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## As China Continues to Grow Regionally, are Relations with Japan Likely to Become More Difficult?

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Relations between China and Japan have historically been conducted amidst wide power disparities. Prior to Japan's Meiji Restoration in 1868, China largely held the regional sway, but the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries witnessed a reversal of roles. However, the recent resurgence of the Chinese economy and Japan's stagnation has set the stage for a regional struggle as two powerful states fight for influence.

Kenneth Waltz's realist depiction of international anarchy warns that 'with many sovereign states, with no system of law enforceable among them, with each state judging its grievances and ambitions according to the dictates of its own reason or desire—conflict, sometimes leading to war, is bound to occur.' [1] While Japan views China as a 'rival intent on usurping regional leadership and gaining regional military hegemony,' [2] China remains wary of Japan's perceived 'social and cultural inclination toward militarism.' [3] These characterisations, rooted in historical interpretation and prejudice, are set to collide with an emergent nationalism and growing economic and military rivalry, to severely inhibit amicable Sino-Japanese relations. Indeed, such is the depth of resentment that moderate Chinese journalist Ma Licheng was forced to retire and emigrate to Hong Kong after imploring that 'both of our peoples must check their nationalistic impulses, abandon their narrow-minded prejudices, and march forward toward regional unification.' [4] This essay argues that China's rise, and the inevitable competition for influence and prestige it causes, will result in increasingly difficult future Sino-Japanese relations. This essay will begin with a theoretical examination of the Sino-Japanese relationship and great power rivalries, before moving on to analyse the importance of jingoistic nationalism, economic and military competition and the role of the United States as the ultimate guarantor of security in Asia.

### The Theoretical Landscape and the Importance of History

In History of the Peloponnesian War, Thucydides' description of the causes of war between the Athenians and the Spartans arguably illuminates the developing Sino-Japanese rivalry. Thucydides notes that 'the growth of the powers of Athens, and the alarm which this inspired in Lacedaemon, made war inevitable...[because Lacedaemon] decided to act while they could exert some influence over the course of events.' [5] This is not to say that war between China and Japan is unavoidable or even inevitable, but that the powerful will always feel threatened by a rising challenger. This realist conception of international relations can be found in Hans Morgenthau's notion of the eternal struggle for power, which, 'by its very nature...is never ended, for the lust for power, and the fear of it, is never still.' [6] Thus, in analysing Sino-Japanese relations, a certain amount of hostility is to be expected, particularly when discussing two nations who are increasingly evenly matched in economic terms, who share a history of conflict and distrust, and whose geographical proximity invites competition. Liberal theorists tend to point to the 'pacifying power of three interrelated and mutually reinforcing causal mechanisms: economic interdependence, international institutions, and democratization.' [7] Notably, economic interdependence can make war untenable for both sides while institutionalism means that 'power is "tamed" by making it less consequential.' [8] This essay, although recognising the salience of the liberal school, aligns with the realist paradigm and argues that an abiding power contest, in which China and Japan jostle for regional leadership and global relevance, will ensue. Accordingly, the ancient Chinese proverb which states that 'two tigers cannot live together peacefully on the same mountain,' [9] is particularly insightful. Michael Yahuda contends that 'notwithstanding the close and significant economic interdependence

# As China Continues to Grow Regionally, are Relations with Japan Likely to Become More Difficult?

Written by Andy Jones

between China and Japan, there is no corresponding spillover into social, intellectual, or security engagement. The result is the two societies have not got closer together.' [10]

Perhaps the most crucial driver of deteriorating Sino-Japanese relations is a history of antagonism and antipathy, which will be touched on throughout the essay. Realist theologian Reinhold Niebuhr claims that 'the human spirit cannot be held within the bounds of either natural necessity or rational prudence.' [11] In this regard, hangovers from history tend to distort rational behaviour and impinge on the sensible course of international relations. For instance, Chinese academic Shi Yinhong was widely ridiculed for his seemingly reasonable assertion that 'it is vital that our policies [towards Japan] be based on strategy and not on emotions.' [12] On the Japanese side, George Ball, Under Secretary of State in the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations, contends that 'you never know when the Japanese are going to go ape,' as they are galvanised by 'pride, nationalism, and often downright irrationality.' [13] Moreover, Morgenthau cautions that 'the difference between international politics as it actually is and a rational theory derived from it is like the difference between a photograph and a painted portrait.' [14]

Chinese politicians since the death of Mao have increasingly embarked on what can be termed 'apology diplomacy,' [15] or the use of historical context to infuse political decision-making and to pressurise Japan into political conciliation and economic concession. Hence, the popular self-image of China as a 'raped woman' [16] has gained in popularity, as Chinese politics moves away from Mao's victor narrative to the modern victim narrative. This victim narrative has an ethical dimension, which initially stems from the 'perceived injustice of "little brother" Japan's humiliating defeat of "big brother" China during the Sino-Japanese Jiawu War of 1894-95. It continues through to the insulting '21 demands' of 1915, [18] to the bacteriological bombing of Chongqing, the Nanjing massacre, [19] the biological warfare research facility known as the '731 Unit,' [20] "comfort women" and the loss of between 15 to 35 million Chinese during the 1931-1945 Second Sino-Japanese War. China's "century of humiliation" is thus largely seen through the prism of Japanese imperialism.

Immediately following the Second Sino-Japanese War, which coincided with the end of the Second World War, Japan's pacifist MacArthur Constitution, and the onset of the Cold War brought about a decrease in tension. Indeed, Reinhard Drifte notes that by 1964 China had waived any war compensation claims, and in 1972, Sino-Japanese relations were normalised. [21] Therefore, no explicit link exists between the beginning of Japan's Official Developmental Assistance (ODA) grant programme in 1979, and war reparations. However, China's victim narrative has distorted the original intentions of the ODA, such that when Japan decided to end ODA payments to China in 2005, a foreign ministry spokesman charged that 'Yen loans are a mutually beneficial arrangement that came into being under special policies and against a historical backdrop.' [22] This change in interpretation owes much to the resurgence of historical context as a political tool. Since the end of the Cold War, with no common enemy to unite them, China and Japan have turned into natural regional rivals. Denny Roy argues that Japanese foreign policy 'exhibit[s] tendencies to adapt to the prevalent international environment,' [23] and this had led to a more assertive diplomacy, more than encouraged by the United States. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, who at 52 is the first Japanese Prime Minister born after the Second World War, can be termed a "normal state" advocate. These advocates are intent on 'rid[ding] Japan of this ahistorical imagination, for they wish to revive the connection between sovereign statehood and the right to belligerency and thus to "reactivate" history.' [24] Meanwhile, changes in China's political structure have also forced a re-emphasis on history. Thomas Christensen contends that 'since the Chinese Communist Party is no longer communist, it must be even more Chinese.' [25] Thus, nationalist credibility is inextricably linked to political legitimacy. This manifested itself in 1998 when President Jiang Zemin used the Jiang-Obuchi summit to castigate Japan for historical indiscretions after Japanese Prime Minister Obuchi refused to give a written apology for Japan's wartime behaviour. [26] As such, history is 'like a fish bone stuck in the throat,' [27] seriously inhibiting Sino-Japanese relations and cooperation, and giving rise to a dangerous growth in nationalist sentiment. With China's regional rise and concomitant struggle for power in East Asia, this menacing nationalism will likely only get worse.

Yahuda highlights that 'the problem in the case of China and Japan is that their respective nationalist resurgences are developing with the other cast as the putative adversary.' [28] Recent public opinion polls seem to reflect this theory. Following the May 2005 anti-Japan riots in China, only 5 percent of Japanese respondents answered that they liked China, [29] a significant drop from 1988, prior to the Tiananmen Square massacre, when 66.3 percent held

# As China Continues to Grow Regionally, are Relations with Japan Likely to Become More Difficult?

Written by Andy Jones

a favourable view of their Chinese counterparts. [30] This huge shift can be attributed to changing threat perceptions levels, in which China's rise, allied with heavy defence spending led 77.6 percent to reply that they perceived some risk of war (up from 43.6 percent in 1975), [31] while 93 percent thought increased Chinese military expenditure was a 'bad thing.' [32] Not surprisingly, support for constitutional revision is also rapidly gaining ground in Japan. In April 2006, 56 percent of respondents approved of modifications to the pacifist Article 9 of the Constitution (up from 15.4 percent in 1965), [33] and a May 2006 poll by the Asahi newspaper found that 85 percent of the Japanese public held a positive image of the Self Defence Forces (SDF), an increase of 17.4 percent since 1991. [34] Chinese hypersensitivity to any notion of Japanese militarism makes the views of an increasing number of Japanese extremely troublesome. However, this rise in nationalist antipathy towards China is complemented by signs of greater assertiveness in Japanese politics, which in itself has been helped by the collapse of the leftists in the Diet, who now command only a handful of seats compared to almost a third of seats throughout the Cold War, [35] and economic stagnation. Thus, former Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's annual visits to the Yasukuni Shrine, home to fourteen Class A war criminals from the Second Sino-Japanese War, fuelled the fire of Chinese nationalists who believe that Japan is 'incapable of behaving as a responsible power.' [36] Moreover, current Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, who began his reign positively with visits to Seoul and Beijing, has recently argued that there is 'no historical proof' in the claim that hundreds of thousands of Chinese and Korean women were coerced into prostitution, so-called "comfort women," by the Japanese Imperial Army in the 1930s and 1940s. [37] Therefore, all signs point to a sense of 'guilt fatigue' [38] in Japan.

In China, anti-Japanese nationalism is commonplace. Only 22 percent of Chinese believe current Sino-Japanese relations are 'good,' [39] and 95 percent view China's rising military strength as a 'good thing.' [40] For instance, historically-informed nationalism raged in 2001 after Chinese model Zhao Wei completed a New York photo-shoot wearing a dress emblazoned with the Imperial Japanese flag. At a New Year's Eve event later that year, Zhao was pushed over and smeared in excrement as she gave a speech. [41] These sentiments have flared even more publicly, and at the 2004 Asian Cup football tournament held in China, fans booed the Japanese national anthem and bombarded the Japanese team bus with stones. [42] Further, widespread anti-Japan riots in Spring 2005, which protested against Japan's bid for a permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council, Koizumi's Yasukuni visits, and Japanese textbooks that downplayed its imperial aggression, alarmed the Chinese government to the extent that further demonstrations planned for Tiananmen Square were banned. [43] In this regard, the CCP were initially happy to endorse and even aid the protests, but chose to stop them as soon as Sino-Japanese relations were put at risk, reminiscent of the curtailed anti-American demonstrations following the Hainan spy-plane incident in April 2001.

Finally, it is worrying that in the case of both Japanese and Chinese nationalism, it is the young who are most vociferously voicing their rage, pointing to sustained future tensions. Hironori Sasada notes the increasing use of Japanese internet forums such as 2 Channel, which has 9.9 million registered users, and where advocates of aggressive foreign policies are in the ascendancy. [44] In China, Peter Gries argues that 'internet nationalism,' dominated by the young, is actually beginning to dictate foreign policy. For example, a one million person online petition forced Chinese officials to delay a decision on a Sino-Japanese rail link-up in 2003, [45] and 44 million supported a 2005 petition which opposed Japan's bid for a seat on the UN Security Council. [46] In this sense, Gries warns that both the Japanese and Chinese governments risk being held hostage to their nationalist credentials, [47] setting in motion a vicious cycle of reactive nationalist anger. China's rise sparked nationalist sentiment in Japan towards a reassertion of Japanese regional and global prestige, which in turn provoked heightened nationalism in China, and so on. This essay will now move on to assess Sino-Japanese economic and military policies, which are negatively influenced by this surge in popular nationalism, but which hold the key to the future of Sino-Japanese regional relations.

## Sino-Japanese Economic Relations: Japan Running Scared?

American realist John Mearsheimer draws attention to what he terms 'the balance of latent power.' [48] Mearsheimer assumes that should a state become an economic power, it would use this economic thrust to forcibly challenge the status quo. Likewise, Samuel Huntington notes that in the past 'the external expansion of the UK and France, Germany and Japan, the Soviet Union and the United States coincided with phases of intense industrialization and economic development.' [49] Thus, in order to achieve military superiority and effect a change in the regional balance

## As China Continues to Grow Regionally, are Relations with Japan Likely to Become More Difficult?

Written by Andy Jones

of power, substantial economic progress must first be made. For instance, the 2002 Defense of Japan report warily states that 'many countries in the region have used the remarkable growth of their economies to expand and modernize their military capabilities. Especially, China's military strength draws attention from countries in the region' [50] Meanwhile, China is also increasingly anxious about Japanese efforts to improve their global political role, which would require 'not only its economic strength but also its military power.' [51] Thus, China's 2005 white paper on arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation opens by mentioning China's victory in the 'People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression,' and moves on to say that 'China is even more reluctant to see some countries cooperate in the missile defense field to further proliferate ballistic missile technology.' [52] Here, China's attitude is clearly informed by historical images. This section will therefore begin by analysing Sino-Japanese economic relations, before moving on to question what it means for their respective military policies.

Between them, China and Japan account for nearly three-quarters of Asia's economic activity, and over half of Asia's military spending. [53] By 2005, Sino-Japanese trade exceeded \$100 billion per annum, Japan was China's largest trade partner, and China overtook the United States to become Japan's largest trade partner. [54] Further, Yahuda points out that 'Japan with its resource-poor advanced high-tech economy, it is argued, should find a natural partner in China, with its resource-rich, more backward, but developing economy.' [55] To what extent is this description an accurate depiction of current Sino-Japanese economic relations? Conversely, could China's economic rise contribute to a further deterioration in the relationship?

The Chinese economic vision, first propounded by Deng Xiaoping, links China's 'security, global influence, and domestic stability' [56] to its economic status. Hence, China's economic development is critical to the CCP's continued legitimacy and for China's global power status, an overt reliance entitled 'GNPism.' [57] China's emergence in 2003 as the second largest global economy [58] and largest recipient of foreign direct investment (FDI) underscores the speed of China's economic rise and the feeling that 'China [is] on steroids.' [59] However, this neo-classical linear approach to economic growth, rooted in hyperbole, is misleading. Shaun Breslin argues that China acts as a 'manufacturing conduit,' [60] since 70 percent of Chinese exports are made by or for foreign companies, minimising Chinese export profits. In this regard, the 'made in China' label is deceptive as China generally hosts the less lucrative final assembly stages. In 2002 for example, value added per capita in the manufacturing industry in the United States was more than 15 times that in China, [61] and in 2004 two-thirds of China's patented projects were completed by foreign companies. [62] China's stagnant domestic economy and the failure of all but the coastal regions to attract FDI are further illustrations of China's economic situation.

In addition, Paul Kennedy's [63] emphasis on the link between economic and technological power and great power status highlights a further Chinese economic weakness. Although recent heavy Chinese investment in high technology [64] has cemented China's status as the second-ranked investor in global research and development, [65] Japan maintains a strong lead in most commercial and military technologies, and has one of the world's largest military-industrial complexes. Compared with China, Japan has a superior civil-military integration (CMI) ranking, which allows 'spin-on and spin-off of commercial and defense technologies respectively.' [66] This should mean that Japan would welcome bilateral trade with an unthreatening China, and liberals would point to increasing economic interdependence as a reason for optimism, given that 'Japan's own economic fortunes are now increasingly tied to the continuing expansion of the Chinese economy,' [67] and vice versa. Indeed, during the May 2005 anti-Japan protests, Chinese nationalists chanted slogans such as 'boycotting Japanese goods will castrate Japan!', [68] revealing the Chinese perception of the depth of the two economies' interdependence.

However, due to its sheer size, the Chinese economy is able to simultaneously be strong and weak. Thus even with severe domestic problems, China is still a remarkably attractive market for other Asian states. Walter Russell Mead has termed this 'sticky power,' [69] a form of structural power. Mead argues that strong states can use sticky power to force weak states to do what the strong want, because weaker economic states are unable to escape China's economic grip once penetrated. Therefore, Japan fears the perceived 'gravitational pull' of the Chinese economy, in which FDI otherwise bound to Japan, could fall into Chinese hands. [70] Indeed, Gilbert Rozman argues that increasing Chinese sticky and soft power is enticing states such as Malaysia and Singapore to reorient their diplomacy towards China's 'Beijing consensus.' Rozman uses the example of China's floating of the ASEAN free trade area to note that 'Japan has scrambled to keep some initiative in the region, although increasingly it appears to

# As China Continues to Grow Regionally, are Relations with Japan Likely to Become More Difficult?

Written by Andy Jones

be at least one step behind China. [71]

The highs of the 'flying geese' pattern of the 1980s, [72] when Japanese economic power caused an Asian boom are long gone. Japan's own economic woes have prevented it from stamping its authority on the region, and contributed to the 'lost decade' during the 1990s, in which Japan suffered a 'precipitous loss of influence and prestige.' [73] In turn, this has helped nationalism to fester in the second richest economy in the world, as post-war Japanese baby-boomers are forced to 'confront the strong possibility that their children will have a worse standard of living than they did.' [74] Nationalists argue that major structural changes in the Japanese economy are needed if they are to achieve their primary goal, 'to regain Japan's leadership position in the world.' [75] For both China and Japan, the benefits accrued from economic interdependence are merely a means to an end, and a hollow relationship remains, even though in 2003 China accounted for 32 percent of Japan's export growth, and remains a vital cog in Japan's economic revival. [76] Additionally, in a recent speech to the Japanese Parliament, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao acknowledged the role Japan has played in 'contribut[ing] to and help[ing] China's reform and opening, and modernisation,' and called for even closer economic ties. [77]

Thus increasing economic interdependence has not, as liberals would predict, brought China and Japan closer together. Despite the institutionalisation of dialogue to manage bilateral economic ties in 2002, much of Sino-Japanese relations have followed an icy course. Yahuda notes that, economics aside, a 'huge lacuna' [78] exists where cooperation should reside. Economic interdependence, while currently mutually beneficial, has failed to provide the glue for a constructive partnership and seems more convenient than long-lasting. For example, in July 2001 Japanese Finance Minister Shiokawa Masajuro claimed it would be 'foolish' for Japan to continue to give ODA to 'a country that may attack Japan with an atomic bomb or missiles,' [79] and who continues to challenge Japan's regional economic status. This highlights the superficiality of the relationship, characterised by a mutual and visceral distrust. China's economic boom has ended Japan's economic hegemony, and a newfound Chinese diplomatic boldness has resulted.

Further, current Sino-Japanese energy relations signify possible future difficulties. Kenneth Pollack, a former advisor to U.S. President Bill Clinton, opines that the global economy 'rests on a foundation of inexpensive, plentiful oil, and if that foundation were removed, the global economy would collapse.' [80] This underlines the importance of energy to future economic well-being in the region. Sino-Japanese conflict over oil would therefore be tied to economic ascendancy and regional power. Japan depends on imports for 99 percent of its oil and natural gas, [81] and though domestic energy supplies currently account for 90 percent of China's energy requirements, [82] China is also beginning to strain under its massive energy burden and is now a net energy importer. In this sense, competing strategies for control of sea lanes and pipelines and tension over 'indigenous' sources of energy are to be expected. Territorial disputes in the South and East China Sea are as much to do with energy resources as they are actual territory. Since 2004, both sides have sent submarines and warships to the contested boundaries as hostilities have risen. The fight for energy also reinforces the importance China has attached to its growing soft power. By investing in Central Asian and African states, China is strategically attempting to diversify oil supplies from the Middle East, which currently accounts for 80 percent [83] of its imported oil. It can be inferred that to this extent, China is attempting to assert its growing regional power at the expense of Japan.

## **Military Power: China Rises and Japan Follows**

Realists claim that in an anarchical system, military strength is 'decisive in shaping the patterns of relations' [84] between states. In an attempt to assuage proponents of the China threat school and despite double-digit percentage increases in military spending since 1996, [85] China has sought to emphasise that it 'loves peace and advocates that nothing is more valuable than peace' [86] and 'unswervingly pursues a national defense policy defensive in nature.' [87] However, the United States has become the cheerleader-in-chief of Japan's rearmament, seeking to 'balance China's rise through its campaign to return Japan to a "normal nation."' [88] Indeed, the 2001 bipartisan Armitage Report urged that current U.S.-Japanese defence cooperation 'should be regarded as the floor—not the ceiling—for an expanded Japanese role in the transpacific alliance.' [89] This seems to suggest that the United States and Japan view China's regional rise as problematic. The Japanese response, based on its threat perceptions of China and North Korea, has been to gradually chip away at its military inhibitions and in doing so it has provoked

## As China Continues to Grow Regionally, are Relations with Japan Likely to Become More Difficult?

Written by Andy Jones

much Chinese ire. The Japanese, along with the Chinese, seem cognisant of the fact that the post-Cold War international environment necessitates military power for great power status, and that old political and economic leverages are no longer sufficient. In the battle for regional leadership, the military sphere is thus a key tenet of a realist foreign policy. As Morgenthau states, 'armed strength as a threat or a potentiality is the most important material factor making for the political power of a nation.' [90]

Predicated on its view of Japanese society as inherently militaristic, discussed earlier in the essay, China is wary of any Japanese military development or change in its pacifist status quo. However, since the early 1990s, a constant stream of Japanese policies has reflected Japan's new-found assertiveness. For example, in 1991, Japan sent its Maritime Self Defence Forces (MSDF) to the Persian Gulf, its first troops overseas since 1945, helped in the UN peacekeeping mission to Cambodia in 1992, and dispatched 700 SDF personnel to East Timor in 2002. Importantly, special laws were also enacted in 2001 and 2002 that allowed the MSDF to participate in the 'war on terror,' and permitted troops to join the 2003 Iraq War on non-military missions. [91] China views these changes according to "slippery-slope" reasoning, [92] fearing that Japan's return to normalcy will inevitably devolve into aggressive militarism. In this regard, Japan has engaged in a deliberately more vocal policy on Taiwan, and in 2005 announced through the U.S.-Japan Security Consultative Committee that it seeks a 'peaceful resolution of issues concerning the Taiwan Strait through dialogue.' [93] This, together with plans for a Theatre Missile Defence system with the United States, has left Beijing unimpressed. Michael Green thus claims that Sino-Japanese relations possess all the 'ingredients for a classic defense dilemma,' [94] as both sides seek to carve out a great power political role based on economic and military strength.

The Japanese Self Defence Force defies its own name, boasting 250,000 military personnel and an annual budget of over \$50 billion, [95] making Japan officially the second highest military spenders in the world behind the United States. In comparison, China's 2007 military budget brought a 17.8 percent rise to approximately \$45 billion. [96] However, this figure is misleading because it fails to include expenditures such as paramilitary expenses and foreign weapons procurements, meaning the true figure is likely to be two to three times the official budget, at between \$90-135 billion, unofficially above Japan. Former U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld has questioned this level of spending, asking 'Since no nation threatens China, one must wonder: Why this growing investment? Why these continuing large and expanding arms purchases?' [97] Moreover, both China and Japan have hinted at circumstances when they would find it acceptable to use nuclear weapons. People's Liberation Army (PLA) Major General Zhu Chengdu has asserted that 'I think we will have to respond with nuclear weapons,' [98] should the United States (and seemingly Japan) intervene in a possible war over Taiwan. Japan, which possesses a "lego" bomb that could be put together rapidly, has also not discounted the use of nuclear weapons. In 2002, Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) leader Ozawa Ichiro claimed that 'Japan can easily have thousands of nuclear warheads...In fact, we have enough plutonium in use at nuclear power plants for three to four thousand warheads. If that should happen, Japan would not lose [to China] even in military terms.' [99] Further, in 2003, then Deputy Cabinet Secretary Shinzo Abe declared that it would be 'acceptable for Japan to develop small, strategic nuclear weapons.' [100] Though Japan defends increased military spending under the auspices of the war on terror and the North Korea threat, China remains unconvinced. In 2005, China implored that 'relevant countries should increase transparency in their missile defense program for the purpose of deepening trust and dispelling misgivings,' [101] related specifically to Taiwan.

Clearly, high military spending together with nationalism make for a combustible mix, with the potential to destabilise the region. However, both militaries face massive weaknesses that seriously inhibit the chances of military conflict, at least in the short term. Eugene Matthews posits that with no combat experience in over sixty years, Japanese troops 'can barely deal with natural disasters such as earthquakes, let alone foreign armies.' [102] However, the Chinese have responded to Japan's military turnaround by claiming that Japan is 'day dreaming to materialize its wild ambitions of becoming a political and military power...[when it] will definitely pose a threat to peace in Asia and the world.' [103] Clearly any military development in Japan would be unacceptable to the Chinese, who seem to believe that Japan should remain pacifist while China expands and modernises its military, posing difficulties for their future relationship. That said, the Chinese PLA also has severe deficiencies. Despite an emphasis on 'informationalization' and joint training, the Chinese still lack coherent joint forces capabilities, joint organisational structures and command and control (C2) potential. David Lampton notes that in the 2006 Israeli-Lebanon war, the Chinese had to lease

## **As China Continues to Grow Regionally, are Relations with Japan Likely to Become More Difficult?**

Written by Andy Jones

foreign aircraft to evacuate citizens due to the paucity of its own airpower. [104]

Nevertheless, the possibility of a Sino-Japanese conflict cannot be totally ruled out. The 2005 Chinese Anti-Secession Law threatens that China 'shall employ non-peaceful means and other necessary measures' [105] in the event of a Taiwanese declaration of independence. Moreover, PLA founder Zhe De asserts that 'as long as Taiwan is not liberated, the Chinese people's historical humiliation is not washed away.' [106] This carefully cultivated rhetoric is a dangerous political game and is based on nationalistic legitimacy claims. Failure to prevent a Taiwanese break-away would be politically suicidal, undermine its power, and could plausibly end CCP rule. China is thus bound to war should Taiwan dare to declare independence. This has two implications for Japan's military policy. First, China has approximately 800 missiles permanently aimed towards Taiwan that are easily capable of reaching the Japanese mainland should conflict erupt. Second, the ever-increasing U.S.-Japanese military alliance and Japan's recent interference in the Taiwan imbroglio, could potentially drag Japan into a war it would rather avoid. Indeed, the director of the U.S. Missile Defense Agency has confirmed that Japan is regarded as America's most important partner in the development of Theatre Missile Defense systems. [107] The recent remarks of Japanese Defence Minister Fumio Kyuma are therefore welcome. Kyuma proposes that 'in the military arena, we should not have doubts about each other, we should trust each other. We need to be open, so that we don't cause mutual anxiety.' [108] Kyuma thus announced the first Sino-Japanese naval exchanges, to take place by the end of 2007, which serve as an attempt to improve coordination and closer contacts. As Aurelia Mulgan warns, 'a fine line exists between Sino-Japanese "stability in tension" and escalation of regional rivalry into actual conflict, or hostilities.' [109] This is because 'states may at any time use force, all states must be prepared to do so—or live at the mercy of their militarily more vigorous neighbors. Among states, the state of nature is a state of war.' [110]

### **The United States, ASEAN and Sino-Japanese Relations**

Lowell Dittmer characterises East Asian relations as a 'quasi-ménage à trois,' in which the United States takes a stabilising role in the structuring of the regional security order. [111] In this sense, the United States uses Japan as a 'strong assistant' against China, while serving to 'put a lid on Japan's militarism,' [112] thereby maintaining the United States' predominant position in the regional balance of power and sustaining regional peace and prosperity. Yahuda thus contends that 'the fact that none of the protagonists anticipates military conflict between China and Japan is only possible because of the role played by the United States.' [113] However, the Sino-Japanese jostling for regional supremacy will continue because states always seek to maintain and maximise their power. Japan will not accept a subordinate role in a Chinese-dominated hegemonic order in Asia, and nor would China if the roles were reversed. Therefore, both China and Japan are engaged in a systematic attempt to increase both their hard and soft power within the region, again pointing to increasingly difficult relations. China has therefore successfully negotiated nearly all of their remaining territorial settlements, often receiving less than 50 percent of the contested land, [114] a part of their 'smile diplomacy' good-neighbourly efforts. This is a key part of China's attempts to play down the expansionist clichés of the China threat school. Meanwhile, Japan has sought to play down the negative regional response to Koizumi's Yasukuni visits, and was one of the first countries to respond to the December 2004 Asian Tsunami, offering generous aid programmes to Thailand, Sri Lanka, India and Indonesia. [115]

The struggle for power will also encompass multilateral fora such as ASEAN, in which Mulgan predicts that 'Chinese actions and policies towards ASEAN will both mirror and reflect Japanese policies and vice versa,' [116] as rivalry for influence rises. Hence, Japan's bid for a permanent seat in the UN Security Council has certainly not been helped by Chinese negativity, while both China and Japan seem intent on racing each other towards an ASEAN free trade area. Liberals hope that institutions will 'increasingly embed interstate rivalries in more complex forms of interdependence and mutual vulnerability.' [117] The Six-Party talks on North Korea are proof that China and Japan can work together in a cooperative framework towards a common goal. However, Yahuda argues that

'multilateral fora...have done little to promote closer interactions between Japan and China. They have not served as vehicles for "rehabilitating" Japan in Chinese eyes, nor can the Japanese be entirely satisfied with them as vehicles for consolidating China as a good regional citizen' [118]

Thus, the realist regional balance of power seems most likely to keep difficult Sino-Japanese relations in check. For

# As China Continues to Grow Regionally, are Relations with Japan Likely to Become More Difficult?

Written by Andy Jones

example, in most of Southeast Asia there are few objectors to Japan's shift towards normalcy (even bearing in mind Japan's lost decade), because most states prefer a stable balance of power in which China and Japan offset each other in a regional equilibrium. [119] That said, as the overwhelming regional heavyweights, each vying for regional supremacy against the other, Japan and China are bound to come into conflict at some stage. It may then fall on the United States, whose attention has been drawn further towards the Middle East, to play the role of the ultimate guarantor of security in the region by encouraging trilateral relations based on common interests.

## Conclusion

China's rise is inevitable. Therefore, this essay is cautious about the prospects for positive Sino-Japanese relations as China's regional influence expands. China's need for peace and stability to complete its economic goals, as well as the United States' taming of any Japanese impulses should, however, serve to keep the peace, at least for now. Li Zhaoxing's description of current China policy as 'develop[ing] a long-term stable and harmonious relationship with Japan' [120] has so far been reciprocated by Abe, whose early visit to Beijing and refusal to attend the Yasukuni Shrine have done much to allay negative Chinese nationalist sentiment. China and Japan, it seems, have almost no choice but to deal with one another as neighbours, and Japan should become accustomed to treating China as its equal, not as its insubordinate associate. Moreover, Japan's expected return to normalcy does not require the construction of a powerful military, or the casting of China as arch enemy. However, as this essay has demonstrated, simmering nationalist tensions affect almost every aspect of the Sino-Japanese relationship. In large part, nationalism can be held responsible for the complete breakdown in communication, economics aside, which characterises relations between the two East Asian giants. For this reason, prudent and rational foreign policies, as Niebuhr warns, can not always be expected. It is not surprising that both Japan and China are seeking regional and global political roles commensurate with their economic and military standing. The question remains, is there room for two great powers in Asia? Mulgan contends that 'China's rise does not automatically herald Japan's decline. Geo-strategic assessments are not necessarily zero-sum. China's rise will, in fact, be accompanied by Japan's continuing rise.' [121] However, territorial energy battles are early warning signs that perhaps neither China nor Japan believe that there is room for both of them. Waltz states that in conditions of anarchy, with no-one to serve as arbiter, a competition for scarce resources will ensue. [122] China's rise has thus undeniably made Sino-Japanese relations more difficult, and as realists caution, the road to conflict is not inconceivable.

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# **As China Continues to Grow Regionally, are Relations with Japan Likely to Become More Difficult?**

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