Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet, *Policy Speech by Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda to the 180th Session of the Diet*, January 24, 2012, accessed June 12, 2012, http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/noda/statement/201201/24siseihousin_e.html.

internationally speaking. Especially for the Sino-Japanese relations this was seen as a possible point of significance (from China's side), as Morimoto was described by many as a conservative with lack of experience as a politician.⁷⁷

In September 2012 Japan announced it having reached an agreement with the owner of the Senkaku islands on the issue of buying them.⁷⁸ The movement for the nationalization of the islands originated from the idea of Tokyo governor Shintaro Ishihara, who managed to mobilize public support for the cause through heavy lobbying. As governor Ishihara had managed to start the movement, PM Noda perhaps saw following through with it as the only option due to the importance of looking at the importance of public opinion so that he could stay in office.

This agreement reached by Japan and the family previously owning the islands, leading to the nationalization of the islands, caused a series of anti-Japan demonstrations and riots in China, and the damages are estimated at over 100 million dollars.⁷⁹ The riots further hindered the already shaky Sino-Japanese political relationship, but prime minister Noda's policy on the islands issue has been uncompromising towards China. China has answered to this with even more increased naval activities surrounding the islands.

⁷⁷ "Japan's New Defense Minister Satoshi Morimoto," *Japan Foreign Policy Observatory*, June 6, 2012, accessed November 15, 2012, <http://www.japanfpo.org/2012/06/japans-new-defense-minister-satoshi.html>

⁷⁸ Julian Ryall, "Japan agrees to buy disputed Senkaku islands," *The Telegraph*, September 5, 2012, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/japan/9521793/Japan-agrees-to-buy-disputed-Senkaku-islands.html>.

⁷⁹ "China anti-Japan protest damage may be over \$100m," *Bangkok Post*, November 14, 2012, <http://www.bangkokpost.com/news/asia/321084/china-anti-japan-protest-damage-may-be-over-100m>.

Summary

In this chapter the focus has been on looking at the development of Sino-Japanese relations after the Cold War until 2012 by first looking at the historical background of a prominent territorial issue between the countries, the Senkaku islands dispute from both sides, and then moving onto looking at how Japan's policy towards the PRC has changed during the years towards the era of DPJ leadership. While most of the 1990s and 2000s were marked by the LDP's dominance in Japanese foreign and domestic politics, the 2009 DPJ victory has arguably brought some changes into the sphere of Sino-Japanese relations. One of the most notable ones is the ongoing effort of keeping the status quo of amelioration with the relations active, something that could only be achieved after the end of PM Koizumi's era in 2006. The three latest Prime Ministers Hatoyama, Kan and Noda have all had extreme domestic pressures to deal with including the relocation of the Futemna Air Station and the twin disasters of the 3/11 tsunami and following Fukushima nuclear catastrophe. In addition to this, maintaining the fragile relationship and balance of economic priorities and increasingly difficult politics with rising China has been a constant issue. This has led the latest DPJ policy towards China to be on the mild side, as right now it would be difficult for the Japanese government to deal with an increasing amount of diplomatic clashes with its foreign neighbors amidst its efforts of rebuilding the country after the twin disasters of 2011.

Chapter III: Japan-North Korea relations

Chapter background

Japan's troubled relationship with its highly militant neighbor, Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), has continuously been one of the important issues for the Japanese government to keep in check. The DPRK has a history of similarly controversial relations with Japan's other neighbors and important allies such as South Korea and the United States. The fact that the Korean War armistice of 1953 still leaves the two counterparts of the Korean peninsula technically at war is one of the pivotal elements of this troubled relationship, and Japan has historically had an important part to play in assisting with the fluctuating level of rapport. Due to this, Japan's approach towards North Korea in the past and today can be looked upon as a case study to analyze Japan's foreign policy coordination and direction in general.

This chapter will be at looking at a variety of perspectives in relation to Japan's North Korea policy and what level of cooperation Japan has managed to reach with other involved powers such as the U.S., China, and Russia. A historical perspective to the issues of the Korean peninsula will also be provided to understand the larger context of the region's problematic status today.

This chapter will also look at what kind of notable international security events the Japan-DPRK relations faced during different eras of post-Cold War rule of the Liberal Democratic Party of Japan (LDP). The main area of interest will be the nuclear ambitions of the DPRK, which continue to hinder its relations with Japan to date. The role of the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) as the current party in power is evaluated in comparison to the LDP after 2009.

History of the Korean peninsula issue and Japan

Time and again in the past, the Korean peninsula has been a playground for greater powers to show their might in battle over the region. As Korea was a weaker counterpart to the invading forces, it was largely seen as a victim in the past centuries instead of a force to be reckoned with. Looking at the situation from the contemporary perspective, powers such as the U.S., Russia, and China have all had contradicting interests when it comes to the international relations orientation of the Koreans.⁸⁰ On the other hand, Japan's history saw numerous invasions of Korea. Some of these invasions happened already in the 1500s which was yet way before the actual pivotal moment contributing to today's historical grievances between the two. That moment was the annexation of 1910 which made all Koreans subjects of the Japanese empire and led to highly controversial treatment of the Koreans by the Japanese.⁸¹ The annexation of Korea was the point for Japan from where it was able to begin rising for the position of a possible imperial contender.⁸² The annexation itself happened without objections from the other imperial powers.⁸³ This would imply that Japan was already getting a kind of blessing for an upgrade in its power level in the region. The peculiarity of western attitudes towards the status of Korea has to be noted as well. For example, according to Alexis Dudden, the French advisor Boissonade had in the time before the annexation evaluated Korea as being neither a vassal state nor independent in relation to China, but something in the middle.⁸⁴ This further emphasizes the

⁸⁰ Linus Hagström and Marie Söderberg, "Introduction: Japan, the great powers and the coordination of North Korea policy" in *North Korea Policy: Japan and the great powers*, ed. Linus Hagström and Marie Söderberg (London: Routledge 2006), 2.

⁸¹ Yutaka Kawasaki, "Was the 1910 Annexation Treaty Between Korea and Japan Concluded Legally?," *Murdoch University Electronic Journal of Law*, 1996; R.J. Rummel, *Statistics of Democide: Genocide and Mass Murder Since 1990* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia, 1997), 33.

⁸² Alexis Dudden, *Japan's Colonization of Korea* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005), 2.

⁸³ Dudden, *Japan's Colonization of Korea*, 49.

⁸⁴ Dudden, *Japan's Colonization of Korea*, 52.

way Korea was looked upon by the world at the time, and does not make it difficult to comprehend why Japan was allowed to simply overtake without objections.

When it comes to the time of the Japanese presence in Korea, some have gone as far as to call the Japanese actions towards Koreans during the Korean occupation a “cultural genocide” due to the highly destructive influence the Japanese presence had on Korean cultural heritage.⁸⁵ In the light of this kind of historical facts, it is easier to understand the origin of North Korea’s original anti-Japanese indoctrination sentiment, which was essential in Kim Il-Sung’s empowerment of the national identity of its people. The demonizing of especially the Japanese as dangerous was towards rationalizing the fact that he wanted to create his own nuclear state amongst powers such as the U.S. and Russia who were holding most of the cards in the deck with their nuclear capabilities. Kim found his own way through enforcing his *Juche* ideology of isolation, separation, and military power on its people.⁸⁶

The aforementioned historical issues contribute to the original dilemma of Japan being involved in negotiations with North Korea, as the state has a clear history of hostility with Japan, and none of its historical grievance issues have been actually solved towards necessary closure. In addition to this, the fact that the North Korean leaders often subscribe to the personality cult-like attitude of portraying themselves as liberators of the northern half of the Korean Peninsula, things become increasingly complicated. This was something that the South Korean military leaders could not argue, as they already had ties with the "enemy" (Japan and the U.S.) from the DPRK's point of view.

⁸⁵ Yuko Matsumura, ““Cultural Genocide” and the Japanese Occupation of Korea,” *Comparative Genocide Studies*, February 23, 2004, accessed July 28, 2011, http://www.cgs.c.u-tokyo.ac.jp/workshops_e/w_2004_02_23_e.html.

⁸⁶ Han S. Park, “The Rationales behind North Korean foreign policy” in *North Korea policy: Japan and the great powers*, ed. Linus Hagström and Marie Söderberg (London: Routledge, 2006), 39.

When it comes to Japan's role in the past negotiations with North Korea (the "Six-party talks", negotiations between the DPRK, South Korea, China, the U.S., Russia and Japan), the way the Japanese government makes decisions has been highly influenced by public opinion and the Japanese mass media. This is seen especially in the amount of importance the Japanese media keeps putting on the abduction issue (North Korea has admitted to abducting Japanese citizens in the past).⁸⁷ Some, such as Hwang would argue that the whole issue of North Korea relations has practically been "hijacked" by the abduction issue and the media frenzy that follows around it.⁸⁸

There are other things to consider as well, however. For example, the issue of the fundamental differences with the Japanese and North Korean political systems and the importance of the general political science concept of *socialization* as something worthy of mentioning. The Japanese general public's attitude may well be to a large extent affected by the highly socialized nature of the Japanese society. Socialization as a process is generally described as: "the process of inheriting norms, customs and ideologies" and "the means by which social and cultural continuity are attained."⁸⁹ The Japanese people are taught to think in a certain way, and so are the North Koreans; these two ways of thinking and especially on the political side differ very much from each other and are bound to clash. The fundamental difference of the totalitarian style and democratic style of living is something that already creates a gap of "us" and "them" for the Japanese, and it is hard to overcome these deep-rooted attitudes. This

⁸⁷ Park, "The Rationales behind North Korean foreign policy", 47

⁸⁸ Balbina Y. Hwang, "Seoul's policy towards Pyongyang: Strategic culture and the negligibility of Japan," in *North Korea policy: Japan and the great powers*, ed. Linus Hagström and Marie Söderberg (London: Routledge, 2006), 67.

⁸⁹ John A. Clausen, *Socialization and Society*, (Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1968).

contributes to the difficult issue of mounting pressures from the public opinion side when decisions are made by the Japanese government.

Another point that has a firm hold on Japanese foreign policy is the influence of the United States. Japan is still to a great extent under the constant security umbrella of the U.S., and this keeps influencing Japanese decision making as well due to the security "debt" it owes to the U.S. However, some such as Sato would argue that Japan has actually differing priorities when it comes to solving the nuclear issue with North Korea, which in its own way may have affected the outcome and success rate of the negotiations.⁹⁰ When it comes to different ways of dealing with North Korea, Japan has had some difficulty to see eye-to-eye with its other counterparts on the negotiation table as well. Japan still has separate (territorial and maritime) disputes with Russia (Northern Territories dispute), China (Senkaku Islands dispute) and South Korea (Takeshima Island dispute), and this hinders their relations since the get-go.

On the other hand, there have been differentiating opinions about the use of hostility and friendship approaches with the DPRK. This kind of disagreeing with whether to use "carrots" or "sticks" has signified Japan's difference in opinion with its counterparts in the negotiation table. Japan would prefer to resort to the use of "sticks" (eg. cutting off aid) where as for example China would see more carrots (eg. pleasing the country through economic assistance).⁹¹

⁹⁰ Yoichiro Sato, "US North Korea Policy: The "Japan factor"" in *North Korea policy: Japan and the great powers*, ed. Linus Hagström and Marie Söderberg (London: Routledge, 2006), 74.

⁹¹ Quansheng Zhao, "Chinese North Korea policy: A secondary role for Japan," in *North Korea policy: Japan and the great powers*, ed. Linus Hagström and Marie Söderberg (London: Routledge, 2006), 105.

However, evidently in the past such "carrot" efforts have proven fruitless as North Korea has many times already kept dancing back and forth with its level of hostility (e.g. with South Korea) despite of different approaches that the negotiators tried during the talks.

Power relations: North Korean perspective

North Korea's reasoning when it comes to negotiations with other powers has to a large extent puzzled scholars of the field, as it would seem to some that its actions have been very sporadic in the past (eg. switching from hostility to a search for détente, then back again to hostility). However, there is some logic and reason to be found in its actions even from an outsider's point of view. The basic stance from North Korea's side has been seen to be an original idea of it being surrounded by enemies. Furthermore, to look at the past is also important. The original great leader Kim Il-Sung's hero legend managed to create the base for the anti-Japanese sentiment previously mentioned in the history section of this paper. Decades later, it is easy to imagine that this kind of indoctrination imposed on its people can have only one kind of an effect, which is hostility towards a country such as Japan.

What, on the other hand, was Kim's original agenda then? The role of the DPRK's so called nuclear ambitions has been under debate, and the significance of reaching the nuclear capabilities that are mentioned in most North Korea related talks is yet undecided. However, it is possible to recognize the two main issues that surround the topic.

Firstly, Kim Il-Sung's original agenda was to purely create a state with nuclear capabilities just for the sake of being powerful among countries like Russia and the U.S. He saw

that this was the only way to maintain the status quo decided by the Juche ideology, and to keep the country separated from the sphere of influence of other powerful states.⁹²

Secondly, during the failed six-party talks Kim Il-Sung's follower, Kim Jong-Il, changed this direction and started to rely on the hope of North Korea's denuclearization as a bargaining tool instead. This seems like a more reasonable approach to begin with, but as the state of the negotiations deteriorated in the end, followed by North Korea's abrupt declaration of quitting any such talks indefinitely, it would seem that the bargaining chip approach was not to be trusted after all.⁹³

This brings us to the current state of things, in which Kim Il-Sung's original plan of creating a nuclear state just for the sake of having nuclear power might be alive after all. Another approach to look at the logic behind the nuclear ambitions is describing it as a "mode of survival".⁹⁴ Having weapons of mass destruction in one's possession can be a powerful deterrent, and Kim has hinted in the past that if he got guarantees from other powers of continued support it would be able to dismantle its nuclear program.

In North Korea's case, some comparisons to other more "normal" states can be made. In general, for a state to maintain its legitimacy in the eyes of its citizens it needs to be able to provide economical support to them and keep peace. However, when looking at the DPRK the situation is obviously quite different. To sustain itself, North Korea has adopted more of an approach that relies entirely on ideological legitimacy (again related to following the Juche

⁹² Bruce Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun: a Modern History* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2005).

⁹³ Mark Landler, "North Korea Says It Will Halt Talks and Restart Its Nuclear Program," *New York Times*, April 14, 2009, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/15/world/asia/15korea.html?ref=global-home>

⁹⁴ Park, "The Rationales behind North Korean foreign policy," 39.

ideals created by Kim Il-Sung) instead of an economical one.⁹⁵ This, combined with an increased amount of indoctrination towards extreme nationalism, has somehow managed to keep the state intact, avoided revolts even during extreme famines and prevailed to successfully maintain the totalitarian status quo for over decades.⁹⁶ According to Byman and Lind, the DPRK's coercive strategy for keeping its citizens and overall regime in check also include methods such as "restrictive social policies, manipulation of ideas and information, use of force, co-optation, manipulation of foreign governments, and institutional coup-proofing,"⁹⁷ and this allows the regime to keep itself intact despite of its problems.

Japan and cooperation with foreign powers

Sato states that the "North Korean crisis has without doubt accelerated Japan's enhanced military cooperation with the United States."⁹⁸ This would of course be the basis of Japan's cooperation efforts with foreign powers; coordinating military security strategy with its most important ally in the region. Several emergency and otherwise special legislations have been implemented in the past for Japan to be able to cooperate with the U.S. more actively militarily. However, some leeway is said to exist purposefully in these legislations not to entrap Japan completely in any kind of future war efforts. As mentioned before what has hindered Japan's role of coordinating things with other powers in the past has been their differentiating priorities when it comes to North Korea.

Most countries, while agreeing on the importance of dismantling its nuclear program also have other interests. In Japan's case this has continuously been the abduction issue. As discussed

⁹⁵ Jasper Becker, *Rogue Regime: Kim Jong Il and the Looming Threat of North Korea* (New York City: Oxford University Press, 2005).

⁹⁶ Park, "The Rationales behind North Korean foreign policy," 50.

⁹⁷ Daniel Byman and Jennifer Lind, "Pyongyang's Survival Strategy," *International Security* 35, no. 1 (2010): 45.

⁹⁸ Sato, "US North Korea Policy: The "Japan factor"," 78.

in chapter II with the Sino-Japanese relations, the Senkaku islands have been a constant point of dispute between the states and have also in the past limited the amount of cooperation. In addition, China in general has more leverage over North Korea due to it actually still holding diplomatic relations with it unlike Japan.⁹⁹ Russo-Japanese relations have their own problems when it comes to amount of international cooperation; past wars and Japan's theatre missile defense plans with the U.S. have caused controversy and Russia has even hinted worrying about Japan's own nuclear ambitions at the expense of North Korea.¹⁰⁰ This kind of an allegation perhaps describes the true suspicious nature Russia and Japan have with each other even today after decades after the end of World War II. Russia's growing activity in the disputed Kuril Islands, or as Japan would call them its "Northern Territories," is undoubtedly also an issue that will in the future gain more attention if these parties are to ever return to a negotiation table to tackle the North Korean nuclear issue. This issue will be discussed further in chapter IV

Continuity and the failure of the six-party talks

After the failure of the six-party talks in 2009 the relations between the other negotiation powers and North Korea have been unstable. North Korea seems to largely dance around the issue and try to act as a puppeteer with the "great powers" on the other end. However, there are some criticisms that have been raised with the original premise of the six-party plan. Hughes argued even before the actual fall of the talks that the multilateral approach had some fault in

⁹⁹ Zhao, "Chinese North Korea policy: A secondary role for Japan," 105.

¹⁰⁰ Alexander Zhebin, "Russian North Korea policy: old conflicts obstacle for Russo-Japanese cooperation" in *North Korea policy: Japan and the great powers*, ed. Linus Hagström and Marie Söderberg (London: Routledge, 2006).

it.¹⁰¹ Difficulties could be found in things as fundamental as translation between all the six different parties, but the main issue arose with the issue of leadership.¹⁰²

Whether these six parties were supposed to be equal “partners” in the negotiation table or whether for example the United States was an actual dominating force was never openly discussed. In his 1999 book “Japan's economic power and security: Japan and North Korea,” Christopher Hughes categorizes the different effects that regional organizations and multilateral efforts have had when it comes to the leadership issue.¹⁰³

The main issue he looks at ends up being the fact whether the United States was to begin with a dominating force (“hegemonic cooperation”) or if there was actual, genuine “concert type operation” to be found in the six-party talks. North Korea has repeatedly expressed its willingness to have bilateral talks with the U.S. instead of multilateral ones. This is perhaps because the DPRK sees the U.S. as the actual only power that matters for the case.¹⁰⁴ With the bilateral possibility off the table, the question on why the U.S. did not to begin with agree to the bilateral talks must be asked.

One must look at the past and recognize the fact that the U.S. did originally indeed form various bilateral relationships with other East Asian countries in the region, such as Japan and South Korea. However, the example of Japan showed the U.S. that such extremely favorable bilateral treatment as with the case of Japan can cause an adverse reaction as well; it may have contributed to the fact that Japan even today has failed to reconcile with its surrounding

¹⁰¹ Christopher W. Hughes, “Japan and multilateralism in the North Korean nuclear crisis: road map or dead end?” in *North Korea policy: Japan and the great power*, ed. Linus Hagström and Marie Söderberg (London: Routledge, 2006).

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Christopher W. Hughes, *Japan's economic power and security: Japan and North Korea* (London: Routledge, 1999).

¹⁰⁴ Sang-hun Choe, “North Korea Presses U.S. to Agree to Bilateral Talks,” *New York Times*, November 1, 2009, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/11/03/world/asia/03korea.html>.

neighbors regarding its war past.¹⁰⁵ Victor Cha writes: "...by treating Japan as its "favorite son" in Asia, the United States unintentionally removed any pressure for Japan to seek atonement in the region."¹⁰⁶

When it comes to past U.S-DPRK bilateral efforts, the DPRK did have its chance at bilateral talks in the past with the U.S. in 1993-1994, but the results from the talks were not notable in the long run.¹⁰⁷ The bilateral talks also have the inherent quality of being difficult due to the fact that there are no third-party witnesses for the talks. Thus, North Korea was time and again able to contest the views of the U.S. later on regarding the nuclear issues discussed and what had actually been agreed upon. The U.S. was being patient with the bilateral DPRK issue at this point, likely due to the popular belief that the regime would collapse in not too long.¹⁰⁸ However, as this did not transpire in the end, the situation grew increasingly complicated as time passed.

Another reason for the improbability of another round of bilateral talks is the power relations between these countries. The fact that North Korea is "demanding" the U.S. to return to bilateral talks might alone be enough a reason for the U.S. to refuse the idea. In addition, in the international community's context making the talks look multilateral may look better to the rest of the world. From a realist point of view, the U.S. also needs the combined leverage from other states such as China if it wants the DPRK to take the efforts seriously.

¹⁰⁵ Victor Cha, "Powerplay: Origins of the U.S. Alliance System in Asia," *International Security* 34, no. 3 (2009/2010): 193-194.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ "Chronology of U.S.-North Korean Nuclear and Missile Diplomacy," *Arms Control Association*, April 2012, accessed November 15, 2012, <http://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/dprkchron>.

¹⁰⁸ Byman and Lind, "Pyongyang's Survival Strategy," 45.

In the end the DPRK's sporadic belligerent actions themselves brought the end to the talks (eg. "Satellite" launch which was believed to be missile-related in April 2009).¹⁰⁹ Perhaps for any chance of a return to the negotiation table multilaterally to exist the world will need action of goodwill from North Korea's side as well for the next time.¹¹⁰

Japan's North Korea policy under the LDP in the 1990s

Since the 1970s the rapport, although largely informal, between Japan and the DPRK was mainly established by the efforts of the members of the JSP (Japan Socialist Party). Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka's policy of two Koreas and their co-existence was a major policy point that showed Japan's attitude towards the peninsula until the end of 1980s.¹¹¹ By the end of the Cold War, a hope for normalization for the Japan-DPRK relations started to emerge. Japan's role as a major financial power helped with the process, as the DPRK was highly interested in Japanese money, while on the other hand Japan wanted to increase its influence on the Koreas to balance it against its competitors China and Russia.¹¹²

In 1989 Japan was under LDP's Prime Minister Toshiki Kaifu. The Foreign Ministry released its policy statement that Japan was open to a variety of discussions with the North and did not maintain a hostile policy towards it, a statement later reaffirmed by former Prime Minister Noboru Takeshita, a move which would keep the customary secret meetings between

¹⁰⁹ The White House, *Remarks by president Barack Obama, Hradcany Square, Prague, Czech Republic*, April 5, 2009, accessed July 29, 2011, http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Remarks-By-President-Barack-Obama-In-Prague-As-Delivered/.

¹¹⁰ "North Korea demands peace treaty with U.S.; Japan says too early for 6-way talks," *JapanToday*, <http://www.japantoday.com/category/politics/view/north-korea-demands-peace-treaty-with-u-s-japan-says-too-early-for-6-way-talks>.

¹¹¹ David Fouse, "Japan's Post-Cold War North Korea Policy: Hedging towards autonomy?," *Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies*, 2004, 2.

¹¹² *Ibid.*

Japan and the DPRK alive.¹¹³ The JSP was still also a major player in these secret meetings, although LDP was the party in power and was calling the shots. This can be seen from the key influence Deputy Prime Minister Shin Kanemaru of the LDP had with the negotiations with the DPRK, which he spearheaded with LDP politicians in 1990 in Pyongyang, a policy action that has been speculated to have been a part of a “greater foreign policy autonomy from Seoul and Washington.”¹¹⁴

Advancement of the normalization of Japan-North Korea relations

Between 1991-1992 Japan’s cooperative policies with North Korea, largely through the efforts of LDP’s Shin Kanemaru went further than originally expected. Notoriously, when it turned out that the North Korean leader Kim Il-Sung was prepared to go further with the normalization scheme, Kanemaru (who was later arrested on corruption charges) was managing the money and policies that Japanese firms were involved in.¹¹⁵

The normalization plan proceeded to its next stage when a surprising three-party declaration between Japan’s LDP, JSP and the North Korean Workers’ Party got together and came to an agreement of formally establishing diplomatic relations as soon as possible. As expected, North Korea also required that the agreement would include a formal apology from Japan’s side for the colonial past.¹¹⁶ This rapid pace of normalization, however, was not looked upon lightly by Seoul and Washington.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Green, *Japan's Reluctant Realism*, 117.

¹¹⁶ Brian Bridges, *Japan and Korea in the 1990s: From Antagonism to Adjustment* (Aldershot, England: Edward Elgar, 1993), 146-147.

The United States expressed its official concerns to Japan about North Korea's possible use of the reparation money for nuclear weapons development, and South Korea on the other hand saw that the Japanese reparation funds, larger than expected, would lessen its influence on North Korea. This resulted in a slowing down of the normalization efforts and in a forced official apology to Seoul by Kanemaru, as Japan still valued it as an ally that should not be angered.¹¹⁷

These concerns resulted in a direct statement from Japan's part on the policy of normalization with North Korea. The statement included four principles:

1) Japan would conduct negotiations with a view toward enhancing the peace and stability of the entire Korean Peninsula;

2) Japan-DPRK normalization would not occur at the expense of friendly relations between Japan and the ROK;

3) While responding to property claims arising from Japan's thirty-six-year colonial rule, Japan would not compensate North Korea for the postwar period;

4) North Korea's acceptance of IAEA inspections of nuclear facilities is important to Japan's national security.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁷ Fouse, "Japan's Post-Cold War North Korea Policy: Hedging towards autonomy?," 3.

¹¹⁸ Byung-chul Koh, "North Korea-Japan Relations," in *Korea and Japan: Searching for Harmony and Cooperation in a Changing Era*, ed. In-Taek Hyun and Masao Okonogi (Seoul: Sejong institute, 1995), p. 115.

The announcement of the principles was a success for Japan, and put it back on its normal track with Seoul and Washington after the initial shock caused by the non-consultation with them.¹¹⁹ The normalization talks subsequently continued with North Korea. However, the interception by the United States and South Korea had already laid a seed of schism for the previously promising normalization talks from North Korea's side.

As the normalization talks continued for as many as eight times during 1991-1992, the DPRK continued to demand that Japan stay with the framework established with the previous three-party declaration.¹²⁰ In addition, due to the U.S.' pressure for inspections of the IAEA, Japan had also requested such cooperation from North Korea – something that the DPRK is notoriously wary of even today. With these factors combined the talks did not get to see much development in the end.¹²¹ When the key mediator and negotiator between North Korea and Japan, Kanemaru, was finally arrested on corruption charges in 1992 the situation with the normalization saw further deterioration.¹²²

However, the problem that finalized the eventual doom of the negotiations was Japan's continued requests for North Korea to grant visitation rights to Japan for the Japanese wives of North Korean men, who had previously moved to North Korea with their repatriating husbands during 1959-1963.¹²³ In addition to this, the other issue of growing interest in the kidnappings of Japanese citizens to North Korea caused Japan to inquire the DPRK especially about the fate of

¹¹⁹ Myonwoo Lee, "Japanese-North Korean Relations: Going in Circles," in *North Korea and Northeast Asia*, ed. Samuel S. Kim and Hwan Lee Tai. (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002), 98.

¹²⁰ Fouse, "Japan's Post-Cold War North Korea Policy: Hedging towards autonomy?," 4.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Tessa Morris-Suzuki, "Re-imagining Japan: North Korea relations Part 2," accessed September 9, 2012, http://japaninstitute.anu.edu.au/japanese_studies/issue_02/Re-Imagining_Part_II.pdf, 2.

¹²³ Yong-Mok Kim, "The Dilemma of North Korea's Japanese Wives," November 10, 1997, accessed September 6, 2012, http://www.jpri.org/publications/critiques/critique_IV_10.html.

Yaeko Taguchi, one of the many women who were taken by North Korea to train its spies in languages and Japanese culture in the previous decades.¹²⁴ North Korea saw this kind of continued inquiries as a violation of its strict self-determination policy (no country should be let meddle with its internal affairs) and instead turned its prospects towards the United States for future negotiation power.

Collapse of the normalization talks and the 1994 nuclear crisis

By 1993 the United States had strengthened its stance on getting the DPRK to accept its demands for official IAEA inspections, and stated its willingness to resort to even “coercive measures” in seeking compliance from North Korea’s side.¹²⁵ Not long after this the DPRK surprised its neighbors by firing a Nodong missile into the Sea of Japan, while citing its policy of not accepting any kind of sanctions from the United States or Japan – such actions would be considered acts of war. The then Japanese Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa of the LDP attempted to hide the North Korean missile test’s existence from the public in hopes of stopping further worsening of the situation, but failed to do so in the end.¹²⁶

The situation continuing to escalate when the United States started preparing for serious contingencies in terms of further DPRK hostilities, and as an ally Japan had to be a part of them. However, the nuclear crisis clearly showed Japan’s level of unpreparedness when it came to cooperating with the United States during an emergency such as this, as Japan’s legislations proved partially insufficient. Fouse writes:

¹²⁴ Fouse, "Japan's Post-Cold War North Korea Policy: Hedging towards autonomy?," 4.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

*The Japanese government was wholly unprepared for these developments, having no contingency legislation for support of U.S. forces outside of a direct attack on Japan itself. A study group established within the chief cabinet secretary's office considered the U.S. requests and found that while Article 6 of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty provided grounds for allowing use of the bases in Japan, the more active types of support requested by the United States would violate Japan's ban on collective self-defense.*¹²⁷

The situation caused the relations between the DPRK, Japan and the United States to be on edge until the former U.S. President Jimmy Carter's visit to North Korea in 1994, which led to the planning of the Agreed Framework, the first step in an effort to get a give-and-take type of a relationship going with Pyongyang. The United States with its allies would give the DPRK crude oil and light water reactors, and North Korea would agree to stop its nuclear program altogether.¹²⁸ This plan proved to be too ambitious in the end, as its actual realization was constantly hindered by especially the U.S. congress's initial reluctance to give the financial backing necessary for the projects to be launched.¹²⁹

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Morris-Suzuki, "Re-imagining Japan," 2.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

Aftermath of the 1994 crisis and policy changes

Understandably the aftermath of the crisis had shown Japan in a clear manner that it would in the future have to ensure having clearer contingency policies for cooperation with the United States in such situations to ensure that the latter would not have to rethink the structure of its alliance with Japan. The situation had caused some direct changes in the cooperation policy.

By 1995 under Prime Minister Tomi'ichi Murayama of the Japan Socialist Party, Japan's National Defense Program Outline (NDPO) went under revision.¹³⁰ The revision strengthened and made Japan's role clearer were there to be a situation around its territory that affected its peace and security. The revision included a statement highlighting the importance of "*the smooth and effective implementation of the Japan-U.S. security arrangements*"¹³¹, but omitted any direct examples of such situations.

Subsequently, the 1996 Japan-U.S. Joint Declaration on Security stressed the continuing importance of their bilateral security arrangement. In the Declaration it was stated that the relationship would "remain the cornerstone for a stable and prosperous environment for the Asia-Pacific region."¹³² A further development between Japan and the United States was the signing of the Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA), which newly gave Japan more freedom to participate in an increased supporting role with U.S.-Japan military exercises and United Nations' peace-keeping operations (PKOs). However, the assistance capabilities were limited to non-lethal activities such as food, transportation and maintenance.¹³³

¹³⁰ Hughes, *Japan's economic power and security*, 191.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² David Fouse, "Japan's Post-Cold War North Korea Policy" in *Japan in a Dynamic Asia: Coping With the New Security Challenge*, ed. Yoichiro Sato and Satu P. Limaye (Oxford: Lexington Books, 2006), 141.

¹³³ Fouse, "Japan's Post-Cold War North Korea Policy: Hedging towards autonomy?," 5.

In terms of direct Japan-North Korea relations, Japan had already joined the signing of the Agreed Framework in 1994, although there were continued conflicting views from the LDP hardliners. Next, in 1995 Japan gave its financial backing to the short-lived Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO). The organization's main objective was to see to the construction of the promised light water reactors (LWR). LWRs are seen as a safer alternative when it comes to production of plutonium that could be used for making weapons of mass destruction, as it is less efficient at it.¹³⁴ Japan's share of the expenses of the construction effort reached as high as 20% in the end, which meant granting around 800 million dollars for KEDO to use.¹³⁵

Re-initiating normalization, collapse and one more re-initiation

In 1995 Japan again re-initiated its efforts for normalization under Prime Minister Murayama, resulting in visits to Pyongyang by the government coalition of the LDP, Sakigake and Socialist Parties. An agreement on food aid to the DPRK was reached in the coming months, and in September 1995 PM Murayama gave an official statement about the effort to normalize relations with the DPRK. Continued pressures and opposition from South Korea's side prevented any concrete developments with the talks during PM Murayama's period.¹³⁶

Further development to the situation for Japan's disappointment followed after PM Ryutaro Hashimoto of the LDP took office at the beginning of 1996. The United States was planning a four-party initiative by joining itself in the effort with South Korea, China and the DPRK, as the dialogue between the Koreas had not made any noticeable advances since the

¹³⁴ Green, *Japan's Reluctant Realism*, 121.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Hong-Nack Kim and Jack L. Hammersmith, "Japanese-North Korean Relations in the Post-Kim Il Sung Era," *Korea and World Affairs* 24, no. 4 (2000): 598.

drafting of the Agreed Framework. As Japan was at this point left out of the talks, the 20% paid for KEDO's reactor projects started to seem to have been funds wasted – no further influence was gained.¹³⁷ Not to be left out instead Japan decided to attempt a re-initiation of a bilateral effort between itself and the DPRK. Of course, on the behalf of the members of the four-party talks this seemed like a move that would only further complicate the situation.

Japan kept its decisive stand on wanting to keep its bilateral effort going under PM Hashimoto, and proceeded to reopen the case of the 'Japanese wives issue' in North Korea in 1997, which was seen as the least problematic.¹³⁸ Japan's stance was perhaps too ambitious since the beginning, as it wanted the DPRK to let all of the wives to return to Japan. Very little progress followed in comparison to what Japan had hoped for. North Korea sent only smaller groups of Japanese citizens to visit Japan in 1997 and 1998.

When it came to the more serious issue of the abducted citizens, what followed was further denial on the DPRK's part of any more Japanese missing citizens residing in the country.¹³⁹ The situation kept the relations cold and the normalization prospect was once again facing a stalemate with the then Vice Foreign Minister Shunji Yanai's statement that there would be little chance for solving the normalization problem and that no official talks could follow before the issue with the kidnapped Japanese would be solved.¹⁴⁰

As Japan's stance on the kidnappings issue seemed unmovable, the DPRK decided to turn around on its previously somewhat promising attitude with a possibility for normalization. In 1998 it went forward with the test launch of a Taepodong rocket, which traveled over Japan's

¹³⁷ Fouse, "Japan's Post-Cold War North Korea Policy: Hedging towards autonomy?," 6.

¹³⁸ Ibid.; Green, *Japan's Reluctant Realism*, 123.

¹³⁹ Lee, *Japanese-North Korean Relations*, 101.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

northern part before falling into the Pacific.¹⁴¹ What followed was deep condemnation from Japan's part, and further escalation of the situation away from any possible compromise that could lead to re-initiation of the normalization talks. The DPRK's image in Japan was again extremely low, and Japan decided to put pressure on it by stopping its previous food aid and expensive financial input to the KEDO cause.¹⁴² This can be seen as effectively leading to its withdrawal from further normalization talks.

The difficulty of maintaining the pact to keep KEDO alive became apparent with Japan's reluctance to continue supporting it financially. The previously trilateral agenda between the United States, South Korea and Japan faced a crisis. Understandably Japan, as the one country to have recently been concretely affected by the DPRK's threatening rocket politics, was expecting a harder line from its two cooperative states.¹⁴³ Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi of the LDP held a speech at the UN and was vocal about his demands for an increased effort of nuclear non-proliferation from the five nuclear states of the United Kingdom, France, China, Russia and the United States, while criticizing North Korea for the previous test launch.¹⁴⁴

With the mounting pressure from the United States and South Korea, and due to the lack of any feasible alternatives, Japan re-joined the trilateral effort and started increasing its military cooperation with the two again. It was followed by two advances. Firstly, a Joint Declaration on security cooperation with South Korea was announced.¹⁴⁵ Secondly, due to the general

¹⁴¹ Kim and Hammersmith, "Japanese-North Korean Relations," 605.

¹⁴² Fouse, "Japan's Post-Cold War North Korea Policy: Hedging towards autonomy?," 7.

¹⁴³ Green, *Japan's Reluctant Realism*, 125.

¹⁴⁴ "Obuchi slams North Korea launch in U.N. speech", *The Japan Times*, September 2, 1998, <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/text/nn19980922a2.html>

¹⁴⁵ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, *Japan-Republic of Korea Joint Declaration: A New Japan-Republic of Korea Partnership towards the Twenty-first Century*, accessed September 12, 2012, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/korea/joint9810.html>.

atmosphere of uncertainty caused by the looming threat of North Korea, revision of the U.S.-Japan Defense Cooperation Guidelines was implemented as well.

Militarily speaking the possible threat from the DPRK's side caused some direct changes in attitude from the Japanese government's side. Japan was eager to have more control with its security, especially over its territorial waters. Japan saw that the United States was not taking the issue with North Korea seriously enough. During Prime Minister Obuchi's term some concrete examples of Japan's new, more proactive style of engaging with the DPRK threat emerged.¹⁴⁶ Firstly, his cabinet authorized the Marine Self-Defense Force (MSDF) to fire upon any North Korean spy vessels that would come to Japanese waters after an incident occurred with such vessels.¹⁴⁷ Secondly, the Air Self-Defense Force (ASDF) was equipped with airborne refueling planes, which theoretically gave it a capability to even attack North Korean bases.¹⁴⁸

In 1999 Japan made the decision to participate in another bilateral effort for normalization followed by President Clinton's example, and the fear of being left out on negotiating on issues that are of most interest to it, namely the missile issue.¹⁴⁹ Former Prime Minister Murayama's delegation was the one to re-initiate the talks. The task was not easy; public opinion on North Korea was yet extremely negative in Japan, and nationalistic activism demanding harsh measures was on the rise.¹⁵⁰ In the 2000s the situation with the DPRK would continue to fluctuate and face further complications.

¹⁴⁶ Liberal Democratic Party of Japan, *A History of the Liberal Democratic Party: Chapter Eighteen Period of President Obuchi's Leadership*, accessed September 10, 2012, from Liberal Democratic Party of Japan: http://www.jimin.jp/english/about_ldp/history/104302.html.

¹⁴⁷ Fouse, "Japan's Post-Cold War North Korea Policy: Hedging towards autonomy?," 145.

¹⁴⁸ Hajime Izumi, "Pyongyang grasps new realities," *Japan Quarterly* (2000).

¹⁴⁹ Fouse, "Japan's Post-Cold War North Korea Policy: Hedging towards autonomy?," 145.

¹⁵⁰ Fouse, "Japan's Post-Cold War North Korea Policy: Hedging towards autonomy?," 146.

Japan's North Korea policy under the LDP in the 2000s

Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori of the LDP took office in April 2000 and the ninth round of bilateral negotiations between Japan and the DPRK started headed by ambassador Kojiro Takano in Beijing. While the ninth round's results (or the lack of them) were highly unsurprising, both parties agreed that the talks should continue and the issues of interest remained very much the same; Japan was eager to know about its kidnapped citizens and the status of the North Korean missile program. Fouse writes: "North Korea demanded a written, legally binding apology backed by reparations, including damages for stolen cultural artifacts and an assurance of the legal status of pro-Pyongyang Koreans living in Japan."¹⁵¹

With President Bush taking office in 2001, the United States proceeded to change its policy on North Korea to a harsher direction. This led the DPRK to look back to the direction of Japan for a summit meeting.¹⁵² However, Prime Minister Mori was unable to get support for such an effort, and during the rest of his term much movement towards positive normalization diplomacy was not reached.

The Koizumi era developments with the DPRK

In April 2001 the highly popular Junichiro Koizumi took office as prime minister, and was able to move the DPRK effort forward once again. By autumn 2001 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan had started a campaign of Japan-North Korea meetings that were held secret from the public.¹⁵³ As previously expected, in 2002 President Bush's harsher policies and the

¹⁵¹ Fouse, "Japan's Post-Cold War North Korea Policy: Hedging towards autonomy?," 8.

¹⁵² Yoshihide Soeya, "Japanese Diplomacy and the North Korean Problem," *Japan Review of International Affairs* (2003).

¹⁵³ Fouse, "Japan's Post-Cold War North Korea Policy: Hedging towards autonomy? : Hedging towards autonomy?," 10.

ultimate decision to include North Korea to his infamous “axis of evil” gave the DPRK more reason to maintain its informal relationship with Japan. Japan managed to get concrete results from its bilateral talks in the form of getting a detained journalist returned safely and a promise from the North Korean Red Cross to continue its search for the Japanese citizens previously kidnapped, an issue that had been one of the main hindrances between the countries during all of the previous negotiations.¹⁵⁴

September 2002 saw the opening of the first Japan-DPRK summit meeting.¹⁵⁵ The meeting resulted in the Japan-North Korea Pyongyang Declaration, which was a hopeful promise of continued cooperation and adherence to international law from both sides.¹⁵⁶ PM Koizumi was facing mixed feelings from the public during this time. Some political commentators saw his attempts to increase the publicity of the North Korea issue as a tactic to get the public’s eye away from the fact that his economic reforms were not proceeding as promised.¹⁵⁷ This wave of criticism was short-lived, as Koizumi’s efforts bore some fruits in the form of a confession from the DPRK’s side: they had indeed been kidnapping Japanese citizens in the past.¹⁵⁸ This, of course did not come as a surprise to anyone, but was seen as a breakthrough in getting the DPRK to open up on the issue. Although a kind of an achievement from a diplomacy point-of-view, the observable consequence of North Korea admitting to the acts it had been accused of for decades,

¹⁵⁴ Kenji Hiramatsu, "Leadup to the signing of the Japan-DPRK Pyongyang Declaration," *Gaiko Forum*, 2003, accessed September 12, 2012, http://www.gaikoforum.com/P20_30_122.pdf.

¹⁵⁵ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, *Japan-North Korea Relations: 2. Japan-North Korea Summit*, May 2004, accessed September 11, 2012, http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/n_korea/relation.html.

¹⁵⁶ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, *Japan-DPRK Pyongyang Declaration*, September 2002, accessed September 13, 2012, http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/n_korea/pmv0209/pyongyang.html.

¹⁵⁷ Robyn Lim, "Koizumi's Pyongyang Gambit: Triumph of Hope over Experience," September 18, 2002, accessed September 11, 2012, <http://www.okazaki-inst.jp/rlonkjkj.html>.

¹⁵⁸ Tsuneo Akaha, "Japan and the recurrent nuclear crisis," in *North Korea policy: Japan and the great powers*, ed. Linus Hagström and Marie Söderberg, (London: Routledge, 2006), 31.

was that the public opinion on it plummeted and the next round of official normalization talks failed to see any results.¹⁵⁹

Only a month later the situation with North Korea faced another crisis, as the previously hopeful Agreed Framework initiative faced utter failure as a consequence to the U.S. confronting the DPRK with evidence of its hidden uranium enrichment program.¹⁶⁰ Ultimately this led to the DPRK's departure from the nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) and mass deporting of international personnel in charge of monitoring the situation in North Korea.

The next year with the initiative of the United States and China the so-called Six-Party talks initiative was launched in August 2003 in Beijing. Although originally the DPRK had strongly demanded strictly bilateral talks with the United States, it agreed to join the multilateral platform. The final group of attendees were the United States, China, Japan, South Korea, Russia and North Korea. The talks proceeded to their fifth round during Koizumi's era as prime minister until 2006.¹⁶¹ Japan's position as one-sixth of the negotiator group was a complicated one, as its priorities on what it wanted to achieve from the negotiations differed from the main powers leading the discussions, such as the United States; Japan wanted more answers about the abduction issue while the United States concentrated on the long-term issue of dismantling the nuclear program. Also the style of negotiation and the dichotomy of use of the "carrots" and "sticks" approaches pulled Japan to a different direction.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁹ "Four Views of the Pyongyang Summit," *Japan Echo* (2002), 43-47.

¹⁶⁰ Xiaodong Liang, "The Six-Party Talks at a Glance," May 2012, accessed September 12, 2012 <http://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/6partytalks>.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶² Zhao, *Chinese North Korea policy*, 105.

September 2006 saw the inauguration of LDP's Shinzo Abe as Prime Minister. Abe had already shown his preference for style of diplomacy with the DPRK in July 2006, as he strongly advocated mandatory sanctions towards the DPRK after its newest provocative missile test rounds. The advocacy was followed by more action. Green and Szechenyi write:

*Most intriguing was the strong message Abe sent the international community when his government imposed unilateral sanctions against North Korea and then led other members of the United Nations Security Council to support resolution 1718, which invoked Chapter 7 of the UN charter calling for mandatory sanctions against countries that threaten international security.*¹⁶³

A year later after Abe's inauguration he made way for LDP's Yasuo Fukuda as prime minister. Fukuda's approach to North Korea was quite different from that of Abe's. While Abe had openly been an advocate of the "sticks" approach of reprimanding the DPRK into order, Fukuda believed in a more dialogue-driven alternative, which was welcomed by the DPRK after Abe's hard-line approach.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶³ Michael Green and Nicholas Szechenyi, "Shinzo Abe and the new look of Japanese leadership," *Harvard Asia Pacific Review* (2007): 29.

¹⁶⁴ "North Korea envoy open to Fukuda dialogue stance," *The Japan Times*, October 12, 2007, <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/text/nn20071012a9.html>.

Fukuda's successor, PM Taro Aso of the LDP, took office in September 2008. PM Aso continued the set course of the Six-Party talks which were making little progress at the time. Despite international pressure the DPRK continued with another test launch in April 2009. The launch was announced to be that of a satellite by North Korea, and ended in a failure much like the previous ones had.¹⁶⁵ However, as the DPRK had refused to put the test launch to a halt, the demand for sanctions within the member countries of the talks, such as South Korea and Japan, started to mount once again, culminating in United Nations Security Council unanimous condemnation. This resulted in the end of the Six-Party talks for an undefined period of time from North Korea's side.¹⁶⁶

The Rise of the DPJ and North Korea relations

After the power shift from LDP dominance over to the DPJ in September 2009, Yukio Hatoyama was the first one to take the role of prime minister. Aside from the general views about political change mentioned in the previous chapter, one significant event occurred during PM Hatoyama's term.

In March 2010, as PM Hatoyama was already almost heading off his seat, the so-called "Cheonan incident" took place. A South Korean corvette, Cheonan, was sunk by a torpedo. An investigation conducted by a variety of international experts came to the conclusion that the torpedo had been fired from a North Korean submarine. This became the official position of the

¹⁶⁵ William J. Broad, "North Korean Missile Launch Was a Failure, Experts Say," *New York Times*, April 5, 2009, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/06/world/asia/06korea.html?pagewanted=all>.

¹⁶⁶ Malcom Moore, "North Korea quits six-party talks and threatens to restart nuclear programme," *The Telegraph*, April 14, 2009, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/northkorea/5151406/North-Korea-quits-six-party-talks-and-threatens-to-restart-nuclear-programme.html>.

U.S., South Korea and Japan, although still contested by the DPRK. As North Korea never admitted its part in the attack, the United Nations Security Council condemned the attack unanimously, but without officially naming the assailant.¹⁶⁷ PM Hatoyama promptly expressed his strong condemning of the attack, but omitted any detailed comments on a future course of action that should be taken on the DPRK. The Minister of Foreign Affairs Katsuya Okada, on the other hand, was just as vague only citing his wish for “firm measures”.¹⁶⁸

PM Naoto Kan of the DPJ took office after Hatoyama’s departure in June 2010. Another North Korea related incident followed during his term, when the island of Yeonpyeong in South Korea was bombarded by the DPRK’s artillery in November 2010.¹⁶⁹ The official reason for the attack cited by North Korea was that it was only responding (in self-defense) to firing of shells first given by South Korean military towards the DPRK's territorial waters¹⁷⁰. The Kan cabinet convened for an emergency meeting, but Japan’s reaction to the incident was in the end nothing noteworthy. Foreign Minister Maehara even ended up taking a softer approach to the DPRK the following year, as he announced that Japan would be ready to have direct talks in 2011.¹⁷¹

Kan managed to stir the pot with a provocative remark about Japanese troops’ possible activities in an emergency situation in South Korea. He mentioned that Japan had had talks with South Korea on the issue of “conducting rescue operations in case of contingencies,” which hinted of a wish that SDF troops be given mandate for rescue operations concerning Japanese

¹⁶⁷ United Nations Security Council, *SECURITY COUNCIL CONDEMNS ATTACK ON REPUBLIC OF KOREA NAVAL SHIP ‘CHEONAN’*, July 9, 2012, accessed September 13, 2012, <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2010/sc9975.doc.htm>.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Dongmin Lee, "Yeonpyeong: Dealing with North Korea," *RSIS Commentary* 163 (2010).

¹⁷⁰ Korean Central News Agency of DPRK, *Statement Released by Spokesman of DPRK Foreign Ministry*, November 24, 2010, accessed November 16, 2012, <http://www.kcna.co.jp/item/2010/201011/news24/20101124-17ee.html>

¹⁷¹ Yoree Koh, "Pyongyang Joins Majority, Slates PM Kan, DPJ," *The Wall Street Journal*, January 4, 2011, <http://blogs.wsj.com/japanrealtime/2011/01/04/pyongyang-joins-majority-slates-pm-kan-dpj/>.

citizens in the Korean Peninsula, especially in the case of the collapse of the DPRK regime.¹⁷² The statement caused uproar due to the issue of Japan's past militarism in the area, and at the same time his publicity ratings were plummeting all the way to 21%, which was the lowest yet to date during his term.¹⁷³

Ever since the 2011 Tohoku earthquake, tsunami and Fukushima nuclear incident PM Naoto Kan's leadership was under fire constantly.

In the end he made way for Yoshihiko Noda of the DPJ in September 2011. In his inauguration policy speech Noda mentioned North Korea in a rather vague way, citing the previous Pyongyang Declaration as a guideline in how Japan should proceed to attempt normalization in the future. He stated:

Japan seeks to normalize its diplomatic relations with North Korea through the comprehensive resolution of the outstanding issues of concern, including the abduction, nuclear, and missile issues, and settling the unfortunate past. Regarding the abduction issue, this is a grave issue that relates to national sovereignty and as the responsibility of the State, we will spare no effort towards

¹⁷² Rajaram Panda, "IDSA Comment: Naoto Kan's Remarks strain Relations with South Korea," Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, December 20, 2010, accessed September 13, 2012, http://www.idsa.in/idsacomments/NaotoKansRemarksstrainRelationswithSouthKorea_rpanda_201210

¹⁷³ Ibid.

*achieving the return of all abductees to Japan at the earliest possible juncture.*¹⁷⁴

In another policy speech in January 2012 there was little change to be seen in his stance regarding the DPRK.¹⁷⁵ However, PM Noda's cabinet faced another North Korean missile crisis in April 2012, as the DPRK conducted a missile test, which although ending in another failure got Japan on its toes preparing for the worst as it rounded up its missile defense systems in preparation for the launch.

However, the Japan-DPRK dialogue has not completely died out yet. In August 2012 Japanese and North Korean officials held a meeting regarding a different matter – returning of the remains of Japanese citizens who died in territory that is currently part of the DPRK during World War II.¹⁷⁶ After the transition of power from the deceased leader of North Korea, Kim Jong-Il, to his son Kim Jong-Un such gestures of good will have not been of abundance. Thus, it is easy to speculate that the move on behalf of the DPRK and its leader might be a show of willingness to open diplomatic dialogue as means of communication once again, although its attitude on the matter has been highly inconsistent in the past years.

In September 2012 Japan started preliminary talks in Beijing with the DPRK on restarting longer term bilateral talks again. From Japan's side especially the abduction issue has been central for the agenda. The September developments were followed by a two-day bilateral

¹⁷⁴ Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet, October 1, 2010.

¹⁷⁵ Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet, January 24, 2012.

¹⁷⁶ "Japan and North Korea to hold first talks in four years," *BBC News*, August 29, 2012, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-19406812>

meeting in Ulan Bator, Mongolia in November.¹⁷⁷ Actual concrete results gained from the newly-opened talks are yet unclear, but a positive speculation on the issue would point to the direction of the new DPRK leader Kim Jong-Un wanting to separate his policies from the previous decades of back-and-forth movement with the rest of the world, starting with Japan.

Summary

In this chapter the focus of the study has been on the developments that the Japan-DPRK relations faced after the Cold War until 2012. The first point of focus was the history of the Korean Peninsula regarding Japan from a general viewpoint. This was followed by a comparison of Japan's and the DPRK's views on their power relations and past negotiations, and the reasoning by which they have conducted such negotiations. These negotiations have had highly fluctuating results and are as of yet today at a stalemate to a large extent. Another important focus was Japan's relationship with other powers solving the DPRK nuclear crisis, how the cooperation dynamic has worked in the past and how it has affected Japan's relationship with these powers. After the look on the failed Six-Party talks the focus shifted to a more detailed study on how the LDP leadership worked with North Korea and its various issues and crises from the 1990s until 2009, when the DPJ took over power in Japanese politics.

Since the end of the Cold War the driving force of Japan-DPRK relations from Japan's side has been largely its hunger for knowledge on its kidnapped citizens from the past decades, and having details on the Japanese wives that left to North Korea willingly previously. In addition to this Japan has wanted to balance its influence against its competitors South Korea and

¹⁷⁷ "Japan reopens stalled talks with DPRK on abductions," *News on Japan*, November 16, 2012, <http://newsonjapan.com/html/newsdesk/article/99649.php>

China. North Korea on the other hand has had the upper hand most of the time with these issues, being mainly concerned on the economic assistance. It has refused to reveal much information at a time to Japan, retreating to its shell every time Japan has shown too much of hostile eagerness or demands in general to it.

When it comes to the different eras of leadership in Japan, some distinctive qualities can be seen. In the late 1980s and early 1990s the Japan-DPRK relationship was largely dealt with behind closed doors and with secret meetings between selected politicians from Japan that had managed to create long-lasting ties with the DPRK. With increasing transparency in dealing with the DPRK such back room dealings have been on the decline. However, with the DPRK's sporadic attitude towards its nuclear testing Japan's leadership qualities have had in the end little possibility to affect its decision-making, as can be seen from the DPRK-Japan normalization talks that were restarted and failed several times in the past.

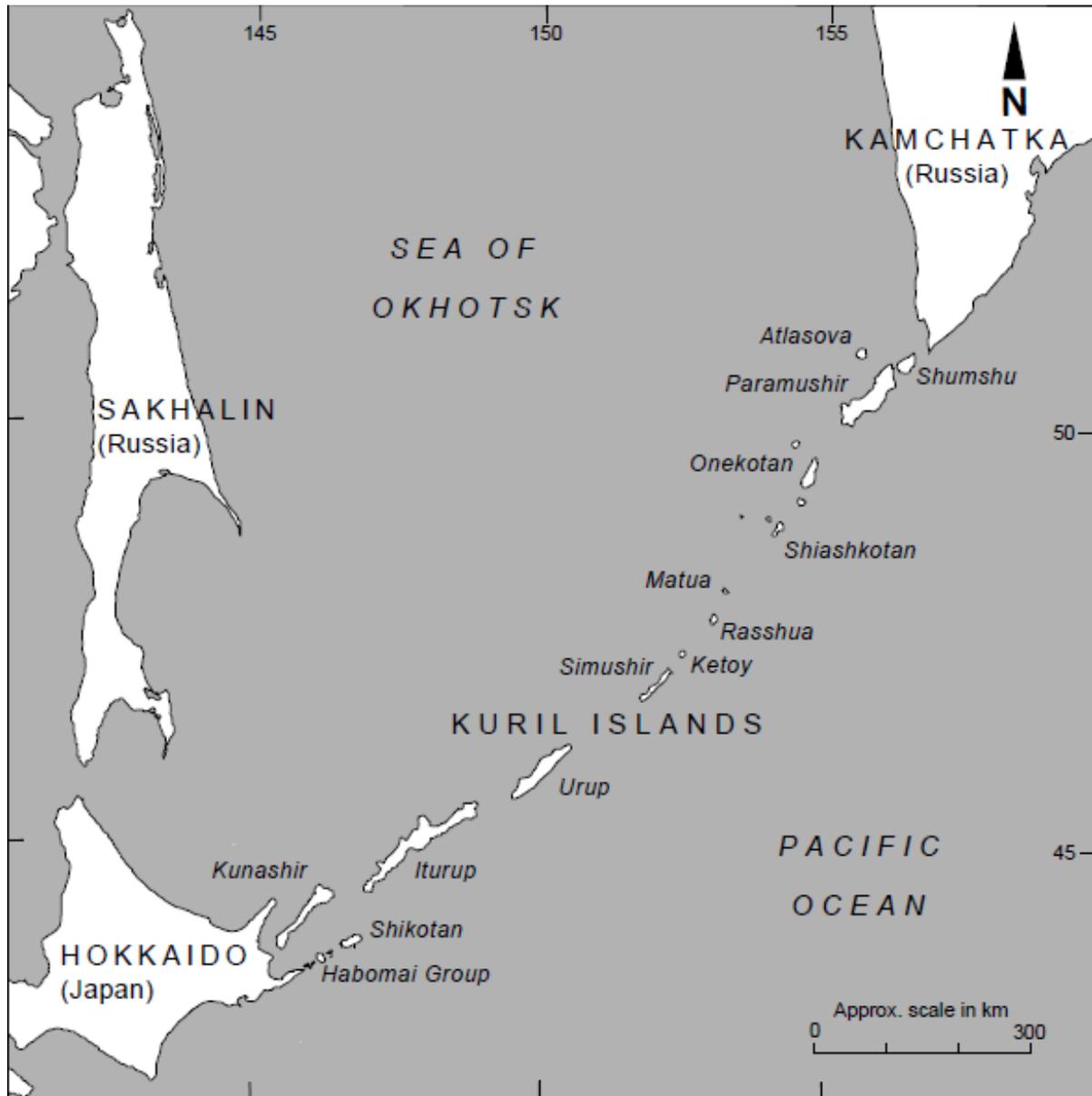
Some, such as PM Shinzo Abe have reacted boldly to the fluctuating relations by deciding on unilateral sanctions on the DPRK when its tendency to continue its missile tests no matter what became apparent. When it comes to the DPJ's decision making on the DPRK, it has not to date shown any significant amount of willpower or willingness to use hardline approaches, although some of the most brutal incidents such as the sinking of the Cheonan and the shelling of the Yeonpyeong happened during its watch.

So far only prime minister Noda, who is currently in office, has managed to take the effort forwards in terms of future negotiations, although Japan is not seeing any major brave changes yet. Although the DPRK has newly tried an approach that would seem like a return to civilized diplomacy by returning war dead from World War II from its territories to Japan and re-

opening negotiations with it on an international platform in Mongolia, it is unlikely that the DPRK has specifically taken a liking to PM Noda. Rather it can be expected that the pendulum may just as well swing the other way in the coming months after the negotiations, as the patten of the past has shown.

Chapter IV: Russo-Japanese relations

Map 2: Map of Japan, the southern Kuriles and Sakhalin¹⁷⁸



¹⁷⁸ Tsuyoshi Hasegawa, "Russo-Japanese relations and the security of North-East Asia in the 21st century," in *Russia and Asia: The Emerging Security Agenda*, ed. Gennady Chufirin (Oxford University Press, 1999): 320.

Chapter background

The relations between Japan and Russia today are to a large extent an extension of the ancient relations between the Russian Empire and Japan, followed by Japan-USSR (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) relations. Already the pre-Soviet relations between Russia and Japan are somewhat descriptive of the current situation in the realm of Russo-Japanese diplomacy: it is largely concentrated on their territorial agendas. Namely, today the two countries' main dispute of concern is their strongly conflicting views on the way the fate of the Southern Kuril Islands north of Japan (called the Northern Territories in Japan) should be dealt with.

Japan and Russia have had a colorful history of territorial exchanges when it comes to the Northern part of Japan. The first part of the chapter focuses on the history of Russo-Japanese territorial interactions which to a large extent laid the foundation to the present day disputes. The interactions are examined to give a general overview on the type of diplomacy that was practiced by the two countries in the past, especially in the case of the Sakhalin island and the Kurils, which have in the recent years seen increasing strategic defense hedging from Russia's side much to Japan's concern. The chapter's main focus of concern is on the role of the Northern Territories dispute, and how Japanese political leadership has dealt with the issue during the years after around the end of the Cold War, from the 1990s to 2012. This has happened first during the era of LDP dominance and then after the power shift of 2009 to the DPJ, as Japan has tried to make its case to return the control of the islands to itself.

The chapter looks at significant events that have affected the Russo-Japanese relations and how both sides have argued their case when it comes to the territorial dispute, which at the

moment has Russia on the leading side as it has controlled the Kuril Islands chain unilaterally since the end of World War II.

History of Russo-Japanese relations and the Northern Territories dispute

Selected history of Russo-Japanese territorial conflict

The earliest encounters between Russia and Japan, which was yet a closed maturing divided nation back then with its *sakoku* (isolation) policy, was in the 1700s. Russia attempted several times to open up relations with Japan, but at the time trade with foreigners was extremely harshly regulated and limited to Nagasaki and to the Dutch. Similar attempts followed in the coming decades but with little results. It had become a Russian dream to become the first country to open Japan up, and Russia went even as far as trying an approach similar to the later successful U.S. Commodore Perry, bringing its boats to Nagasaki and demanding opening up.¹⁷⁹ The Russian approach was not as aggressive as Perry's was later, and they were refused and turned back.

Indeed, the decisive factor was to be Commodore Perry's arrival to Edo in 1853, when Japan was finally forcefully told to open itself to the United States. Interaction with the rest of the world followed later, but much due to the kick start Perry had initiated. Diplomatic relations were established in 1855 with the Treaty of Commerce and Navigation Between Japan and Russia (Treaty of Shimoda). The treaty also established the border between the islands of Etorofu and Uruppu (Iturup and Urup), and established the island of Sakhalin as a place for co-

¹⁷⁹ George Alexander Lensen, *The Russian push toward Japan; Russo-Japanese relations, 1697-1875* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959).

habitation between the Japanese and Russians. However, the glooming beginning of a problem with the Northern Territories had already raised its head at this point, as Russia had in the earlier decades already started showing interest in the Northern islands, mapping and navigating the areas with interest.¹⁸⁰

In the 1860s the conflicting interests of territorial expansionism started affecting Russo-Japanese relations on a more serious level. Firstly, with the treaty of Peking, Russia was able to acquire the piece of coastline from China where it started building the military naval base of Vladivostok, which is at a close proximity with Japan -- an obvious military liability for Japan. At the same time, Japan was heading towards an emergent role of military and industrial power thanks to the opening up, and China on the other hand was facing significant internal weakening.

Both parties, Japan and Russia, were competing for Chinese territory to obtain.¹⁸¹ These territorial ambitions from Japan's side culminated in the Sino-Japanese war of 1894-1895, which ended in Japan's victory. The peace treaty (Treaty of Shimonoseki) sealed the peace. However, in the end Japan was denied access to the Liaodong Peninsula and the militarily important Port Arthur which was originally promised to Japan in the peace treaty. This was due to the "triple intervention" invoked by Russia, Germany and France.¹⁸²

After the Meiji Restoration started in 1868, Japan (at this point Empire of Japan) was increasingly heading towards modernization and its territorial interests were of utmost importance to keep its growing role in the region stable. The Russo-Japanese war of 1904-1905 was fought primarily on the issue of territorial importance of Korea, which Japan regarded as an

¹⁸⁰ John J. Stephan, *The Kuril Islands: Russo-Japanese frontier in the Pacific*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974).

¹⁸¹ "China and the West: Imperialism, Opium, and Self-Strengthening (1800-1921)," Columbia University Asia for educators, accessed October 1, 2012, http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/main_pop/kpct/kp_imperialism.htm.

¹⁸² Morinosuke Kajima, *The Diplomacy of Japan, 1894-1922*, (Tokyo, 1976).

important buffer zone towards any kind of military movement from the surrounding countries.¹⁸³ However, Russia had been making movement in the area in the form of e.g. building roads towards Korea. Japan decided to strike first, and a declaration of war was made in 1904. Japan being victorious in the war has been historically seen as significant due to the fact that it was the first war in recorded history where an Asian nation defeated a Caucasian nation in warfare.¹⁸⁴ Treaty of Portsmouth ended the war, and as a consequence Japan received the southern half of the Sakhalin Island from Russia and was able to lease the Liaodong peninsula (with the militarily important Port Arthur) for its use.¹⁸⁵

In 1922 hostile relations between Japan and Russia continued in the form of Japan supporting the anti-Bolshevik movement together with the British, Americans and French forces. Japan was supporting the movement in Asia, and even occupied Vladivostok during this time until it fell to the Red Army later on. Before World War II, in 1932, Japan started to show interest in Soviet territories. Japan had already invaded Manchuria, gaining more territory and established the Manchukuo puppet state. This was followed in 1936 with the anti-Comintern pact formed with Nazi Germany to counter the international communist expansion, which led to a sharp decline in Soviet-Japanese diplomatic relations.¹⁸⁶ Vladivostok, or the near area of it, turned out to be important when the first border skirmish of Battle of Lake Khasan broke out in 1938 there. More was to come, and border skirmishes happened more often on the Soviet-Manchurian border. However, nothing major happened until World War II when Japanese

¹⁸³ Russo-Japanese War Research Society. "The Russo-Japanese War Research Society FEBRUARY 1904 - SEPTEMBER 1905," accessed January 5, 2013, <http://www.russojapanesewar.com/intro.html>.

¹⁸⁴ Rotem Kowner, *The impact of the Russo-Japanese war*, (London: Routledge, 2007).

¹⁸⁵ Charles B. Doleac, *An Uncommon Commitment to Peace: Portsmouth Peace Treaty 1905*, (2006).

¹⁸⁶ Edan Corkill, "Train-shame death, anti-Comintern pact signed, Tokyo "paralyzed," Japan and U.S. to halt yen rise against dollar," *The Japan Times*, November 20, 2011, <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/text/fl20111120ec.html>.

expansionism saw its peak.¹⁸⁷ It can be seen, however, that the Japanese ambitions for expansion already existed during this time.

From the Soviet side of the relations it was the time of the Yalta conference (Yalta agreement) that was very significant for the coming years of Russo-Japanese relations. It was in the Yalta conference that Josif Stalin expressed his commitment to join the war against Japan after the fall of Germany would come to pass. This happened in the end August of 1945 when the USSR systematically took over Japanese territories starting from Manchukuo and ending up at the Kuril Islands, which are in question today regarding the territorial dispute.¹⁸⁸

During the Cold War Japan was firmly under the security umbrella of the United States, and thus fell into an opposite camp from the Soviet Union. It took Japan and the USSR until 1956 to sign the Joint Declaration which normalized their relations after the war. However, no formal peace treaty was created and the situation persists even today. Talks about negotiations of forming a peace treaty aside with ending the territorial conflicts exist, but no tangible results have been reached as of yet.

The Legacy of the Islands disputes: History of the Sakhalin issue

Historically speaking the Sakhalin (in Japan called Karafuto) island has been a diplomatic hindrance to Russo-Japanese relations since even before the modern Japanese state was established. First Japanese settlements were made in Sakhalin as early as Edo period, but already at this time there was rivalry between Russia and Japan in regards of sovereignty over the

¹⁸⁷ Alvin D. Coox, *The Anatomy of a Small War: The Soviet-Japanese Struggle for Changkufeng/Khasan, 1938* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1977).

¹⁸⁸ Hasegawa, *Racing the enemy*, 5.

area.¹⁸⁹ Japan decided to fortify its position in the area by unilaterally declaring sovereignty of the island as early as 1845, with the idea that it was an extension of its northernmost main island, Hokkaido. The same thing was done in the case of the Kuril islands at the time. However, the Russians already at this point contested the idea of Japanese sovereignty and responded by moving more people to the island and establishing coal mines, schools, prisons and churches in the area.¹⁹⁰

The 1855 Japan-Russia Commerce Treaty (Treaty of Shimoda) established the idea that both parties could coexist on the island. The area saw a North-South split, with Japanese on the South side and Russians on the northern one. However, a problem existed with the fact that no clear border between the Japanese and Russian settlements existed although the island was technically under joint sovereignty. Thus, there was still plenty of leeway for further arguments from both sides. The 1875 Sakhalin-Kuril Islands Exchange Treaty (Treaty of St. Petersburg) brought a change to the situation.¹⁹¹ Japan received the Kuril Islands chain, and the Russians were now in full control of the Sakhalin island. Another development followed after the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05, when Japan received again the southern part of Sakhalin below the 50° N with the Treaty of Portsmouth.¹⁹² At this time Japan called the southern part of Sakhalin Karafuto-cho (according to the Japanese name for the island) with Toyohara (today's Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk) as the capital. However, the present day problems followed after the end of World War II.

¹⁸⁹ Brett L. Walker, *The conquest of Ainu lands: ecology and culture in Japanese expansion, 1590-1800* (University of California Press, 2006).

¹⁹⁰ Russian Gateway, "Sakhalin," 2008, accessed October 6, 2012, <http://www.russian-gateway.com.au/sakhalin>

¹⁹¹ Patrick G. March, *Eastern Destiny: Russia in Asia and the North Pacific* (Praeger/Greenwood, 1996).

¹⁹² Ibid.

In 1945, in accordance with the Yalta agreement (agreement reached by United States, United Kingdom and the Soviet Union on post-war arrangements), Russia took over Sakhalin and called it an officially integrated part of Russia. A major evacuation and repatriation of Japanese and a partial one of Korean inhabitants followed. Many of the Koreans were refused repatriation to Japan, thus they had no choice but to stay on the island as "Sakhalin Koreans". The 2002 Russian census indicates that 333 ethnic Japanese still inhabit the island, being 0.06% of the island's population.¹⁹³ With the 1951 San Francisco Peace Treaty Japan officially ceded its claim to the Sakhalin Island, but it did not also recognize Russia's dominance over it. A major reason for this was the fact that the USSR was never a party to the San Francisco Peace Treaty which ended the war.

Even though it can be seen that from the official political side Japan has mostly already given up on the idea of there being any realistic chance for the return of Sakhalin from the Russians (very much unlike in the case of the Kurils), arguments backing Japanese right to the island persist from grassroots level. Historically speaking the mapping and exploration of the island was done very early by the Japanese, and was largely inhabited by the Japanese ethnic minority, the Ainu people, who gave it its original name.¹⁹⁴ Of course, the historical sentiment and moral right argument applies only so far, since the legal right to the island has already been given up by the Japanese.

¹⁹³ Official Russian census homepage, *Russian Census* (2004), accessed October 12, 2012, <http://www.perepis2002.ru/index.html?id=87>

¹⁹⁴ "Ainu Historical Events (Outline)," Ainu Association of Hokkaido, 2010, accessed October 12, 2012, <http://www.ainu-assn.or.jp/english/eabout05.html>

The Legacy of the Islands disputes: History of the Kurils issue

There are many coinciding factors with the Sakhalin island case and the current dispute with the Northern Territories issue. In fact, the naming of the islands as "Kurils" is also of controversy, as the naming will also affect the eventual fate of the country that has legal right to the islands. The Japanese inhabited the Kurils from the Edo period, and the four islands in question with today's dispute are the southernmost ones north of Hokkaido: Kunashiri, Etorofu (Iturup), Shikotan and Habomai.¹⁹⁵ The treaties of 1875 and 1905 are of importance from the Japanese perspective. As mentioned earlier, in 1875 Japan gained full control of the Kurils in exchange for Sakhalin Island. Similarly to the Sakhalin case, in the aftermath of World War II the Soviets took over the Kuril Islands. However, in the case of these islands it is important to note that this was done after Japan had already surrendered unconditionally.¹⁹⁶

One opinion is that that the surrender was actually the trigger for the Soviet invasion on the islands, as Stalin had a plan to take over Hokkaido as well - this of course was not a part of the Yalta agreement and the plan never materialized.¹⁹⁷ There is also the persisting question of original ownership of the islands, as Japan states that it had the claim to them since much earlier than during World War II, but Russia did not. This can make Russia's stance on taking them over during the aftermath of World War II look rather like aggressive opportunism than something that was done to end the war. Of course, from the Russian perspective the islands would be seen as legitimate "spoils of war" and the Yalta agreement can be interpreted as claiming the same.

However, whether the Yalta agreement was in any way binding is another case as it is called -- just an agreement between the powers that be, not a legal document sanctioned by

¹⁹⁵ Hasegawa, *Racing the enemy*.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

international law, although sometimes called the "Yalta Treaty". Historically speaking, peace treaties have been the tool to settle territorial disputes, but as one has not been reached yet between Russia and Japan, the case is left open from the Japanese perspective. The Yalta agreement is also hindered by its ambiguous writing style (perhaps done on purpose back at the time of drafting), which has led the participating parties and the states in question (such as Japan) to have several interpretations to its content. One of the key questions is whether the Yalta agreement applies to the "Northern Territories" at all, in the case that they are not a part of the Kuril chains in the first place.

On the other hand, President Truman's statement to Stalin in 1945 speaks its own language about how dangerous this leeway within the Yalta agreement turned out to be:

*You evidently misunderstood my message [about the Kuril Islands]... I was not speaking of any territory of the Soviet Republic. I was speaking of the Kurile Islands, Japanese territory, disposition of which must be made at a peace settlement.*¹⁹⁸

This key piece of evidence has brought light to the early U.S. position on the matter (that the Yalta agreement did not apply to the Northern Territories, and that the issue should be concluded bilaterally by Russia and Japan), but as expected Russia rejected this position

¹⁹⁸ Bruce A. Ellerman, Michael R. Nichols, et al., "A Historical Reevaluation of America's Role in the Kuril Islands Dispute," *Pacific Affairs* (1998-1999).

entirely.¹⁹⁹ This was likely due to the fact that it was already in control of the areas at that point, and did not want to reopen the case any further.

Another point of interest is the 1943 Cairo Declaration's statement that "Japan will also be expelled from all other territories which she has taken by violence and greed."²⁰⁰ As mentioned, if Russia did not have claim to the Kurils prior to 1945, it is hard to imagine the four southern islands of the chain to have been obtained by violence and greed by Japan in the first place. Russia was also openly criticized by the U.S. for not fulfilling the Yalta agreement accordingly, but instead seemingly demanding only the fulfillment of the parts of the agreement that are to its liking instead, such as keeping all the islands north of Hokkaido permanently instead of negotiating the issue of the Northern Territories with Japan.²⁰¹

The Soviet-Japanese Neutrality Pact (Japanese-Soviet Nonaggression Pact) of 1941 is another point of interest to look at. It can be argued that the USSR's decision to enter the war in 1945 was a violation of international laws, as the agreement even though canceled on April 5th of 1945, was still in effect until April 13th of 1946.²⁰² Most importantly, the main Japanese argument in the case is actually related to the naming of the islands. Japan remains at the position that the four contested islands are actually not a part of the Kuril island chain which is mentioned in the Article 2c of the San Francisco Treaty, which would nullify the Russian argument.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ National Diet Library, *1-1 Cairo Communiqué, December 1, 1943*, accessed October 13, 2012, http://www.ndl.go.jp/constitution/e/shiryō/01/002_46shoshi.html

²⁰¹ "Text of Dulles Reply to the Soviet Charges Against Japanese Peace Treaty; THE PRESIDENT ARRIVING TO OPEN PEACE CONFERENCE," *The New York Times archive*. September 4, 1951, <http://select.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=F40E16FB355B177B93C6A91782D85F458585F9&scp=8&sq=japan+treaty+soviet&st=p>

²⁰² Boris N. Slavinskiĭ and Geoffrey Jukes, *The Japanese-Soviet neutrality pact: a diplomatic history, 1941-1945* (London: Routledge, 2004).

The earliest mentions from Japan about the position of Etorofu and Kunashiri not being part of the Kurils can be traced to the drafting of the 1956 Soviet-Japanese Joint Declaration that normalized diplomatic relations.²⁰³ The Kuril Islands issue was not solved at this point, as Russia and Japan agreed to postpone it until a permanent peace treaty would be reached.

Japan remained with this statement regarding the islands of Etorofu and Kunashiri ever since the Joint Declaration was drafted, but Russia did not accept it back then similarly to the current situation where the two states remain at a stalemate in negotiations. Moreover, according to the Japanese logic, as Russia refused to sign the 1951 San Francisco treaty it should not have had any right to the islands in the first place. Rather, the Russian takeover of the islands can be perhaps seem more comparable to looting as Japan had already surrendered at the point of the takeover.

However, the Japanese arguments have been contested by western historians as tactics of expansion, as evidence of Japanese statesmen admitting that the four islands were included in the Kuril islands when the Joint Declaration was drafted, has surfaced.²⁰⁴ Seokwoo Lee cites an October 1951 Diet of Japan session where Director of Treaties Bureau of Foreign Ministry of Japan, Kumao Nishimura, includes the islands of Etorofu and Kunashiri to the Kuril Islands chain.²⁰⁵ This, on the other hand, would argue against the common Japanese statement that the Northern Territories (including the aforementioned islands) are a separate entity from the Kurils.

²⁰³ Hiroshi Kimura, *Japanese-Russian relations under Gorbachev and Yeltsin* (M.E. Sharpe, 2000).

²⁰⁴ Gregory Clark, "Northern Territories dispute highlights flawed diplomacy," *Japan Times*, March 24, 2005.; Gregory Clark, "Northern Territories dispute lives on self-righteous deadlock," May 12, 2009, <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/text/eo20090512gc.html>

²⁰⁵ Seokwoo Lee, "Towards a Framework for the Resolution of the Territorial Dispute over the Kuril Islands," *Boundary & Territory Briefing* 3, no. 6 (2001): 15.

The Northern Territories problem has not only affected Japan's international relations with its northern neighbor. Alexander Bukh argued in his 2012 paper that there has been a split between the Japanese people whose livelihoods are directly affected by the territorial row, and the Japanese government, which has turned the dispute into a major "national mission".²⁰⁶

Russo-Japanese relations under the LDP in the 1990s

Fluctuating relations towards normalization

Japan's relations with first the Soviet Union and then the newly established Russian Federation under the LDP in the 1990s saw a high level of fluctuation between a possible glimpse of hope for finding a way to solve the territorial problem towards an official peace treaty. The main reason for the fluctuation was the fact that both sides, although hopeful and eager to end the dispute, were in the end highly reluctant to be flexible with the territorial problem. One of the closest examples of such possible breakthroughs was when the USSR offered Japan two of the smallest islands in the Northern Territories. This plan, however, never materialized. One of the main reasons for the inflexibility with the issue has been nationalistic pressures on each country's home front.

Before the impending collapse of the Soviet Union, Japan met with the other G7 countries in 1990 with the LDP's Toshiki Kaifu as its Prime Minister. The meeting was held in Houston, Texas. Japan managed to get a word in about its case for furthering its claim with the

²⁰⁶ Alexander Bukh, "Constructing Japan's 'Northern Territories': Domestic Actors, Interests, and the Symbolism of the Disputed Islands," *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* 12 (2012): 483–509.

Northern Territories dispute by having its resolution being a priority added to the list of agendas of the meeting.²⁰⁷ At the same time PM Kaifu was trying out similar diplomacy with the other G7 countries by removing Japan's Defense White Paper notes about the Soviet Union being a danger in the Far East, something that Japan had been releasing regularly since the 1980s.²⁰⁸

This did not mean that Japan was completely removing its preparedness or wariness for the situation with the USSR in the region. Junzo Nakano writes:

*[...] within the 1990 White Paper, the references to Soviet Far East military forces being a "source of the increased military tensions" remained. Furthermore, in the 1991 edition, a similar reference was made.*²⁰⁹

Although the end of the Cold War and the subsequent collapse of the Soviet Union, and the power shift the collapse brought with it did start to bring eventual amelioration to the tension, Japan saw Russian forces in the Far East still holding an uncomfortably strong presence.

In 1993, under Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa of the brief era of non-LDP dominance (The Japan New Party was at the handle), the Tokyo Declaration on Russo-Japanese relations brought on increased sense of secured ties and improvement.²¹⁰ The era of the Tokyo Declaration saw increased hope for a long delayed formal peace treaty since the end of World

²⁰⁷ Junzo Nakano, "Japan's Security and the Russian Far East," in *Siberia and the Russian Far East in the 21st Century: Partners in the "Community of Asia*, ed. Akihiro Iwashita (Sapporo: Hokkaido University, 2005), 41.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ Nakano, "Japan's Security and the Russian Far East," 42.

²¹⁰ Nakano, "Japan's Security and the Russian Far East," 43.

War II. The Tokyo Declaration was one step from Japan's side towards realizing a more loosened policy, away from the strict non-separation of the territory issue and economic relations with Russia.²¹¹

Although the economy factor had started gradually to be seen as more important than before from Japan's side, the Northern Territories issue continued to be a dominating factor for shifts in tone for the relations. Ultimately little actual progress was seen after the Tokyo Declaration on the territorial frontier.

An example case of fluctuation in the relations was in 1992. Then Russian President Boris Yeltsin's attitude towards the dispute seeming initially open-minded, a breakthrough meeting in Japan was expected. Japan was offering Russia billions of dollars in aid with the condition that the islands dispute be settled for good.²¹² President Yeltsin had initially been quoted even as saying that he believes that the islands should be returned to Japan. However, the ameliorating relations saw a harsh setback due to pressures from the conservative forces on Russia's side. With the increased pressures from the home front the Russian president decided to cancel his official state visit to Japan that year.²¹³ The constant danger to Yeltsin from the Russian home front was not exactly anything new at this point, as not too long ago, in August 1991 the Soviet conservatives had attempted a coup against the president.²¹⁴ From this example one can see that the nationalistic pressures on the islands issue are severe from both sides.

²¹¹ Viktor B. Supian and M.G. Nosov, "Russian-Japanese economic relations," in *Russia and East Asia: The 21st Century Security Environment*, ed. Gilbert Rozman, M. Nosov et al. (New York: EastWest Institute, 1999), 88.

²¹² Will Englund, "Yeltsin cancels visit to Tokyo as dispute over islands remains unresolved", *Baltimore Sun*, September 10, 1992, http://articles.baltimoresun.com/1992-09-10/news/1992254050_1_kuril-islands-yeltsin-japan.

²¹³ Nakano, "Japan's Security and the Russian Far East," 44.

²¹⁴ Kazuhiko Togo, "Russia: Territorial Disputes and Strengthening the Relationship," in *Japan's Foreign Policy 1945-2009: The Quest for a Proactive Policy*, ed. Kazuhiko Togo (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 248.

The Krasnoyarsk Prospect and the Kawana Proposal

The next hope for major concrete steps of improvement with Russo-Japanese relations happened in 1997 under Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto of the LDP. In his speech to the Japan's Association of Corporate Executives he emphasized the coming importance of mutual interests with Russia and aiming for better relations in the long run.²¹⁵ Hashimoto met with the Yeltsin the same year unofficially in the Russian city of Krasnoyarsk, which led to an understanding that the it would be in both of their interests to come up with an official peace treaty by 2000.²¹⁶ During the talks Japan took initiative in proposing a plan known as the '*Hashimoto-Yeltsin*' plan, which aimed at a deeper economic interaction. The main agendas to implement through the plan were as follows:

- 1. Investment Cooperation Initiative*
- 2. Russia's incorporation in the global economy*
- 3. Enlargement of reform assistance*
- 4. Management training program*
- 5. Strengthening of the energy dialogue*
- 6. Peaceful utilization of nuclear power*
- 7. Space cooperation*²¹⁷

²¹⁵ Tsuneo Akaha, "A Paradigm Shift in Russo-Japanese Relations," *Demokratizatsiya: The Journal of Post-Soviet Democratization* 2, (Spring 1998): 347.

²¹⁶ Ibid.

²¹⁷ Togo, "Russia: Territorial Disputes," 254.

The developments of 1997 led into the signing of an agreement for 100 million dollars in loans to Russia's developmental projects in the Far East.²¹⁸

The gradual economic loosening of the relations continued as in 1998. Supian and Nosov write:

*In February 1998 it was announced that the Japanese Export-Import Bank, through the international Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD, or World Bank), had granted Russia unrestricted credit in the about of \$1.5 billion.*²¹⁹

A second attempt at an informal meeting between Yeltsin and Hashimoto followed in 1998 in Kawana. This is where PM Hashimoto tried to resolve the territorial dispute once and for all by offering concessions. He suggested a border demarcation between the two islands of Etorofu and Uruppu (Iturup and Urup).²²⁰ Unfortunately the main issue of a peace treaty never took hold in concrete terms in the end during Yeltsin's time, as both governments attitudes towards each other kept following the patterns of fluctuation.

In addition, the promising connection between Hashimoto and Yeltsin became less useful as Hashimoto had to step down as prime minister due to the LDP's defeat in the elections of July

²¹⁸ Supian and Nosov, "Russian-Japanese economic relations," 88.

²¹⁹ Supian and Nosov, "Russian-Japanese economic relations," 88-89.

²²⁰ Togo, "Russia: Territorial Disputes," 255.

1998.²²¹ The territorial dispute, and Russia's later demands to complete the process for peace by leaving the dispute unsettled made it virtually impossible for Japan to even consider accepting the terms, and the stalemate situation remained the same.²²²

Towards the end of the 1990s, in 1999 Japan and Russia tried to hasten the yet hopeful process of talks due to Yeltsin's oncoming visit to Japan during the LDP's PM Keizo Obuchi's term. A "border demarcation committee" was established to help with entertaining the idea of a compromise to ensure the existence of at least some kinds of results towards the Presidential visit.²²³ However, the effects were to an extent quite the contrary; the effort only showed both parties how far they in fact were from finding a viable solution to the issue. As the improbability of the previously hopeful year 2000 peace treaty plan became increasingly obvious, Japan was going as far as to consider Russia's old 1950s compromise suggestion on returning only two of the islands (Shikotan and the Habomai group, the smallest of the Southern Kurils and closest to Japan) and settling the issue once and for all through this.²²⁴ The plan never went through, and the fluctuating relationship once again fell into the static state of a stalemate.

In the end, the hopeful Krasnoyarsk suggestion for finding a way to conclude a peace treaty by 2000 was perhaps highly unrealistic to begin with, considering the difficult history of the negotiations that have seen very little flexibility from both sides. First of all, at this point President Yeltsin was known to be a big speaker when it came to hopeful promises, but his promises were rarely kept to their full extent. This kind of enthusiastic good intentions over realistic considerations were a miscalculation from Russia's part.²²⁵ From Japan's side it had

²²¹ Ibid.

²²² Hasegawa, "Russo-Japanese relations," 334.

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ Ibid.

²²⁵ Hasegawa, "Russo-Japanese relations," 335.

turned out to be a fatal error in judgment to place its hopes in this wager which was unlikely to bring results.

Russo-Japanese relations under the LDP in the 2000s

The Irkutsk Statement

In March 2001 former prime minister Yoshihiro Mori met with the Russian president Vladimir Putin in the Russian city of Irkutsk. The main agenda of the meeting was to negotiate on reaching a permanent peace treaty.²²⁶ Although nothing binding on the peace treaty was decided on in Irkutsk, they reached an agreement on the so called Irkutsk Statement, which reaffirmed both sides' wish to work with "utmost efforts" towards a peace treaty in addition to talks on increased economic cooperation.²²⁷

Coming to the 2000s the Northern Territories issue was still the main source of problems for the Russo-Japanese relations, and Japan's objective of bargaining for the Northern Territories had not changed. Minor political incidents such as the governor of the Sakhalin oblast (area of both the Sakhalin area and the Kurils) accusing Japan of spreading propaganda about the fate of the islands took place.²²⁸

Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's coming into office was another development, as he took office in April 2001 and the Russian Premier Vladimir Putin officially invited him for a

²²⁶ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, *Japan-Russia Summit Meeting in Irkutsk*, March 25, 2001, accessed November 17, 2012, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/europe/russia/pmv0103/summit.html>.

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ Mark A. Smith, "Russo-Japanese Relations," (Defence Academy of the United Kingdom: Conflict Studies Research Centre, 2003), 5.

visit. During the end of PM Mori's term and the beginning of PM Koizumi's term there was still hope left for an agreement on the islands issue. However, Togo writes:

And yet again, seven months of negotiations ended when Makiko Tanaka, daughter of the late Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka, assumed the post of Minister for Foreign Affairs at the end of April 2001. The total confusion which occurred between the Foreign Minister and the Foreign Ministry officials paralyzed many aspects of Japanese foreign policy, including its Russian policy.²²⁹

What Togo refers to is that as foreign minister, Tanaka had already from before gained a reputation of having a direct and confrontational style, clashing with other officials of the ministry, who had their own interests to protect. These open clashes over "personnel transfers, reform steps and policy issues," and allegations of mishandling of her secretaries' salaries eventually led to her losing the position in 2002.²³⁰ She was also much criticized for her lack of knowledge when it came to international diplomacy.²³¹

²²⁹ Togo, "Russia: Territorial Disputes," 258.

²³⁰ "Former Foreign Minister Tanaka tenders Diet resignation," *The Japan Times*, August 10, 2002, <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/text/nn20020810a1.html>.

²³¹ *Ibid.*

In the end nothing concrete was accomplished in the meeting, as both parties continued their inflexible stances when it came to the Northern Territories dispute and their differentiating views on the 1956 Declaration which normalized Russo-Japanese relations.²³²

In fact, it would seem that both sides had increasingly hardened stances on the issue especially further towards Koizumi's term. In 2002 it became apparent that there were to be very little space for negotiation between the countries, as Russia's deputy Foreign Minister Losyukov voiced out loud his feeling that the relations were at a declined state.²³³

The Six-Point Action Plan

By the time of PM Koizumi's next visit to Russia in 2003, however, further fluctuation occurred as hopeful six-point action plan had been established by cooperation from both parties for the betterment of relations. The main points of the plan included:

- 1. Deepening of Political Dialogue*
- 2. Peace Treaty Negotiations*
- 3. Cooperation in the International Arena*
- 4. Cooperation in the Trade and Economic Areas*
- 5. Development of Relations in Defense and Security*
- 6. Advancements in Cultural and Interpersonal Exchange.*²³⁴

²³² Togo, "Russia: Territorial Disputes," 258.

²³³ Smith, "Russo-Japanese Relations," 6.

²³⁴ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, *Japan-Russia Action Plan*, accessed November 16, 2012, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/europe/russia/pmv0301/plan.html>.

Not only was the plan drafted, during his visit to Russia PM Koizumi ended up signing the plan with the Russian Premier. This could be seen as one of the biggest developments in the relations in decades, as it was a concrete step towards positive development. However, from a realistic point of view the plan's actual possibility to do anything else than reiterate the previous hopeful scenarios was dim, as it left out any future development plans with the territorial dispute.

In his 2003 policy speech PM Koizumi reaffirmed thoughts from Japan's side as he spoke in a fashion that made it clear that the situation regarding the Northern Territories was still far from being solved, although hope was not to be abandoned completely:

*Between Japan and Russia, there remains a "negative legacy of the 20th century", in the issue of where the islands of Habomai, Shikotan, Kunashiri and Etorofu belong. I firmly believe there is great potential for development of the relations between Japan and Russia. In reality, however, our two countries have realized only a small portion of such development potential, partly because of the existence of the abovementioned issue.*²³⁵

Aside from the realistic point of view of his statement, on the bilateral level aside from the territorial dispute Russo-Japanese relations saw another development as they started up a telephone hotline for the leaders to communicate with in emergencies. The economic

²³⁵ Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet, *Speech by Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi at The International Scientists Conference*, January 11, 2003, accessed November 16, 2012, http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/koizumispeech/2003/01/11kouen_e.html.

development part of the 2003 action plan also was one of the most likely ones to succeed, as Japanese interest in terms of investments in the Russian Far East was undeniable in potential.²³⁶

The year 2005 was coincidentally good for diplomatic occasion between Japan and Russia, as it marked anniversaries of three major events in Russo-Japanese history: the 150th of the signing of the Treaty of Shimoda of 1855, 100th anniversary of the end of Russo-Japanese War of 1905 and the 60th anniversary of the end of World War II. With Junichiro Koizumi still on the PM seat, Japan used the opportunity to open up the discussion on the islands dispute once again. However, Koizumi's initiative was shadowed by the fact that he had in 2004 become the first prime minister to get closer to the islands for an 'inspection', which was highly controversial on the Russian side.²³⁷ The situation in the end resulted in a back-and-forth of arguments from the Japanese and Russian media, where both leaders expressed their rather nationalist sounding views to please their audiences.²³⁸

In 2006, During Koizumi's last months as Prime Minister another incident regarding the islands took place as a Japanese fisherman was shot to death by Russian coast guard near the disputed territory, while the rest of the crew were detained. Although Japanese fishermen getting detained had been a regular issue between the countries, fatalities in such incidents had been extremely rare.²³⁹ The situation was a major blow to the hopeful thinkers expecting the anniversary of the relations to bring some kind of positive development to the ties.

²³⁶ Smith, "Russo-Japanese Relations," 10.

²³⁷ Kanako Takahara, "Koizumi to 'inspect' Russian-held islands," *The Japan Times*, August 26, 2004, <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/text/nn20040826a1.html>.

²³⁸ "2005 Marks Milestone in Japan-Russia Relations: 150th Anniversary of Diplomatic Ties," *Foreign Press Center Japan*, accessed October 15, 2012, http://www.fpcj.jp/old/e/mres/japanbrief/jb_31.html.

²³⁹ Joseph P. Ferguson, "Fishing Wars: Japan-Russia relations continue downward spiral," August 22, 2006, accessed from <http://www.stratad.net/downloads/PacNet%2041.pdf>.

In 2008, as Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda of the LDP had taken office, a common topic when facing anti-Japanese sentiment (textbook revisions) arose, complicating diplomatic ties with Russia. Plans for school textbook guidelines in Japan, which would cite the Kurils to be Japanese territory, spread in the media. This resulted in Russia giving its official statement to denounce the action as counter-productive for the relations.²⁴⁰

In 2009 Prime Minister Taro Aso of the LDP met with the Russian President Medvedev on the Sakhalin island. This meeting was followed by Russian Prime Minister Putin meeting with PM Aso in Japan. To no extreme surprise, the hopeful atmosphere that these two meetings had created crumbled soon enough, as PM Aso the same year publicly blurted out his view during a Japanese budget committee meeting that the Russian occupation of the islands is in the end "illegal".²⁴¹ Nationalistic sentiment had once again defeated diplomacy, and the issue remained at a stalemate.

Russo-Japanese relations and the rise of the DPJ

The events in 2009 were followed by the Democratic Party of Japan victory at the ballots. In general the DPJ proved to have a rather mild approach towards Russia during 2009-2012. While Russia was increasing its presence on the Kurils, Japan was avoiding confrontation. This was likely largely due to the fact that it had its hands full with the worsening Sino-Japanese situation of the Senkaku islands.

²⁴⁰ "Japanese schoolbooks to claim Russia's Southern Kuril Islands," *RT News*, July 16, 2008, <http://rt.com/news/japanese-schoolbooks-to-claim-russias-southern-kuril-islands/>.

²⁴¹ Kazuhiko Togo, "Major Foreign Policy issues from 2004 to 2009," in *Japan's Foreign Policy 1945-2009: The Quest for a Proactive Policy*, ed. Kazuhiko Togo (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 418.

The first proposal for positive development with the Russo-Japanese relations during the DPJ came with PM Yukio Hatoyama. The DPJ's first prime minister had in September announced a hopeful and positive view on future Russo-Japanese relations as he pointed out that "building a trusting relationship with Russian leaders was the key to solving a decades-long dispute over four islands seized by the Soviet Union in 1945" being a part of his policy.²⁴² He also had his grandfather's name to his side, as the former PM Ichiro Hatoyama was the first Japanese PM to ever visit the USSR and was a familiar name to the Russians.²⁴³

However, with his meeting with the Russian leader Medvedev in 2009 his stance already seemed stricter. As Medvedev was interested in talking about flexibility and the importance of economy between Japan and Russia, Hatoyama insisted that the two topics of economy and territory are strictly connected like "*two wheels of a cart*."²⁴⁴ This was in a way an unexpected step towards looking at Japan's past policy of non-separation of the issues, which had gradually been loosening already since the late 1990s.

On the other hand, the next year Hatoyama was already proudly newscast as "vowing to resolve the territorial row with Russia."²⁴⁵ However, PM Hatoyama did not in the end gain any major positive advancement with the Russian issue. From one aspect, his words often seemed to be too optimistic considering the fact that he was not ready to continue in a different direction from his predecessors when it comes to furthering flexibility with the territorial issue. This was important especially due to the fact that the economic relations between Russia and Japan had

²⁴² "Japan's Hatoyama keen to improve ties with Russia," *Reuters*, September 3, 2009, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2009/09/03/us-japan-politics-russia-sb-idUSTRE5823KX20090903>.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁴ Joseph P. Ferguson, "Japanese Prime Minister Hatoyama Meets President Medvedev in New York," *The Jamestown Foundation*, October 6, 2009, http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=35583.

²⁴⁵ "Hatoyama vows to resolve territorial row with Russia," *The Japan Times*, February 8, 2010, <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/text/nn20100208a1.html>.

seen some serious advancement before Hatoyama's term. Hatoyama causing the inseparability of the territorial and economic topics to resurface seems counterproductive.

His follower, PM Naoto Kan's term saw more provocative developments from Russia's side on the islands, as the Russian President Medvedev visited the Kurils in the latter half of 2010, meeting local inhabitants and announced plans for further development on the islands.²⁴⁶ PM Kan's role was to contribute to the back-and-forth of the diplomatic rows by announcing the Japanese government's view of Russia's move as "regrettable".²⁴⁷

No major backlash followed on the issue from Japan's side, but Russia's stance on the issue seemed firmer than ever. The fact that President Medvedev was the first Russian leader to ever travel to the islands also sent a clear message to Japan. Later on Medvedev also, to no surprise, stated his firm plans to continue such visits. Japanese Foreign Minister Seiji Maehara on the other hand managed to make Japan's stance on the issue even more sheepish, as he only stated that it would "hurt the Japanese people's feelings."²⁴⁸

At the end of PM Kan's term Russia announced further plans for the islands in terms of active defense capability, as President Medvedev further emphasized his stance that the islands are an "inseparable part of the country and a strategic Russian region."²⁴⁹

Later in 2011 since PM Yoshihiko Noda took over leadership in Japan, the situation with the stalemate has not seen much movement from Japan's part and has remained confidently active from Russia's side. A ministerial meeting between Russia and Japan is in the planning for

²⁴⁶ "Russian president visits disputed Kuril islands," *BBC News*, November 1, 2010, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-11663241>.

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

²⁴⁹ "Tokyo regrets RF Security Council chief visit to S Kurils," *Itar-Tass*, September 12, 2011, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c154/223486.html>.

December 2012 with the territorial dispute in mind, but Japan's stance on the issue seems extremely dormant at the moment. PM Noda's January 2012 policy speech mentioned the previously central Northern Territories issue only in passing.²⁵⁰

Summary

In this chapter the focus has been on the history of Russo-Japanese relations, with the territorial disputes that cause schism between the two states even today, in mind. The complex and yet extremely disputed history of Japan's territorial issues with Russia was looked upon since the pre-Soviet times, as the very same areas are of issue even today between the two countries. While the question over Sakhalin island has been settled between the two governments over the Northern Territories problem and the diplomatic row has kept back-and-forth fluctuations in the Russo-Japanese relations going on for decades.

The 1990s saw a time of continued attempts to keep the negotiations alive. Especially the Tokyo Declaration of 1993, and later negotiations in Krasnoyarsk and Kawana gave hope for future warming of relations. At the same time the economic sector was developing due to Japan's loosening policy of non-separation between the issues of economy and territory.

Still during the LDP's era, the early 2000s saw another hopeful time during the transition period from PM Mori to PM Koizumi. The negotiations, however, died due to unclear policymaking after Makiko Tanaka took the Foreign Minister's office. PM Koizumi also managed to cause controversy by initiating an 'inspection' of the islands. During his follower PM

²⁵⁰ "Japan, Russia agree to arrange Noda's Russia trip in Dec.," *Kyodo News*, September 8, 2012, <http://english.kyodonews.jp/news/2012/09/181193.html>; also Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet (2012, January 24).

Fukuda's term a textbook revision controversy arose likewise, further causing distancing between Japan and Russia when it came to solving the territorial issue. Fukuda's follower, PM Aso, also caused further controversy on the Russian side by describing the occupation of the islands as illegal.

Further into the 2000s the level of communication on the territorial issue had much deteriorated into a self-repeating exchange of decided hard-line policies from both sides. During the DPJ's era PM Hatoyama took a step back by reconnecting the issues of territory and economy in his statement, while President Medvedev was gesturing for flexibility. Hatoyama's follower, PM Kan, on the other hand had to witness further provocative action from Russia's side as it started to increase its high-level personnel visits on the islands and implementing plans for boosting security on them.

Subsequently, during the current PM Noda's term a stalemate between Russia and Japan on the Kuril Islands continues. At the moment only Russia has proven to be making serious proactive effort in keeping its influence on the islands issue dangerously clear by increasing its defense capabilities on them. The Japanese government, on the other hand, has shown a trend of waning rigor when it comes to keeping the discussion on the issue alive, likely due to its more imminent territorial threat of the Senkaku islands from China's side.

Chapter V: Discussion and conclusion

This chapter looks at the findings from the three case studies of China, North Korea and Russia from several viewpoints. As stated in Chapter I, the research framework that relies on a comparative analysis between security issues and policies within the LDP and DPJ periods, is used to look at the progress Japan's political climate saw in the past and present towards the main research question of "How have Japanese relations with China, North Korea and Russia developed in the post-Cold War era in terms of Japanese security under the LDP and the DPJ?".

This chapter first analyzes the findings on how the early history of Japan's relations with its three neighboring countries relates to the current security environment and the territorial disputes.

After an analysis on the importance of the historical aspect discussed at the beginning of each case study chapter, this chapter addresses the findings on LDP and DPJ policies towards the security issues and the main security events that took place under them until the year 2012.

Finally, this chapter looks at the findings on the main question and concludes whether the DPJ has been able to differentiate its approaches and policies in comparison to the LDP after its victory in 2009.

Role of Japan's early historical relations with China, North Korea and Russia

The People's Republic of China

The debate around the Senkaku islands has been especially harsh in the recent years. The interpretation of the Sino-Japanese history is the key element that allows the debate to exist in the first place. As mentioned in Chapter II, especially from China's side the arguments for the islands' ownership rely heavily on old historical evidence such as maps and imperial Chinese documents made prior to the 19th century, while Japan insists with its argument that the islands were no-man's-land when taken by Japan. The motive for using these early historical documents to gain access to the islands from China's side still faces harsh criticism. As mentioned in Chapter II, the claims grew heavy only after natural resources were found around the islands in the 1970s. As per to the historical aspect of this research, from the case study findings it is clear that history plays an important part in the territorial spat over the Senkaku islands. However, whether the historical findings from China's side are only used as a tool for opportunism is another issue. In this sense, two categories of Senkaku arguments can be created: one that acknowledges the importance of China's claim to the islands on the grounds of the historical evidence, and another that sees China's claim for the islands as a more recent issue starting around the 1970s.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea

The Japan-DPRK relations, being mainly concerned on the security of the whole region due to the nuclear threat, are of different kind from the territorial spats. The difficult history between the two countries, however, contributes to the issue. Japan is not by any means the only country in the region concerned about the DPRK's explicit ambitions to go nuclear. However, the

fact that historically speaking North Korea has had a tendency to treat Japan as a natural enemy, partially to strengthen the original hero legend of Kim Il-Sung, contributes to the difficult relations. The fact that Japan's invasions on the Korean peninsula go as far as the 16th century is another contributing factor. North Korea's confrontationist policy was also easy to take further after World War II, as Japan finally lost its control over the Korean peninsula and all the previous colonies were treated as victims. In this sense, the legacy of Japan's World War II aggression gave the leaders of the DPRK the perfect, most important tool of anti-Japanese indoctrination which strongly presents itself even today as the two have no official diplomatic ties. Due to these factors, the findings of the case study point to the fact that the early historical events contribute to the non-existence of official Japan-DPRK relations in the 21st century. The lack of official diplomatic relations left the informal channel open during the LDP period mainly to keep tabs on the Japanese wives issue and to make sure anti-Japanese sentiment in South Korea would not get out of control.

The Russian Federation

The islands in question with the Northern Territories dispute between Japan and Russia saw several developments before 1945 when Russia took over the Kuril Islands chain. Russia had in the past been in control of the Kurils as well, before it ceded them to Japan with the 1875 Treaty of St. Petersburg. This past control over the islands can be speculated to be part of the original Russian longing to retake its control over them. In addition to this Japan had also in the past shown significant expansionism within territories that Russia subsequently took over in 1945 before acquiring the Kurils. In short, Japan and Russia have had an active past of rivaling territorial ambitions. Thus, it is not surprising that Russia wanted to gain more foothold in the region by taking the Kurils permanently after World War II. In this sense, judging by the

findings from the historical case study on Russia it can be said that the historical territorial rivalries between Russia and Japan had an impact on the fact that Russia wanted to expand its territory near Japan; an opportunity that arose after the Yalta conference in 1945. The Northern Territories issue with Russia is still closely connected to the normalization declaration of 1954 (which considers the returning of two of the islands), and has throughout the post-Cold War period until present day maintained its status as the bottom line for hope of negotiations.

The LDP and DPJ: Security issues and policies, achievements and failures

The LDP from the early 1990s saw the beginnings of a rising China, which also led to the growing popularity of the China Threat Theory inside the Japanese government. The original "China school" of experts was soon gone from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and this affected Japanese policymaking making it wary of unintentionally supporting China's rise to possible hegemony through technological trade. At the same time Japan still had to face accusations from China's side about the burden of its wartime past, which led to a certain level of carefulness whenever dealing with China, although the Senkaku islands issue was flaring up already at this point. The DPJ, on the other hand, has proceeded to have very different policies within the terms of its three prime ministers on China. This had become evident especially after the Senkaku issue had grown to a far larger proportion than what it was during the 1990s and 2000s under the LDP. The era of apologizing seems to be over, as China continues its assertiveness.

With North Korea, the LDP saw decades of back-and-forth of negotiations after the original negotiator who was seen as having promise, Shin Kanemaru of the LDP, was out of the picture. The LDP's policy of keeping the abductions issue a main priority with the DPRK made

the original bilateral negotiations and the later multilateral negotiations complicated. The sporadic nature of North Korea's amelioration efforts which were followed with abrupt missile tests also caused the LDP's policy on North Korea to be generally reactive, with its biggest weapon being cutting of food aid and sanctions. However, after the original Six-Party talks fell through once and for all in 2009, the movement on the DPRK sector under the DPJ governments has been slight. In regards to the centrality of the abductions issue, solving it has held a strong bipartisan support within the government. In this sense, whether it is the LDP or the DPJ in power the issue is almost certain to stay central to the government's DPRK policy.

With Russia, the LDP era faced several hopeful negotiations towards a peace treaty and finding a solution to the Northern Territories issue. Although many of the meetings such as those between Japan and Russian presidents Yeltsin and Putin only gave results that worked towards a growing economic cooperation and postponement of the Northern Territories decision, hope for continuation of the talks was alive most of the time. During the DPJ's era this gap between Japan and Russia on the Northern Territories issue has become larger. Japan faces a largely unprecedented situation of having a very diminishing stack of bargaining chips for negotiating with Russia at this point. The original (once hopeful) plan of conceding to taking only two smaller islands is in the past. Russia with its actions of security developments on the islands has shown its intention of going for a permanent solution, and policymaking from Japan's side has no choice but to be reactive depending on Russia's future actions.

Overall, in comparison many of the movements inside the LDP during its long rule after the Cold War were small compared to the "pendulum swings" Japan is seeing today with the DPJ's first three prime ministers and their priorities, preferences and policies. The security alliance with the United States was always a priority to keep in mind for the LDP, and this was

evident especially during the early and mid 2000s under PM Koizumi. The DPJ, on the other hand, has seen much more fluctuation inside the party with its policies during the short while it has been in power with its three prime ministers Hatoyama, Kan, and Noda.

The three Prime Ministers of the DPJ: Hatoyama, Kan and Noda

The DPJ's era in power has seen three prime ministers during whose terms the so called swinging pendulum effect has been evident in policy focuses.

During the DPJ's first prime minister Yukio Hatoyama's time, the main issue the DPJ's reputation was hanging on was the planned relocation of the Futenma Air Station from Okinawa, as he himself made it an important part of the DPJ manifesto. Although largely linked to domestic politics, the Futenma issue was deeply connected to Hatoyama's plan of moving Japan away from too much U.S. control. The DPJ's policy at this time was largely revolving around aiming at switching to a more independent decision making process from the U.S. security umbrella. This attempt aimed at making the two more equal partners in terms of security. This was one end where the pendulum was swinging at -- growing independence from the U.S. influence, and at the same time emphasizing the importance of ties with Asia, namely China. Considering the fact that Japan's strong alliance with the United States has historically been important to how strongly Japan can deal with China (without the constant backing of the U.S. Japan would not have much if any credibility), this was a bold attempt at change.

After much confusion on his means to achieve such a difficult task of convincing the U.S. decision makers to agree with him on the Futenma issue, Hatoyama budged and admitted that he had been overly ambitious and given especially the people of Okinawa false hope with the issue. However, his policy of reducing the emphasis on the U.S. security alliance had already made a

mark as the DPJ's first major step away from decades of LDP tradition of keeping it as one of the main priorities. The extreme end of the pendulum swing Hatoyama was aiming at with his foreign policy proved highly unsustainable, as the the American troops in Japan were by any scale too important a factor to simply undermine in such a way.

At the same time as a part of the effort of making Japan a more independent leader in the region, a much talked topic during the 2009 elections was Hatoyama's idea of the "East Asian Community". This idea proved to go nowhere as well, as criticisms started piling up and the roles of power players such as Japan and China in the framework of the EAC were yet largely ambiguous. In the end none of the DPJ prime ministers managed to create any concrete results regarding the almost utopian East Asian Community idea by 2012.

One of the major changes regarding Sino-Japanese relations during Hatoyama's term was the fact that Japan started downplaying the human rights issues of China (perhaps towards a better relations with the Chinese leaders who he was approaching with his new U.S. policy). The last leaders of the LDP had kept these issues more surfaced compared to the DPJ.

In the case of the DPRK Hatoyama faced the sinking of the Cheonan during his term. The prime minister did not take a hardliner policy towards this issue despite his previous talk about making Japan a more powerful player in the region with a more equal relationship with the United States, but very much followed the rest of the world leaders' condemning reactions towards the DPRK. The dilemma of the status of the American troops on Okinawa was not Hatoyama's only promise that proved to be too much to chew. In the case of Russia Hatoyama once again made promises that he could not possibly keep, as he vowed to solve the territorial

row with Russia during his term, but in the end did not manage to create any concrete results before having to step down in the aftermath of the Futenma fiasco.

Hatoyama's follower, prime minister Naoto Kan's task was to show that he would not follow the same path and would bring actual change to the political arena. Surprisingly, the political pendulum inside the DPJ swung to the other side in regards to some of the main policies of the DPJ election platform. PM Kan proved not to be so interested in Hatoyama's East Asian Community idea, and the plan was virtually forgotten during his term. Instead of focusing on the Asian cooperation aspect, he returned the focus towards the traditional priority of the U.S.-Japan security alliance. Kan's plans for the American troops on Okinawa were also differentiating from those of Hatoyama. Hatoyama had debated for a significant decrease of U.S. troops on Okinawa, while Kan returned to a previous plan of simply moving the troops to a different location inside Okinawa as the financial burden of taking care of a more large-scale operation of troops movement was still under debate.

Unfortunately Kan's reputation as a maverick became secondary after the 3/11 twin disasters that occurred in Japan. Suddenly all eyes were on him to responsibly get Japan out of the disasters' aftermath. What ended up being the biggest problem was the lack of transparency with dealing with the disasters, something that in the end gave Kan's opposition the necessary ammunition to ensure that his reputation as a leader would be tarnished with ease. On the other hand, the positive impact of the American troops' aid during the aftermath of the disasters gave the intense criticisms on the Okinawa issue a breather, which helped Kan and his successor to justify their continually increased closeness with the United States.

The DPJ was also more vocal about its policy towards China during Kan's term in opposed to Hatoyama. In the aftermath of the Chinese trawler incident Kan openly talked about the problems China was creating with its increased naval activities in the region, and said that it was arousing worry and suspicion with its neighbors. Foreign Minister Maehara went further with the DPJ's seemingly assertive policy by openly claiming the incident to have been deliberate on behalf of the skipper. This was also at the different side for the swing of the political pendulum when comparing DPJ's approach to China with his predecessor, whose one main concern was connecting Japan's Asian neighbors.

The shelling of Yeonpyeong of South Korea by the DPRK happened during PM Kan's term. Kan's reaction towards the attack was nothing notable, and a change in the DPRK policy towards anything harsher could not be seen. The legacy of the abduction issue since the LDP days, however, was still strong and remained as one of the main priorities for Japan's DPRK policy during Kan's term. This was evident from his statements from 2011, when he cited toughening sanctions if the situation on the abductions would not get clearer.

During Kan's term the Russian expansion on the Kurils and the Northern Territories area continued and not much change in policy could be seen. Japan was facing an era of having to deal with Russia with a highly reactive policy based on their movements on the Kurils issue, as no promise of return of the islands existed at the moment. Russia was holding all the cards, continuing to increase its defenses and presence in the area. In the end this meant that Japan could not do much aside from condemning further movements and hoping for a gesture from Russia's part. After all, the policy on economic cooperation between the countries was still going strong.

Kan's follower, prime minister Noda has had one of the biggest challenges in the recent years when it comes to Sino-Japanese relations. The Senkaku islands problem started flaring up in a major way after Japan's announcement of the plans to buy the islands to itself officially in 2012. The anti-Japanese riots in China and increased Chinese suspicious fishing boat activities around the islands have kept the DPJ on its toes. Noda's policy on the issue has been uncompromising. Hatoyama's East Asian Community has continued to disappear into the background during Noda's term. This is likely to be connected with the current political climate with China, as it would probably be impossible to approach it with the territorial row heating up. Dealing with the Senkaku issue first has been one of Noda's main priorities.

In the case of the DPRK the first actual developments towards a new bilateral negotiation happened during PM Noda's term in 2012. Trying to shed more light on the age old abduction issue, Japanese and North Korean delegations met first in Beijing in September, and later in Ulan Bator in November. The results of the meetings are yet to be released, but knowing the DPRK's track record with Japan on these issues the chance of anything concrete coming out of the talks is not very high. However, as the DPJ's policy with the DPRK has not achieved any concrete results during the terms of the three prime ministers, this may be the first step towards another attempt at getting the closed state to open up.

The Northern Territories issue with Russia during Noda's term as well has largely maintained the status quo. Both sides have been uncompromising with their policies. In the end, Russia has no reason at the moment to make amends with the islands issue as it has proven to be highly capable of expanding its influence over them. Moreover, due to the spat over the Senkaku islands the priority for Japan has shifted greatly towards maintaining the Sino-Japanese situation

under control instead of concentrating on the Russo-Japanese policy, which is unlikely to move one way or another without a friendly gesture from Russia's side.

With the following conclusive remarks on the era under the DPJ, this study has shown that although the DPJ was extremely eager to give the general public grand ideas of change in comparison to the LDP before and after the elections of 2009, the DPJ was overall largely guilty of over-promoting its ability to differentiate its main policies from the LDP. Rather, the political pendulum inside the DPJ's own leadership terms with its three prime ministers has shown greater contrast. This has made the party's policy priorities especially between PM Hatoyama and his followers to seem to be from a wholly different playbook, which does not bode well for the party's future. The oncoming elections of December 2012 will be the main indicator on how the political pendulum between the LDP and the DPJ moves next, and if there will be more abrupt future swings inside the DPJ leadership's policy as well.

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