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China's Military Modernization, Japan's Normalization and the South China Sea Territorial Disputes

Zenel Garcia

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I dedicate this book to my mother, Mayulis Calvo, whose unwavering support and dedication made this manuscript possible.

Contents

1 Introduction 1

2 The South China Sea Disputes 17

3 Sino-Japanese Security Relations 35

4 China's Military Modernization 45

5 Japan's Normalization 61

6 Republic of the Philippines Case Study 79

7 Socialist Republic of Vietnam Case Study 95

8 Conclusion 109

References 125

Index 141

List of Maps

Map. 2.1 SCS maritime claims (*Source* EIA: http://www.eia.gov/countries/regions-topics.cfm?fips=scs) 19
Map. 2.2 9-dash map (*Source* United Nations: http://www.un.org/Depts/los/clcs_new/submissions_files/submission_vnm_37_2009.htm) 21

List of Tables

Table 4.1 Spratly archipelago features occupied by the People's Republic of China 53

Table 6.1 Spratly archipelago features occupied by the Republic of the Philippines 80

Table 7.1 Spratly archipelago features occupied by the Socialist Republic of Vietnam 97



CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Abstract This chapter addresses the relevance of the South China Sea (SCS) as a maritime highway, a source of hydrocarbons, and as a source of food and livelihood. In particular, it focuses on how the intersection of economic, energy, and food security are too important to ignore, particularly in the context of competing territorial disputes, overlapping exclusive economic zones (EEZs), and growing nationalism make the disputes too important to ignore. Consequently, the SCS disputes are reshaping East and Southeast Asian security dynamics by influencing the alignment policies claimant and non-claimant countries alike.

Keywords South China Sea · Territorial disputes · East Asia · Southeast Asia

Background

East and Southeast Asia have played a crucial global economic role in the recent years; posting annual growth at rates exceeding the global average and contributing to over a third of the global economic growth.[1] However, despite its economic vitality, East and Southeast Asia are plagued by ongoing maritime territorial disputes among pivotal states in the region. These disputes not only threaten the economic and political

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stability of the contending parties, they directly affect global trade networks and regional stability. The most critical of the ongoing rows in East and Southeast Asia is the South China Sea (SCS) territorial disputes. This is the result of a number of factors: (1) the SCS's geopolitical position as maritime superhighway, (2) its potential as an energy source, and (3) and its abundant marine resources. In other words, the SCSs pivotal role means that even minor local clashes over the disputes can have serious spillover effects in the region and beyond.

Maritime Superhighway

Stretching from the Strait of Malacca in the southwest to the Luzon Straits in the northeast, the SCS serves as one of the main arteries for global shipping. Over "50% of the world's merchant fleet tonnage crosses through the Malacca, Sunda and Lombok Straits, with the majority continuing on into the South China Sea."[2] The tanker traffic that passes through the Malacca Straits "is more than three times greater than the Suez Canal traffic, and well over five times more than the traffic of the Panama Canal."[3] The Energy Information Administration (EIA), an agency of the US Department of Energy, estimates that 30% of the world's global maritime crude oil trade, amounting to 15 million barrels per day (BPD), traverses the SCS.[4] This means that one-third of global crude moves through the SCS, making this the second most important chokepoint for oil trade after the Strait of Hormuz.[5] The EIA also estimates that 40% of the global liquefied natural gas (LNG), or 4.7 trillion cubic feet (Tcf), traverses the SCS on to major regional importers like China, Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan.[6] Lastly, significant quantities of coal from Australia and Indonesia, which are the world's two largest coal exporters, are transported through the SCS to markets around the world, particularly China and Japan.[7]

The SCS serves as a crucial maritime highway through which the sea lanes of communications (SLOCs) of most countries traverse. In other words, the national security of many countries rests on the amicable resolution to the SCS territorial disputes and the continued adherence to the international norm of freedom of navigation. This is particularly important for countries that rely heavily on energy imports and whose economies are primarily driven by exports of manufactured goods like China, which has laid claims to all land features in the SCS and their surrounding waters, and Japan which is not a claimant in the SCS disputes

but sees China's increasing assertiveness in the region as detrimental to the freedom of navigation, and consequently, its national security. In essence, Japan relies on its South China Sea SLOC for 80% of its oil supply and 70% of its exports. Therefore, "any disruption of the maritime traffic due to frictions between claimant states or undue control by a single dominant power would have a catastrophic impact on Japan. For this reason, the SCS is seen as a "national security concern" by "diplomatic authorities."[8]

Energy Deposits

The second factor that makes the SCS increasingly important is its estimated energy deposits. The robust economic growth in the region is expected to increase the demand for fossil fuels. The EIA projects that Asian countries outside of the Organization for Economic Cooperation Development (OECD) will have a 2.6% annual increase in demand for liquid fuels. This will result in an increased share of global consumption from 20% in 2008 to 30% by 2035.[9] Non-OECD Asian countries' natural gas consumption is also expected to grow at an annual rate of 3.9%; increasing their share of global consumption from 10% in 2008 to 19% by 2035. The "EIA expects China to account for 43 percent of that growth."[10] Additionally, "with Southeast Asian domestic oil production projected to remain flat or decline as consumption rises, the region's countries will look to new sources of energy to meet domestic demand."[11] As a result, these countries are increasingly looking to the SCS as a potential source of energy to meet national demands in order to continue promoting economic growth. This has created an imperative for securing parts of the SCS as a way to acquire additional sources of hydrocarbons. However, the territorial disputes in the region have hindered efforts to conduct proper exploration of energy reserves in the area.

The lack of adequate oil and gas exploration in the SCS has resulted in a number of conflicting claims regarding the deposit amounts in the seabed. The Chinese have been the most optimistic in their estimates. Zhang Dawei, an official at China's Ministry of Land Resources, has optimistically claimed that the "South China Sea might hold 23-40 billion tons of oil reserves."[12] That figure is larger than China's current onshore resources. The Chinese have also estimated that the area may contain more than 2000 tcf of natural gas reserves.[13] A different study conducted by the state-owned Chinese National Offshore

Oil Company (CNOOC) estimates that the SCS holds around 125 billion barrels of oil and 500 tcf of natural gas. However, no independent studies have been able to confirm any of the optimistic estimates provided by Chinese agencies or state-owned corporations.[14] A 1995 study conducted by Russia's Research Institute of Geology of Foreign Countries concluded that deposits were closer to 6 billion barrels of oil in the Spratly Islands, of which 70% would be natural gas.[15]

Two American agencies have also conducted surveys of the area, providing yet another set of conflicting figures. The EIA estimates that the oil and natural gas reserves in the SCS are 11 billion barrels and 190 tcf respectively. The report indicates that these figures represent proven and probable reserves and are much closer to the high-end estimate.[16] In the next survey:

> The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) analyzed the potential for undiscovered conventional oil and gas fields within several geologic provinces of Southeast Asia in 2010 as part of its World Petroleum Resources Assessment Project. The study included a significant area of the South China Sea, which the USGS estimates may contain anywhere between 5 and 22 billion barrels of oil and between 70 and 290 trillion cubic feet of gas in as-yet undiscovered resources (not including the Gulf of Thailand and other areas adjacent to the South China Sea). These additional resources are not considered commercial reserves at this time because it is unclear how economically feasible it would be to extract them.[17]

Despite the conflicting claims, however, there is a general consensus among the rival claimants in the SCS that the seabed possesses valuable hydrocarbon resources that are desperately needed in order to promote economic growth in their countries. Chinese state media in particular has referred to the area as the "Second Persian Gulf," indicating the importance attached to the potential hydrocarbon resources in the SCS by Beijing.[18]

Marine Resources

The third major factor that makes the SCS increasingly important is its role as a fisheries ground. This is underscored by the fact that by 1995 the SCS was contributing 12% of the total marine global production as well as 54% of marine culture production.[19] By 2015 the SCS remained

one of the top five productive fishing zones in the world, where 55% of the world's fishing vessels were producing 12% of the world's catch and officially employing 3.7 million workers in the region.[20] In other words, the SCS is not only an important global fishery, but also a key component of the regional economies. Additionally, the SCS serves as an important source of nutrition for the millions of East and Southeast Asians. For example, during the 3-year span of 2000–2003 the per capita consumption of fish in the region was 26.1 kg a year. Compared to the world average of 16.3 kg a year, it is clear that the populations inhabiting the littoral countries of the SCS rely heavily on fish and other marine foods for nutrition and protein.[21] In fact, "fish protein is more than 22 percent of the average Asian diet, significantly higher than the global average of 16 percent."[22] The fishing industry is a multibillion dollar a year business that is a major provider of employment and income for millions of people in the region.

> In 1994, the estimated numbers of full and part-time fishers engaged in marine and inland fisheries were 8.7 million and 1.7 million, respectively. According to FAO's findings, around 85% of the world's fishers are concentrated in Asia, particularly in the SCS region, compared to 77% in 1970. China has the largest number of fishers followed by Vietnam, Indonesia and the Philippines. In total, at least 31 million people are engaged in the fisheries sector (including aquaculture) and related industries in the region.[23]

The biodiversity of the SCS makes it a prime location for marine resource extraction. "According to a Chinese study, species abundance in the SCS region includes: 1027 fish, 91 shrimp and 73 cephalopod species in the Northern continental shelf; approximately 205 fish and 96 shrimp species in the continental slope, and more than 520 fish species around the islands and reefs of the Southern waters."[24] Additionally, the most comprehensive catalogue of marine fishes list 3365 special in 263 families in the SCS.[25] However, intense overfishing and pollution are causing concerns over the long-term productivity of the area.[26] In fact, marine resources have been depleted to 5–30% of the 1950s levels in many areas of the SCS.[27] This has caused significant concern in the coastal areas of the littoral states in the SCS, and has resulted in local fishermen venturing beyond their territorial waters and deeper into the contested areas of the SCS. Consequently, fishing has become a

politically sensitive issue for the disputing countries. Numerous encounters have resulted in the apprehension of fishing crews, many of which have been fined, harassed, and in some cases, killed.[28]

In essence, these factors come together in a way that provides increasing relevance to the SCS as a geographic space, and deeply influences state behavior. The intersection of economic, energy, and food security are too important to ignore, particularly in the context of competing territorial disputes, overlapping exclusive economic zones (EEZs), and growing nationalism. Consequently, the SCS disputes are increasingly mired in securitization and de-securitization patterns that are reshaping East and Southeast Asian security dynamics, and consequently, regional order.[29]

Regional Security Dynamics and the South China Sea Disputes

The SCS disputes have undoubtedly changed regional dynamics as claimants pursue efforts to bolder their position, and non-claimants assess how best to approach the situation. This process is predicated on discourses on threat perceptions, made explicit through securitization language, that reveal policy preferences and galvanize empirical developments in the SCS. One of the most important developments in recent years has been the proactive engagement of Japan in the SCS disputes through its support of several Southeast Asian claimants. Although Japan is not a claimant to any of the SCS features or EEZs, it has been enhancing its economic and political presence in the area due to the fact that the SCS is the main artery of its SLOC. Since Japan also has an ongoing dispute with China in the East China Sea (ECS) over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands, Tokyo is concerned that Beijing's attempt to change the status quo in the SCS could be a precursor to an escalation in the ECS. In fact, Japan has considered the disputes in the SCS and ECS as interrelated since 1992 when China passed its Law on the Territorial Waters and the Contiguous Zone, in which it claimed sovereignty over the Spratly and the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands.[30] In other words, Tokyo's growing securitization of Beijing, as a result of the growing enmity between the two, has produced a more proactive policy in the SCS disputes.[31]

China's increasingly assertive maritime policies have been one of the key factors in the rising tensions in the SCS and ECS. This increased assertiveness is the result of Beijing's own securitization of the SCS;

a process that begun with the passage of the Law on the Territorial Waters and the Contiguous Zone of 1992,[32] but has become increasingly evident in more recent discourses surrounding the designation of the SCS as a "core interest" beginning in 2010,[33] and its addition to the Chinese passport in 2012.[34] It is the securitization of the SCS that helps contextualize the most explicit form of Chinese assertiveness in the region, its growing physical presence; a development made possible by its emergent military capabilities. China's growing military capabilities have been instrumental in allowing it to undertake a more active and assertive physical role in its maritime periphery which has consequently concerned many of the countries in the region.[35] As a reaction to China's growing assertiveness, a number of East and Southeast Asian countries have securitized Beijing's actions, particularly through narratives focused on its unilateral efforts to change the status quo, the perceived threat that it poses to international norms of freedom of navigation, and ultimately, how these developments undermine regional stability.[36] This securitization in turn has led several Southeast Asian countries to undertake military modernization programs of their own in order to establish a minimum credible defense. These efforts are reflected in the defense spending patterns of the region. For example, by 2010 defense spending by Southeast Asian countries was 60% higher than it was in 2001.[37] This growth is primarily attributed to the ongoing tensions in the SCS.

In other words, rather than pure material calculations, security dynamics in the SCS are the product of China's initial securitization of the area as a result of the intimate link between the legitimacy of the Chinese Communist Party and its ability to maintain the territorial integrity and sovereignty over the People's Republic of China.[38] The SCS and its land features, much like Taiwan, are perceived as the missing pieces to making China whole again.[39] Adding the strategic and economic benefits which the SCS accords only intensifies the complexity of the disputes and its increased securitized status. China's securitization of the SCS and subsequent maritime policies has in turn resulted in its securitization by key states in East and Southeast Asia.

Southeast Asian countries have also pursued de-securitizing efforts to protect themselves and their claims from further Chinese encroachment. Much of this is evident in their efforts to socialize China. However, their attempts to socialize China within multilateral organizations, particularly ASEAN, have had mixed results.[40] In essence, socialization has its limitations due to increased economic dependence of ASEAN members,

thus allowing China to undermine unanimous support for the position of ASEAN claimants.[41] Consequently, for many Southeast Asian states, the securitization of China has resulted in the preference of hedging policies that involves the internationalization of the SCS disputes by inviting global and regional powers to play a larger role in the security of the region.[42] Increasingly, these countries have turned to Japan, an American ally, as another potential hedge vis-à-vis China. For its part Japan "is willing to play a role in the "great game" of influence currently underway in Southeast Asia, in which Tokyo is soft-balancing China and is supporting a more sustainable US military presence."[43] In other words, policy preferences and strategic choices by Japan and key Southeast Asian countries is the product of China's increasingly securitized status in the region.

Japan's Growing Role

After a period of relative cooperation in the early years of the 2000s, underpinned by narratives of a "peaceful rise," Beijing resumed, and heightened, its securitization of the SCS.[44] This securitization, characterized by the narratives presented above, provided the rhetorical basis for China's more assertive policies in the SCS. On a material level, these assertive policies are made explicit by China's growing presence in the SCS; a development made possible due to its emergent military capabilities vis-à-vis its neighbors. These capabilities are largely the result of Beijing's ongoing efforts to modernize the People's Liberation Army (PLA), particularly its navy and airforce. This increased physical presence has resulted in a number of clashes in the SCS in recent years that have led to the intensification of the disputes. Consequently, as these clashes increase, China has become increasingly securitized. This in turn galvanizes the military modernization programs of China's neighbors, but more importantly, shapes their policy and strategic choice preferences. Although the littoral countries in the SCS are aware that China's military capabilities far exceed their own, they are determined to establish a minimum credible defense capability. To this end, Japan has demonstrated a willingness to provide some assistance to Southeast Asian countries, particularly by forging strategic partnerships and aiding their capacity-building efforts through the provision of hardware and training. Key Southeast Asian states have been increasingly receptive to Japan's overtures, illustrating how the mutual securitization of China's activities along its maritime periphery has shapes policy preferences in the region.

Few countries in Asia have been more concerned about China's securitization of the South and ECS, as well as its military modernization and assertive maritime policies, than Japan. Japan finds China's lack of military transparency and intensification of maritime activities as a serious security concern.[45] Therefore, while Japan's normalization process predates Chinese assertiveness, it has served as a stimulus to hasten reforms. Anxiety over the Chinese assertiveness and military developments in the SCS prompted the Japanese to devote a section of their defense white paper to the area in 2012, citing growing concerns over the freedom of navigation in the region.[46] In fact, China's actions in the SCS have become a regular feature in Japanese defense white papers in recent years. Consequently, Japan has increasingly become involved in the SCS disputes.

Japan's involvement in the SCS disputes is a crucial development in the past decade. While Japan has been a significant investor in Southeast Asia, its political weight has been relatively negligible for many decades. This is due to the fact that many of the countries in Southeast Asia endured brutal occupations by Japanese Imperial forces during WWII which nurtured strong distrust among the locals toward Japan.[47] However, decades of Official Development Assistance (ODA) and investment from Japan to these countries have done much to normalize relations and create a more positive view among ASEAN members toward Japan.[48] In other words, Japan has been largely de-securitized by its Southeast Asian neighbors, thus allowing it to play a greater political role in Southeast Asia.[49] Its de-securitization, coupled with its normalization process, which began to accelerate in the early 1990s, has allowed Japan to enter a new period of political and military engagement in the region.

This engagement initially took the form of peace-building activities under the umbrella of the United Nations, leading the Japanese Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) to participate in U.N. missions in Cambodia in 1992 and Timor-Leste in 2002.[50] Over the past decade, however, Tokyo has been increasingly actively engaged in providing security-oriented development assistance for Southeast Asian states in order to support maritime capacity-building.[51] This indicates that a normalizing Japan is willing to play a more proactive political and security role in the region, something which it was unable or unwilling to do in decades past. Furthermore, it indicates how the mutual securitization of China's actions by Japan and key Southeast Asian states have reshaped Japan's role in the region.

Structure and Organization

This book assesses how China's securitization of the SCS, coupled with its military modernization has affected the SCS disputes. Additionally, it evaluates how these developments have affected Japan's normalization process, and consequently, how this normalization process is affecting the SCS disputes. These interrelated questions are important since they reveal the underlying forces that have been shaping the SCS disputes over the past decade.

In order to address these questions, this study frames the aforementioned processes through the rhetorical and empirical dimensions of Securitization Theory. Securitization Theory contends that "security" is constituted through speech-acts.[52] Consequently, by "uttering 'security,' declaring that a referent object is threatened, a state-representative moves a particular development into a specific area, and thereby claims a special right to use whatever means are necessary to block it."[53] In other words, securitization is a speech-act that that elevates non-politicized and politicized issues to the realm of security.[54] This has important implications since once a referent object becomes securitized, it is differentiated from politicized issues through a heightened sense of urgency and by facilitating the usage of extraordinary measures. As a result, actions outside the bounds of societal and international norms become justified.[55] By utilizing Securitization Theory as a framework for understanding the SCS disputes, it is possible to better understand how threat perceptions are formed and articulated, but more importantly, how they influence policy preferences. In other words, the security dynamics surrounding the SCS disputes are not merely the product of an objective, materially given, security threat, but are given meaning through securitization speech-acts predicated on historical patterns of amity and enmity between contending states.

The following seven empirical chapters demonstrate the Sino-Japanese-Southeast Asian relations as they pertain to the SCS territorial disputes. The second chapter provides an overview of the SCS disputes and the core claims of the main contending parties. The third chapter focuses on Sino-Japanese relations in order to provide some historical background and examine the perceptions they have toward each other. The fourth chapter will focus on China's military modernization programs as well as its military doctrines and policies toward the SCS. The fifth chapter will address the Japanese normalization process and how

Japan's evolving security needs have promoted an active SCS policy in order to balance China's assertiveness. The sixth and seventh chapter will be composed of case studies involving two Southeast Asian countries, the Philippines and Vietnam respectively. These two have been chosen due to the fact that these two countries have been the most active in disputing their claims against China which has resulted in more clashes with the PRC. The Philippines and Vietnam are also two of the three Southeast Asian countries which Japan has identified as "key partners for active Japanese security reengagement in Southeast Asia."[56] The final chapter will be the conclusion where securitization and de-securitization processes will be assessed in order to explain how China, Japan, and Southeast Asian states have forged their policy preferences regarding alignment and posture toward the SCS disputes.

Notes

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CHAPTER 2

The South China Sea Disputes

Abstract This chapter provides an overview of the territorial claims made by China, the Philippines, and Vietnam. It focuses on the historical trajectory of the competing claims, their legal basis, and their congruence with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Additionally, the chapter addresses the legal challenge presented by the Philippines against China at the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA), the results of the arbitration, and the response by the affected parties. It concludes that despite China's inconsistent application of UNCLOS in the South China Sea, confirmed by the PCA ruling, Beijing has not changed its approach to the disputes, thus heightening tensions in the region. The first is that China's claims in the SCS and its increasing assertiveness toward the disputes have played a key role in the growing tensions in the region. The second is that the Philippines and Vietnam, as the most geographically proximate claimants to China, have borne the brunt of China's assertive policies in recent years. As a result, the Philippines and Vietnam have been at the vanguard of contesting China's claims and internationalizing the disputes in order to hedge against China.

Keywords South China Sea · Territorial disputes · UNCLOS · International law · Arbitration

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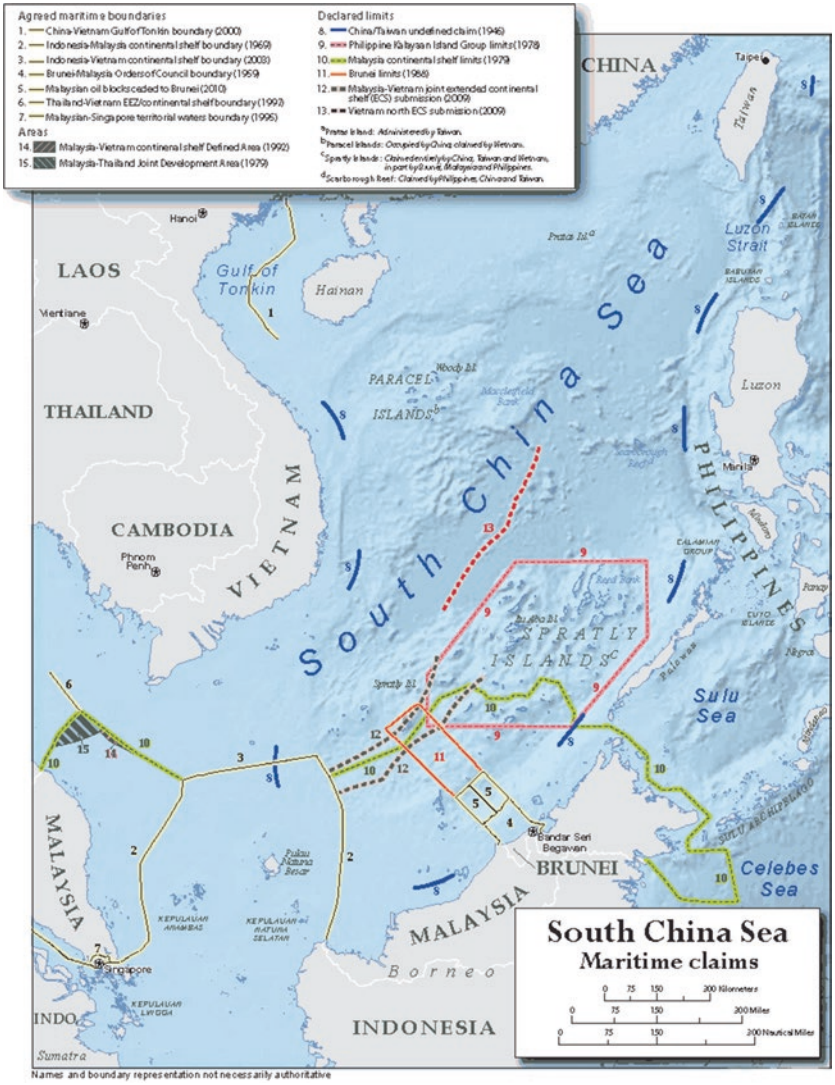
The vital resources and strategic location of the SCS make the ongoing territorial disputes the most important security problem in the East and Southeast Asia region. It is a dispute that has the potential to undermine regional stability and the global economy. This potential is exacerbated by the intensifying patterns of securitization surrounding the dispute. In other words, the actions of direct claimants and indirect participants to the South China Sea disputes are being increasingly filtered through a negative image of the "other" that is produced through securitization rhetoric. Consequently, the space for prudent action and negotiation has been eroded and more assertive actions and counteractions are legitimized.

It is through this lens that China perceives the actions of Southeast Asian claimants, Japan, and the United States in the SCS as an affront to its territorial integrity and sovereignty. Conversely, it is through this lens that many of China's neighbors perceive its assertiveness as detrimental to regional stability and international norms such as freedom of navigation. In other words, each side is increasingly concluding that the other is actively undermining its domestic and international interests through their activities in the South China Sea. Because securitization processes facilitate the utilization of extraordinary measures, this can have detrimental effects on possible resolution of the disputes and opens the possibility for armed conflict.[1]

The parties to the current territorial disputes include: China, Taiwan, Vietnam, Philippines, Malaysia, and Brunei. All of them are signatories to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). The current statuses of the claims are as follows:

- A dispute over the **Paracel Islands** in the SCS, which are claimed by China and Vietnam, and occupied by China;
- A dispute over the **Spratly Islands** in the SCS, which are claimed entirely by China, Taiwan, and Vietnam, and in part by the Philippines, Malaysia, and Brunei, and which are occupied in part by all these countries except Brunei; and
- A dispute over **Scarborough Shoal** in the SCS, which is claimed by China, Taiwan, and the Philippines[2] (see Map 2.1).

For the purposes of this book, the only claims which will be evaluated are those of the People's Republic of China (PRC), the Philippines, and Vietnam. The case study selection is predicated on two interrelated



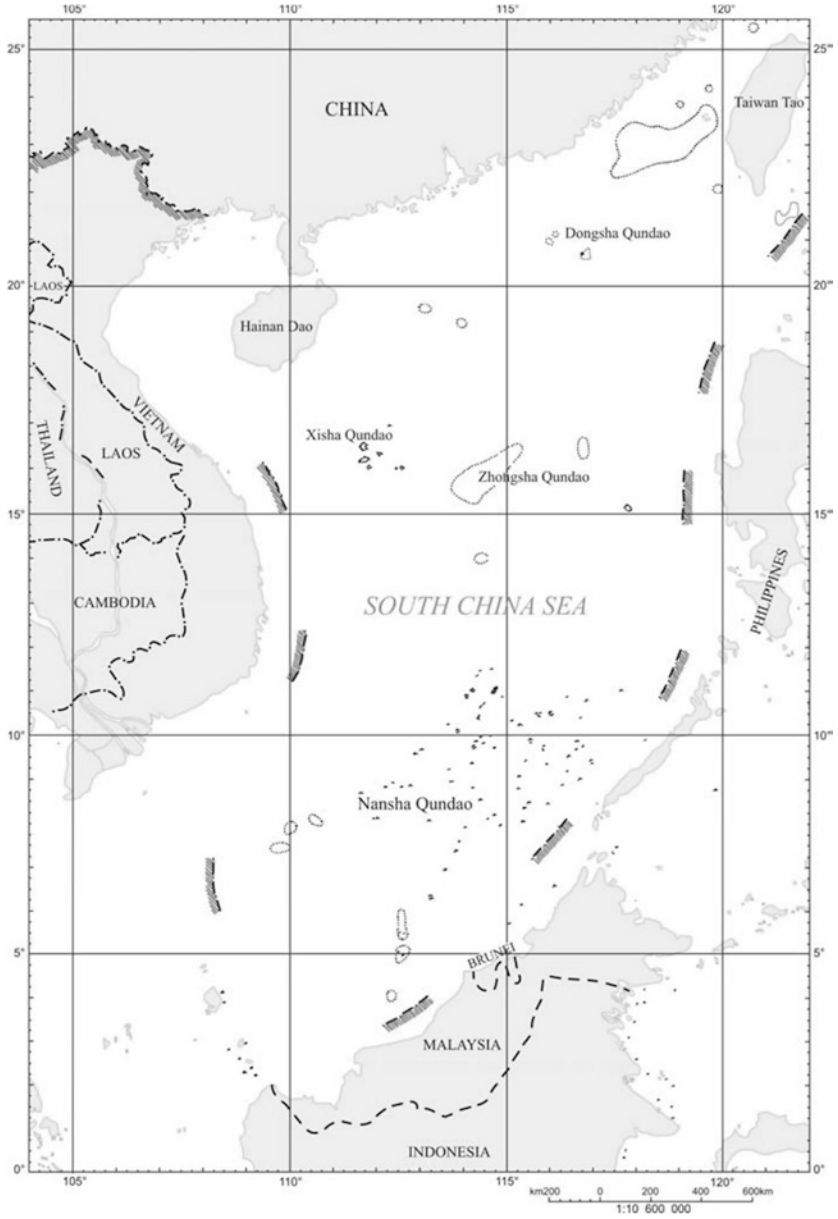
Map. 2.1 SCS maritime claims (*Source* EIA: http://www.eia.gov/countries/regions-topics.cfm?fips=scs)

factors. The first is that China's increasingly securitized claims in the SCS have led to greater assertiveness toward the disputes. In essence, Beijing has played a pivotal role in the growing tensions in the region. The second is that the Philippines and Vietnam, as the most geographically proximate claimants to China, have borne the brunt of China's assertive policies in recent years. As a result, the Philippines and Vietnam have been at the vanguard of contesting China's claims and internationalizing the disputes in order to hedge against China.

The book will also focus on the Spratly archipelago and Scarborough shoal component of the disputes. This is due to the fact that while the Paracel archipelago is still disputed by Vietnam, there has been no significant changes to the administration of the archipelago since China evicted Vietnam from the islands. Consequently, it will focus on the features currently controlled by the claimants disused.

The People's Republic of China

The claims of the PRC on the SCS are largely based on historical and archeological grounds. Beijing regularly cites the numerous expeditions sent to the area during the Han Dynasty in 110 CE and by the Ming Dynasty in the fifteenth century as proof of discovery and administration of the area.[3] In addition to these expeditions, historical references in imperial records, maps, and archeological findings have been used to supplement Chinese territorial claims.[4] After World War II (WWII) ended, Japan, which had been occupying many of the features in the Paracel and Spratly archipelagos for years, withdrew its forces and abandoned all claims in the region as part of its unconditional surrender. This paved the way for the Republic of China, led by Chiang Kai-Shek, to raise Chinese traditional claims to the area by producing the now-famous nine-dash map. The map was later adopted by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) after their victory over the Nationalist forces of Chiang Kai-Shek in the Chinese Civil War in 1949. Although the original map consisted of 11 dashes, Premier Zhou Enlai approved the removal of two of the lines around the Gulf of Tonkin in 1953. Subsequent maps published by the PRC have shown 9 rather than 11 lines.[5] The San Francisco Treaty of 1951, which finalized the terms of Japanese surrender, prompted the CCP to formalize its claims in the SCS by referring to the Nationalist map (see Map 2.2).[6]



Map. 2.2 9-dash map (*Source* United Nations: http://www.un.org/Depts/los/clcs_new/submissions_files/submission_vnm_37_2009.htm)

This map represents the most expansive claim among the parties to the disputes since the U-shaped line that is formed by the dashes encompasses roughly 80% of the total area of the South China Sea.[7] The area far exceeds what is claimable as territorial waters under the UNCLOS. This is a problem exacerbated by the fact that the claimed area includes waters that lie well within the claimable Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) of the Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei, and Vietnam.[8] For its part, China has been ambiguous over what the nine-dash line in the map actually represents. It is unclear whether Beijing is claiming sovereignty over the entire sea and seabed in the enclosed area, or if it is making more limited claims, such as sovereignty over the land features or to historical fishing and navigational rights.[9]

Despite some ambiguity over the exact claims being made by the Chinese government with the nine-dash line, it does appear that at minimum China is claiming sovereignty over the island groups within the area enclosed by U-shaped line on the map. The island groups claimed are the Pratas Islands (Dongsha), the Paracel Islands (Xisha), Macclesfield Bank (Zhongsha), and the Spratly Islands (Nansha).[10] China's 1992 Law on the Territorial Sea and the Contiguous Zone placed these island groups under the administration of Hainan Island Province.[11] This claim was further reinforced in 2009 when China submitted the nine-dash map to the United Nations with an accompanying statement that read:

> China has indisputable sovereignty over the islands in the South China Sea and the adjacent waters, and enjoys sovereign rights and jurisdiction over the relevant waters as well as the seabed and subsoil thereof (see attached map [of the nine-dash line]). The above position is consistently held by the Chinese Government, and is widely known by the international community.[12]

The Chinese statement was made in response to a joint submission made by Malaysia and Vietnam regarding their delimitations of their continental shelf claims to the United Nations.[13] However, as will be discussed below, China's counterclaim and submission of the nine-dash map to the U.N. was challenged by the Philippines for not being consistent with UNCLOS standards.

By June 2012, the Chinese government had announced that it would be upgrading the administrative level of the Paracel Island

group.[14] The following month, the PRC formally established Sansha City on Woody Island (Yongxing) which is located in the Paracel archipelago. The act of elevating Sansha to a prefecture-level city was not merely political theater. Along with its administrative upgrade, Sansha City was given an accompanying military garrison which would facilitate its new role as the administrative seat of the SCS for the Chinese government.[15] Since 2012, Sansha has served as a staging point for Chinese operations in the SCS as it aims to demonstrate effective administration of the area through its fishing moratoriums, interdictions of fishing vessels from neighboring countries, and interdiction of foreign military vessels conducting surveillance outside of its territorial waters.[16]

Republic of the Philippines

The Republic of the Philippines' claims in the SCS are also based on historical justifications as well as the principle of *terra nullius*, which essentially means that the islands were not occupied or under the sovereign authority of any other state. The Philippines began laying claims in the SCS as early as 1947. At the time, the Spratly Islands were referred to as the "New Southern Islands" by the Philippine government. The Philippine Foreign Affairs Secretary at the time, Carlos P. Garcia, requested the Allied Forces to place the islands under the jurisdiction of the Philippines, citing security reasons.[17] In the same year, a Filipino businessman and lawyer by the name of Tomas Cloma established settlements in the Spratly archipelago and declared them a protectorate. He named the group of islands he identified or settled as the "Kalaya'an" or "Freedomland."[18]

By 1974, Cloma deeded the Kalaya'an group to the Philippine government and in both 1971 and 1978 the Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos declared the Kalaya'an Island Group (KIG) to be formally part of the Philippines.[19] The 1978 declaration was made official through Presidential Decree No. 1596 in which the KIG were identified as a municipality of Palawan.[20] Since 1968, the Philippines has had a military presence in the KIG group and effectively controls and administers at least 8 of its features. The KIG also hosts residents who participate in local elections, a fact that allows the Philippine government to demonstrate administrative capacity in the area.[21] It is the exploration and

"discovery" of the KIG group by Tomas Cloma that serves as one of the historical bases of the Philippine claim.

The second historical base for the Philippine claim comes from previous treaties it had signed with other parties in order to demarcate maritime boundaries. In essence, "the Philippines continues to claim that all of the waters between its baselines and the lines defined by a series of treaties dating from 1898, 1900, and 1930, the so-called 'Philippines Treaty Limits' or 'Philippines Box,' constitute its territorial waters."[22] These claims essentially extend the Philippines' territorial sea from the 12 nautical miles allowed by the UNCLOS to 285 nautical miles. Although the disparity between the customary law of the UNCLOS and these treaties is clear, the Philippines has had difficulties abandoning the Treaty Limits claim as a result of domestic pressures as well as constitutional constraints.[23]

The Philippine justification for its *terra nullius* claim is centered on the Japanese withdrawal from the area after its defeat in WWII. Because Japan did not cede the islands to any other nation in the San Francisco Treaty, the islands were given the status of "trusts." This essentially nullified any previous ownership of the islands. As a result, the Philippine government felt that its occupation of the islands was justified.[24]

In recent years, the Philippine government has attempted to bring its SCS claims more in line with the UNCLOS due to the fact that its Treaty Limits claim was undermining its position as a claimant.[25] In 2009, the Philippine Congress ratified the Archipelagic Baselines Act. In accordance with UNCLOS provisions, the Philippine claimed 12 nautical miles of territorial sea and 200 nautical miles of EEZ straight from territorial baselines. The Kalaya'an box that previously used to encapsulate the 53 features that it claimed has been done away with, although the Philippine continues to lay claim to those features under the "Regime of Islands" clause in the UNCLOS. At present, only a small section of its southern boundary with Malaysia continues to be determined by the Treaty of Paris which is one of the treaties that make up the old Treaty Limits.[26] Furthermore, in 2013, in an effort to validate its EEZ claims and invalidate China's in the SCS, the Philippines submitted for arbitration its dispute with China to the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) under the compromissory clauses of the UNCLOS (this will be discussed further below).

Socialist Republic of Vietnam

The Socialist Republic of Vietnam bases some of its claims on historical usage. Court records from the reign of King Le Thanh Tong (1460–1497) indicate that Vietnam claimed sovereignty over the Spratly Islands. This historical claim is reinforced by Vietnamese maps dated to the seventeenth century that incorporated the Spratly Archipelago into Vietnam.[27] Like China, Vietnam has also presented archeological evidence to bolster its claims to the Spratly and Paracel Islands.[28] In addition to historical usage and archeological evidence, the Vietnamese government proclaims sovereignty over the Paracel and Spratly Island groups based on French colonial claims. When Vietnam became a protectorate of France in 1884 in the aftermath of the Sino-French War, France declared sovereignty over the entirety of the Paracel and Spratly archipelagos, an act which continues to be used to justify Vietnamese claims to this day.[29]

Like the Philippines, Vietnam has made some of its claims on the concept of *terra/res nullius*. The Vietnamese claim that before the French formally occupied some of the features in the Paracel and Spratly archipelagos in 1933, the islands were essentially unclaimed and therefore a "no man's land."[30] As a result, Vietnam took over the sovereignty of the islands after Vietnam became independent. Since 1973, the Vietnamese have controlled up to 22 features in the Spratly Island group, making them the most significant holder of territory among the claimants in that archipelago.[31] Although Vietnam also claims sovereignty over the Paracels (Hoang Sa), the PRC effectively evicted the Vietnamese from the archipelago in 1974 after an intense naval battle.[32] In essence, Hanoi has fared better in staking and solidifying its claims in the Spratly archipelago. Since establishing a significant foothold in the Spratly Islands in the 1970s, Vietnam has erected several military facilities throughout the features it controls and, like China and the Philippines, it has established a settler outpost. The outpost is located in Spratly Island (Dao Truong Sa) which is the fourth largest feature in the Spratly archipelago and the largest feature controlled by Vietnam. In 2007 the Vietnamese government held local elections in the area in order for the inhabitants to select a representative to the National Assembly.[33] The Spratlys, known as Quan Dao Truong Sa in Vietnam, are currently administered as a district of the Khanh Hoa province.[34]

The division of Vietnam from the 1950s to the 1970s led to some confusion in regards to the claims being made in the South China Sea. North Vietnamese Premier Pham Van Dong stated that his government recognized the PRC claims in both the Paracel and Spratly Archipelagos. In contrast, the South Vietnamese government located in Saigon held on to its claims on both groups.[35] In fact, it was the Saigon government that had been occupying the Paracels when the PRC dislodged its forces from the archipelago. The North did not acknowledge the casualties suffered by the South during this clash and instead supported its communist ally in the claims.[36] However, when South and North Vietnam reunited in 1975, Vietnam reasserted its claims to both archipelagos.[37]

In recent years, much in the same way as the Philippines, Vietnam has attempted to clarify its claims in the SCS in order to bring them into proper standing with the UNCLOS. In 2003, Vietnam signed a treaty with Indonesia that delimited the continental shelf and the EEZ boundaries between the two countries. That was followed by an agreement with China in 2004 that delimited the maritime boundaries in the Gulf of Tonkin.[38] Then in 2009 Vietnam and Malaysia made a joint submission to the United Nations Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS). The submission dealt with claims beyond the 200 nautical mile EEZ. Lastly in 2012, Vietnam ratified a legislation called the Law of the Sea in which it claimed a 200 nautical mile EEZ and a 350 nautical mile continental shelf from its baselines.[39] While there remain some discrepancies regarding certain portions of Vietnam's claims that do not fall in accordance with this new law, it is clear that it has made some efforts to bring its claims up to UNCLOS standards much the same manner as the Philippine has done.

Other Claimants

Taiwan, Malaysia, and Brunei are also claimants in the SCS territorial and maritime disputes. However, their response to China's increasing assertiveness in the SCS has been muted over the years. It is Indonesia, a country that does not see itself as a party to the SCS disputes that has gradually begun to challenge China's claims in the region. Strictly speaking, unlike the other six claimants, Indonesia is not a party to the territorial component of the SCS disputes. Nevertheless, China's nine-dash map overlaps with the EEZ of the Natuna Islands, an area that is rich in fish stocks and hydrocarbons. In other words, Indonesia is a de

facto participant in the maritime component of the South China Sea. Indonesian President, Jokowi Widodo, has stated that "the 'nine-dashed line' that China says marks its maritime border has no basis in any international law," adding that Indonesia supports the completion of a code of conduct for the South China Sea.[40] The overlapping EEZ claims in the SCS near the Natuna Islands has led to several confrontations between fishermen and coast guard vessels from both countries within the Natuna Island's EEZ.[41] In fact, a skirmish that occurred in 2016 prompted Beijing to claim that the nine-dash line accorded Chinese fishermen with traditional fishing rights within the EEZs of the Natuna Islands for the first time.[42]

These events have regularly raised tensions between the two countries and have prompted Indonesia to bolster its military presence around the Natuna Islands and conduct military exercises in its vicinity.[43] Additionally, the Indonesian government has sought to build new bases and upgrade existing ones in the Natuna Islands. These efforts complement Indonesia's growing maritime capabilities aided by foreign weapons acquisitions and the growing sophistication of its indigenous defense shipbuilding sector.[44] Indonesia has also renamed the EEZ around the Natuna Islands as the "North Natuna Sea" in an effort to bolster its claim.[45] While some of its Neighbors, namely the Philippines and Vietnam, have engaged in similar behavior, as will be discussed in further chapters, Indonesia's name change is limited to its EEZ as opposed to the entirety of the South China Sea, signifying its efforts to remain outside of the dispute and continue playing the role of "honest broker." In fact, Indonesia's efforts to limit the extent of its involvement in the SCS disputes is based on its desire to continue enjoying its trade and investment relationship with China. Consequently, the main contestants in the SCS disputes continue to be China, the Philippines, and Vietnam, while Indonesia plays a limited role focused on the EEZ of the Natuna Islands.

Toward a Code of Conduct

After a decade of heightened tensions in the SCS leading to perceptions of a "China threat" among Southeast Asian countries, Beijing agreed to discuss a Code of Conduct (CoC) with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). These discussions led to the Declaration of Conduct (DoC) in 2002. This became a key component of China's

"charm offensive" in the region.[46] The DoC outlines principles for avoiding conflicts in the SCS. It states that:

> The Parties concerned undertake to resolve their territorial and jurisdictional disputes by peaceful means, without resorting to the threat or use of force, through friendly consultations and negotiations by sovereign states directly concerned, in accordance with universally recognized principles of international law, including the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.[47]

Although the DoC called for the peaceful resolution of the disputes, it is nonbinding, and therefore has no enforcing mechanism in order to uphold the agreed-upon principles. The DoC was successful in easing tensions in the region for a number of years; however, by 2007 China had reverted to its assertive posture in the South China Sea.[48] Beijing's heightened securitization of the SCS since 2007, and the consequent clashes that have resulted from its assertiveness and growing presence, has made progress toward a formal CoC difficult.

After a long hiatus in negotiations, on August 6, 2017, foreign ministers from ASEAN and China adopted a framework of a CoC on maritime disputes. This framework is meant to pave the way for actual negotiations on the code to take place. Although the framework is explicit that the CoC "is not an instrument to settle territorial disputes or maritime delimitation issues," it aims to promote "mutual trust, cooperation and confidence prevent incidents, manage incidents should they occur and create a favourable environment for the peaceful resolution of disputes."[49] There are still a number of obstacles for a formal CoC to be finalized such China's island reclamation efforts, fishing moratoriums, interception of fishing vessels and oil exploration vessels, and its rejection of the internationalization of the disputes. These obstacles are no minor hurdles, particularly because they represent how China's securitization of the SCS disputes has resulted in several actions that run counter to established international norms and pose a threat to regional stability. Additionally, the responses by Southeast Asian states have paralleled China's by pursuing fishing moratoriums, renaming of the seas, and their own island reclamation efforts, indicating that their securitization of China's actions has produced counter-normative actions. In other words, there is a real possibility that a CoC, much like the DoC, will remain unenforceable since the mutual securitization of the claimants is co-constitutive and continues to produce enmity between them.

The Permanent Court of Arbitration and the South China Sea Ruling

On January 22, 2013, the Philippines submitted its grievances with China's claims in the SCS for arbitration to the PCA under the compromissory clauses of the UNCLOS.[50] At the heart of this submission was the legality of China's nine-dash map under international law. Through a note verbale, China rejected arbitration and challenged the jurisdiction of the PCA to hear the case.[51] China's position was that the court could not address issues of jurisdiction and sovereignty over contested features in the South China Sea. However, in a 2015 ruling, the court concluded that since the arbitration involved the classification of features and their corresponding maritime entitlements under UNCLOS, it could rule on those issues without taking a position on their sovereignty. Furthermore, the court ruled that China's absence in the arbitration proceedings would not preclude the court from moving forward with the case.[52]

The ruling on the case occurred on July 12, 2016. The PCA invalidated China's "historic rights" claims on the South China Sea. It contended that prior to UNCLOS and, especially before WWII, the SCS was considered high seas. As a result, the exercise of freedoms on the high seas such as navigation and fishing, which are already permitted under international law, cannot give rise to historic rights.[53] Additionally, the count contested China's claim that is has established rights and jurisdiction within the area outlined in the nine-dash map, arguing that claimant states in the SCS have contested China's claims, thus no acquiescence has occurred. More damaging, however, the PCA ruled that "China's claims to historic rights, or other sovereign rights or jurisdiction, with respect to the maritime areas of the South China Sea encompassed by the relevant part of the 'nine-dash line' are contrary to the Convention and without lawful effect to the extent that they exceed the geographic and substantive limits of China's maritime entitlements under the Convention."[54]

After ruling on China's historic rights and the legality of the nine-dash map in the South China Sea, the PCA ruled on the legal classification of the features and their corresponding maritime entitlements under the Convention. China's island-reclamation efforts were a key part of this section, leading the court to consider historical evidence on the features prior to their reclamation.[55] To this end, the court made it clear that reclamation efforts and man-made structures would not be relevant for the

determination of the classification of a feature. Here again the PCA delivered another defeat to China. It ruled against China's efforts to establish a baseline around the Spratly Archipelago since this was a right provided only to archipelagic states. Furthermore, the size of the baseline claimed by China would exceed the water to land ratio of nine to one, thus putting it at odds with the Convention.[56] Lastly, the PCA rules that no feature in the Spratly Archipelago met the requirements for being classified as an island under the provisions of the Convention. In other words, none of the features being contested could generate an EEZ or continental shelf. This meant that, at most, those features classified as rocks could generate a 12 nautical mile territorial sea and nothing else. Consequently, questions of jurisdiction and sovereignty aside, Chinese features in the South China Sea could only generate territorial seas and that Chinese reclamation efforts and fishing moratoriums impeded lawful use of the Philippines' EEZ.[57]

The landmark ruling of the PCA and its corresponding award was immediately rejected by China. China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a release stating that the award "is null and void and has no binding force," with Foreign Minister Wang Yi arguing that the arbitration was "a political farce under the pretext of law." President Xi Jinping also indicated that China's territorial sovereignty and maritime interests in the SCS would not be affected by the award.[58] The Philippine government provided a muted response, with Foreign Affairs Secretary Perfecto Yasay Jr. welcoming the ruling and calling for "restraint and sobriety." Yasay indicated that following the ruling the Philippine government would aim to negotiate with China the lingering issues of sovereignty and EEZ delineation that were not addressed by the ruling.[59] In essence, despite the landmark ruling of the PCA, China has not changed its approach to the SCS disputes. In fact, signs point to greater efforts by Beijing to militarize the South China Sea in order to cement its position vis-à-vis the other claimants.[60]

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CHAPTER 3

Sino-Japanese Security Relations

Abstract This chapter provides an overview for the historical legacies and the extant territorial disputes that provide the context for Sino-Japanese security relations. It focuses on the processes that have shaped Japan's and China's security perception of the other. The chapter concludes that lingering mistrust as a result of historical legacies of war, and ongoing territorial disputes, have resulted in diametrically opposed images and perceptions of each other which have had negative consequences on their security relations.

Keywords China · Japan · Perception · Security · Territorial disputes

Historical Legacy

China and Japan share a long and distinct history. The proximity between the two countries enabled contact between the two cultures since the first century of the Common Era. Exchanges between China and Japan flourished over the centuries which enabled China to influence much of Japanese development in the form of writing, philosophical traditions, religion, and culture. However, the roles of teacher and student were reversed in the nineteenth century as Japan modernized and China fell into a semi-colonial status under foreign powers. Japan's defeat of China in the First Sino-Japanese War in 1885 was devastating for China

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which had to pay large indemnities and cede territories to a country it considered its pupil. Additionally, full-scale invasion of the Chinese mainland in the 1930s by Japanese imperial forces has left a legacy of bitterness which continues to affect their relations in the twenty-first century.[1]

The legacy of the atrocities committed by Japan in China during the 1930s until the end of WWII in 1945 remains a point of contention between the two countries. For its part, the CCP leadership believes that Japan has not adequately apologized for the crimes committed during its invasion of China. The Japanese government's failure to pass any kind of resolution admitting to the atrocities committed by its own troops has only strengthened the Chinese belief that Japan has not repented for the actions taken by its soldiers during that tumultuous period.[2] Another detrimental issue related to this WWII legacy is the fact that Japanese school textbooks habitually diminish the scope of Japanese atrocities during WWII, particularly the crimes that were committed in China during the Nanking rape and the experiments conducted by Unit 731.

This has been a politically charged issue between the two countries for decades now.[3] Repeated visits by Japanese officials to the Yasukuni Shinto Shrine which honors all Japanese soldiers killed in war, including 14 Class-A war criminals from WWII, has only played to Chinese sensitivities and has created further strains in bilateral ties. During his tenure, CCP Chairman Jiang Zemin requested that Japanese Prime Minister Koizumi refrain from visits to the shrine. Nevertheless, Koizumi ignored these requests and continued to make visits to the Yasukuni shrine throughout his tenure as PM, inciting anger from the Chinese side.[4] Prime Minister Shinzo Abe also paid a visit to the Yasukuni Shrine in 2013 a year after beginning his second tenure as PM, resulting in yet another rebuke by Chinese and Korean officials.[5]

In addition to these extant historical issues, Beijing has regularly expressed concern regarding Japan's potential role in a possible cross-strait clash between China and the United States over Taiwan. This is connected to the evolving nature of the US–Japan alliance which Beijing has observed with increasing alarm. Lastly, another point of contention between China and Japan is the territorial dispute over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands. The islands are currently administered by Japan but are claimed by China. As a result, bilateral relations between Beijing and Tokyo is regularly strained due to the numerous maritime and air encounters between the two, as China has aimed to contest

Japanese control of the islands. This has resulted in recurring patterns of enmity and, consequently, mutual securitization.

Because the enmity that exists between China and Japan intersects historical legacies and territorial disputes, it inevitably affects two of the most important functions of the nation-state: (1) its ability to control its historical narrative and (2) its ability maintain territorial integrity and sovereignty. This means that despite Beijing's and Tokyo's periodical efforts to settle their differences, there is always a pendulum swing in the opposite direction that results in regular clashes. Consequently, these patterns of enmity that produce their mutual securitization generate negative images of the "other," thus shaping policy preferences. This is particularly salient when these policies involve the security realm.

Chinese Security Perceptions of Japan

Chinese security concerns regarding the Japanese have been primarily focused on Taiwan. Many analysts agree that current People's Liberation Army's (PLA) capabilities are aimed at deterring Taiwan from achieving de jure independence and denying any outside intervention in a Mainland-Taiwan conflict. Particular attention is placed on the United States and its main ally in the region, Japan. The Chinese are wary of the US–Japan alliance for a number of reasons, but it is the Taiwan issue that is of highest concern. In 1997 the United States and Japan revised the guidelines for their defense cooperation. This revision allowed Japan to assist the United States in conflicts outside of Japanese territories.[6] The Chinese perceived this revision to be problematic for four reasons:

> First, in Japan-US-China triangular relations, Japan intends to sacrifice Chinese security interests for Japan-US relations. The reason is that all military alliances must have an imaginary enemy and it seems the Japan-US alliance is taking China as its imaginary enemy. Second, the revised guidelines and related measures do not exclude Taiwan in their scope. There is therefore a hidden danger of strategic conflicts between China and the US-Japan alliance. Third, the revised guidelines are transforming the Japan-US military alliance into an Asian version of NATO. Although Japan's roles will mainly be to provide logistics and rear-area support, Japan is actually "sailing out in a borrowed boat". Therefore, Japan's policies of "homeland defense" and "not to be a military power" no longer exist. Finally, the revised guidelines and related measures have strengthened domestic demands for revising Japan's constitution.[7]

The fact that the revision does not exclude Taiwan in its scope has garnered criticism from China because it creates the possibility that it may have to contend not only with American, but also Japanese involvement in a cross-strait conflict. Exacerbating the issue was a 2005 joint statement made by the United States and Japan which indicated that there should be a "peaceful resolution" to the Taiwan Strait issue. Considering that Taiwan is a core national interest for the PRC, Beijing responded by enacting the Anti-Secession Law which legitimized non-peaceful means to prevent Taiwanese independence.[8] This issue has been one of the main drivers for the PLA's heavy investment in missile technologies, in particular the Anti-Ship Ballistic Missile (ASBM) program in order to deter any involvement by US and Japanese forces if such conflict were to occur.

The fact that the Chinese perceive the US–Japan alliance as a means of containing Chinese military modernization has only been exacerbated by the joint development of a Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) system between the two allies. The program has solicited criticism from Beijing since it perceives that this "missile shield" is aimed at China. Though the Japanese side agreed to the BMD programs on the grounds that it needed deterrence against a nuclear-armed North Korea, the Chinese claim that current Japanese missile-interception capacity exceeds current North Korean missile capabilities. Consequently, they believe that the Japanese have "great-power" ambitions and that the true aim of the program is to reduce PLA missile capabilities. Japan currently operates six Aegis-equipped destroyers, which are further supported by over a dozen American Aegis destroyers deployed in the Pacific. The Aegis system is a countermeasure platform capable of intercepting incoming missiles over a vast area, which could theoretically negate incoming missile threats. Chinese analysts are quick to point out, that out of the six Aegis-equipped destroyers Japan currently deploys, Japan only needs two in order to intercept incoming missiles from both China and North Korea. Some go further, claiming that a single Aegis-equipped destroyer is enough to provide full coverage over the Japanese archipelago.[9]

It is clear that China views Japan as a potential threat to its security and is very suspicious of any steps taken by Japan to become a "normal" power. Chinese officials contend that although Japan is supposedly "disarmed," it maintains a large land force that numbers 250,000, which is comparable to Britain.[10] Furthermore, Japan's military spending places it in the top 10 global military spenders, something that has not escaped China's attention.[11] The Chinese perception of a Japanese threat to its

security has only strengthened their resolve to modernize their military as quickly as possible in order to deter or balance any actions taken by the Japanese to fully normalize itself as a military power.

In essence, China's security concerns about Japan revolve around core issues of territorial integrity. Specifically role that Japan is perceived to play in undermining these issues. The SCS, then, is but the most recent theater in which China now sees itself having to contend with a more proactive Japan. When understood through unresolved historical legacies and existing territorial disputes, it is clear that China has securitized Japan. This is evident in China's 2015 White Paper which stated that "Japan is sparing no effort to dodge the post-war mechanism, overhauling its military and security policies. Such development has caused grave concerns among other countries in the region."[12] In other words, Japan's activities are perceived as undermining Chinese interests specifically because its actions are being filtered through a securitized "other."

Japanese Security Perceptions of China

China's increasingly assertive policies, a product of its securitization of its maritime peripheries and some of its neighbors, has concerned key regional actors like Japan. In particular, China's modernization program, which facilitates China's power projection and serves as the empirical expression of its securitization rhetoric, has been met with suspicion by the Japanese. Tokyo is wary of Beijing's defense expenditures which have seen double-digit growth for over two decades now. Particularly worrisome is that China's emergence as an economic power and military power has taken place during a period in which Japan's own economy has stagnated. In other words, a "modern Japan has never had to deal with a strong China. World attention turned from the Japanese miracle to fascination with China in a way that was psychologically jarring for Japan."[13] This adds another layer to existing questions regarding Sino-Japanese historical legacies and ongoing territorial disputes, thus highlighting Japan's anxieties about its place in the region. Subsequently, Japan has come to securitize China's actions, something explicitly stated for the first time in 2004 when the Japanese Defense Agency (JDA) raised the possibility of a future armed conflict with China.[14] Increased Chinese air and maritime incursions into the Japanese-administered Senkaku Islands in the past decade have only increased the perception among Japanese officials that a modernized PLA has become more assertive and is a potential threat.[15]

These islands have been a source of contention between the two sides since the United States transferred administrative control of the islands to Japan in 1972. China claims that the islets belonged to the Taiwanese provincial jurisdiction which was ceded to Japan by the ruling Qing Dynasty in the Treaty of Shimonoseki after China lost the First Sino-Japanese War in 1895. According to the Chinese, the Diaoyu Islands, as they are known in China, have been under Chinese control since the Ming Dynasty. Since the Treaty of Shimonoseki was part of the "unequal treaties" that were rendered void at the end of WWII, China claims that they should have been rightfully returned.

Tokyo claims that the islands, which are known as the Senkakus in Japan, were brought under Japanese administration when Japan took control of the Ryukyu island chain in 1879, and became sovereign territory after Japan formally annexed the Ryukyu Islands in 1895. Since Japan claims that the Senkakus are formally part of the Ryukyu island chain, they rightfully belong to Japan. The fact that the United States took no position on the legal status of the islands when it transferred administrative control to Japan has created a problem for the Chinese. What further complicates this dispute is a United Nations survey from 1968 which claimed that the sea surrounding the islands contained vast oil and gas reserves.[16] Japan's lack of energy resources, and China's growing dependence on energy imports to fuel its economy, have raised the stakes on the sovereignty of the islands and the surrounding seas. Beyond the energy security implications of the islands, this territorial dispute has been exacerbated over the years as Chinese vessels and aircraft have been found operating in the vicinity of the islands.[17] Sometimes these encroachments have been dangerous as the Japanese Coast Guard (JCG) has had to interdict Chinese vessels. The encounters have regularly caused diplomatic crises between the two neighbors. Consequently, Japan's White Papers reveal that it perceives China's assertive actions as efforts to unilaterally change the status quo through coercion, something that is "incompatible with the existing international order" adding that "China remains posed to fulfill its unilateral demands without compromise, including making steady efforts to turn its acts into faits accompli," demonstrating its securitization of China.[18]

The importance of submarine forces to China has added a new dimension to the tensions between the two countries as there have been a number of Chinese research ships conducting surveys in the area around

the Senkaku Islands which have the potential to map the ocean floor. This has become a critical security concern for Japan since those maps can be used by PLA submarines to conduct operations in the area. As a result, the JCG has opted to deploy larger ships to the area in order to deter further Chinese incursions.[19] As previously mentioned, increased PLA capabilities resulting from its modernization programs have also raised concerns among Japanese officials who believe that China poses a threat to Japan's sea lines of communication. Being a small island country, Japan has little to no natural resources. It relies on energy imports for the vast majority of its oil and gas consumption. The increased power-projection capabilities of the PLA in both air and sea create anxieties in Japan because of the possibility of Chinese interruption of the SLOC.[20] Because of this, Taiwan has become an important strategic asset regarding the security of the Japanese sea lanes. According to Japanese military analyst Shigeo Hiramatsu:

> Taiwan serves as a critical component of Japan's sea-lane. If Taiwan were integrated into China, the South China Sea would become China's Sea, bringing the sea lane to the Middle East and Southeast Asian countries under strong Chinese influence. China would have more say over Japan's Nansei Islands and the East China Sea. If the East China Sea were brought under Chinese influence, the Yellow Sea would lose access to high seas and become China's inland sea, while the Korean Peninsula will fall under the Chinese sphere of influence. Moreover, China will probably use Taiwan as a stepping-stone and make its way into the Pacific….Taiwan is Japan's 'lifeline'.[21]

This essentially means that the Japanese fear that growing PLA capabilities may create a power imbalance across the straits which may result in long-term strategic losses for Japan. For Tokyo, China's geographically dominant position in East Asia's maritime periphery and its growing military capabilities can eventually present a realistic threat to Japan's shipping lanes by restricting access to resources abroad.[22] The fact that the Japanese military establishment sees Taiwan as a strategic asset to secure its SLOC lends credence to Chinese fears of a possible Japanese intervention in a cross-strait conflict.

Due to the numerous Chinese incursions into the Senkaku area, and the ongoing PLA modernization programs, Japan decided to formally terminate the ODA program tailored for China in 2008.[23] The ODA program for China began in 1979 shortly after the Sino-Japanese

Rapprochement of 1972 in the wake of President Nixon's visit to China. This program consisted of low-interest loans as well as grants for China which were aimed at developing infrastructures such as airports, seaports, and roads which directly benefited Japanese firms that were investing on the mainland.

The origins of this program began in 1972 when the Chinese and Japanese were normalizing their relations. One of the pressing issues during the negotiations was the war reparations which China felt Japan owed for the human and material damage caused during the Second Sino-Japanese War. However, from the Japanese perspective, the Chinese had given up the rights to ask for reparations in 1952 when the Nationalist government, which was the internationally recognized government of China at the time, signed the Japan–Republic of China Treaty. The fact that the Japanese delegation brought this treaty up angered Chairman Mao Zedong and Premier Zhou Enlai. Nevertheless, because the Chinese felt that rapprochement with the United States and Japan was more important, they agreed to waive the issue of reparations. Once Deng Xiaoping became the Chairman, he expressed displeasure with the fact that China had waived the issue of reparations during negotiations, but was not too vocal due to the fact that both Mao and Zhou still remained important figures to the memory of the party. In 1978 Deng made a visit to Japan and motioned that China would be open to low-interest loans from Japan to help in his modernization initiatives. He was more explicit in 1987 when he commented that Japan had an obligation to help China in its development. Deng stated that Japan "has the biggest debt to China. In 1972 China did not ask for reparations. Frankly speaking, we harbor dissatisfaction over this point."[24] The Japanese agreed that assistance in the form of low-interest loans and grants would create good will between both sides and by the time the program ended the Chinese had received billions in development assistance.

In the same manner that China has securitized Japan, and particularly its potential role regarding its core territorial interests, Japan has securitized China and its actions in the context of the role Beijing may play as the power balance continues to shift in the region. In essence Sino-Japanese security relations exists in a condition of mutual securitization which reinforces behavior that feeds into their existing enmity.

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CHAPTER 4

China's Military Modernization

Abstract This chapter assesses China's military modernization programs. Of particular importance are the catalysts that have led to such a rapid modernization, such as the Gulf War, the Taiwan Straits Crisis and the American response to that crisis, and finally, the ongoing United States–Japan alliance. Current military doctrines are assessed and evaluated, especially the concept of Anti-Access Area Denial (A2/AD) and its corresponding weapons programs, both foreign acquisitions and domestic production. Finally, the chapter tackles China's South China Sea policy and concludes that military modernization has paved the way for increased Chinese assertiveness in the territorial disputes.

Keywords China · Military modernization · Strategy · Anti-Access/Area Denial · South China Sea

Background

Since Deng Xiaoping took over the reins of the Chinese Communist Party in 1978, China has undergone profound economic reforms. These economic reforms have proven to be extremely successful as China's economy has grown exponentially over the past three decades.[1] By 2010 China had surpassed Japan as the world's second largest economy behind the United States.[2] This economic growth has benefited the PLA which

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has used this new-found wealth to push for comprehensive modernization programs across all of its service branches. Military spending in China has grown by double digits annually since the early 1990s. The Department of Defense (DOD) estimated that China's defense budget for 2017 was $154.3 billion and will continue to rise for the foreseeable future.[3] However, the current level of defense spending has not always been the norm. During the initial phase of economic reforms in the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s, China's military ranked as the least important among the proposed "four modernizations" (industry, agriculture, defense, and science and technology) under Deng Xiaoping's tenure.[4] Much of the policies being enacted during this time period were concentrated on economic growth and modernization of the country's industries. Nevertheless, while the economy remains the main focus of Chinese policymaker's agenda today, the military has begun to take a more prominent role in the annual budget of the PRC. This growing prominence is the direct result of the CCP's growing securitization of several core interests in the region, beginning with Taiwan, and then spilling over into the East and South China Sea disputes.

Catalysts for Modernization

The increasingly prominent role of the military began as a result of two key events that occurred in the 1990s and served as the catalysts for PLA modernization. The first catalyst began with the Gulf War in 1991. The Chinese High Command was stunned by the overwhelming success that the United States and its allies had over Saddam Hussein's Iraqi forces. The allies employed technologies that had not yet seen combat use but the results were clear: absolute decimation of the Iraqi forces. The US-led coalition were able to penetrate Iraqi airspace with impunity by deploying their sophisticated stealth fighters/bombers. Naval forces were able to launch cruise missiles and other precision weaponry while remaining outside the range of the Iraqi countermeasures. The use of electromagnetic warfare attacks and computer viruses to infect enemy systems completely blinded Iraqi command and control networks, rendering them unable to coordinate defenses or counter Allied attacks. This was also the first conflict in which unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) received the surrender of an opposing force.[5] Equally impressive was the use of global positioning systems (GPS) by the Allies to coordinate their movements effectively and efficiently, something Iraqi forces were

incapable of achieving. Chinese generals were forced to admit that the PLA was ill-prepared to conduct war against any modern military force.[6] The leaders of the CCP acknowledged the need to properly modernize the PLA so that it could operate effectively in the twenty-first century.

The second catalyst that fully cemented the modernization programs in the PRC was the Taiwan Straits Crisis of 1996. In March of that year, the PLA's Second Artillery Corps (SAC), which is in charge of the strategic missiles in the military's inventory, began firing short-range ballistic missiles (SRBM) within miles of two vital Taiwanese harbors, Keelung in the north and Kaohsiung in the south. The reason behind the provocation was Taiwan's first democratic elections. The PRC wanted to dissuade the Taiwanese people from proceeding with the elections by undermining its government; therefore, it resorted to intimidation by conducting missile tests off the Taiwanese coast. The United States responded by sending two aircraft carrier groups to the vicinity. Once near Taiwan, American forces began to conduct military exercises and monitoring PLA operations in order to discourage further missile launches. This incident gave new urgency to the modernization programs in the PLA since Chinese leaders became convinced that they would definitively have to contend with the United States in a cross-strait conflict.[7] These two instances served as the catalysts of the modernization programs, particularly because the lack of a modern and capable force undermined the CCP's ability to deliver on its promise of regaining lost territories such as Taiwan, something that could lead to restive regions like Tibet and Xinjiang an opening for secession. In other words, these events exposed the fragility of the CCP's position. It is at this point that the PLA decided to revise its operating doctrines and strategies and began a comprehensive foreign weapon acquisition program as well as a complete overhaul and modernization of its indigenous industrial military complex.

Military Doctrines

Among the first modernizing measures taken by the PLA was the overhaul of its doctrines and strategies. While it is difficult to ascertain completely accurate pictures of the PLA's strategies and doctrines, white papers reveal three publicly acknowledged doctrines. These are: "Active Defense", "Local War under Conditions of Informatization," and "People's War."[8] These doctrines were formulated from the ground up or modified by PLA officers in order to allow the military to

operate using modern tactics and equipment. “Active Defense” is a hotly debated concept. On the surface it is meant to be a purely defensive doctrine, essentially claiming that the Chinese would not be the first to initiate a conflict. However, part of the doctrine also states that an enemy’s attack does not necessarily have to be kinetic in order to warrant countermeasures. What this means is that the PRC can perceive something as an attack even if it’s political or economic in nature. According to the PLA publication: *Science of Military Strategy*, “Active Defense” entails the following:

> Strategically, we would fight only after the enemy has struck. But when foreign enemies forced war on us, we should be able to deal out powerful counterattack and stop the enemy’s offence in predetermined areas. After gradually depriving the enemy of his strategic initiative, we would change strategic defensive to strategic offensive, so as to utterly defeat the enemy’s invasion.[9]

While “Active Defense” provides the overarching doctrine for the military, “Local War under Conditions of Informatization” provides the definite concept of how the PLA will approach combat. The basic tenets of “Local War under Conditions of Informatization” revolve around the perception that near-future wars will take place primarily along China’s periphery. They will also be of short duration and limited in scope, hence the “local” aspect of the doctrine. The Informatization component of the doctrine invokes the fact that warfare in the twenty-first century, no matter the scope, will require advanced technology to effectively win an engagement.[10] The doctrine highly emphasizes the asymmetrical nature of the balance of power between China and its potential adversaries: U.S. and Japan. The PLA understands that its own capabilities, while vastly improved over the past decades, still remain technologically inferior compared to modern militaries.[11] Keeping this in mind, Beijing has sought to acquire technology and weapons that allow them to attack vital weaknesses in their enemies’ military. One of the fundamental principles of this doctrine is “anti-access and area denial” (A2/AD). A2/AD calls for particular weapons which allow China to impede, restrict, or deter enemy movements in the area it wishes to exert control over. This is particularly relevant in a cross-strait contingency where the PLA would be actively trying to keep American and Japanese forces from intervening as it conducts operations to retake the island.

The last of the three main doctrines currently operational in the PLA is "People's War". This is by far the oldest of the three doctrines and has been modified to encompass the realities of twenty-first century warfare. Dating back to the 1930s when fighting the Japanese in the Second Sino-Japanese War, the doctrine emphasized the importance of the participation of the general population in different aspects of warfare. Much of this remains true today; it essentially calls for the "mobilization of the Chinese population and the country's natural and industrial resources in times of emergency to support the armed forces."[12] A publication by the *Science of Second Artillery Campaigns* elaborates on how this doctrine is put into practice:

> …within the battle zone, the financial potential, mechanical maintenance capability, loading and unloading transportation capability, medical first--aid ability, in addition to the quantity and quality of the population, would all constitute extremely direct influence towards the logistics, equipment technical support and personnel replenishment.[13]

Although the CCP officially recognizes three doctrines and accompanying strategies, it is clear that its foreign weapons acquisitions and indigenous development heavily favor "Local War under Conditions of Informatization" and its A2/AD component.

Acquisitions and Indigenous Production

The PLA has pursued the purchase or the development of weapons systems which can properly fulfill its A2/AD requirements. Key imports have been: 300 + Sukhoi fighter jets, 12 Kilo-class submarines, four Sovremenny-class missile cruisers, and about 1000 S-300 surface-to-air missile (SAM) batteries which are able to simultaneously track over 100 targets.[14] The submarines come equipped with state of the art anti-ship missiles (ASM) such as the SS-N-22 Sunburn and SS-N-27 Sizzler against which the US Navy has yet to find an effective way to defend its aircraft carriers.[15] The SAM batteries and Sukhoi fighters are aimed at deterring aerial incursions into Chinese territory or area of engagements. Subsequently, these weapons have become the centerpieces of the PLA acquisition program in recent years due to the fact that they are among the most modern platforms currently deployed by the military.

One of the key indigenous programs that have been successful is the Yuan-class diesel submarine. In order to give some perspective on the capabilities of the submarine, Jane's Navy International, an intelligence analyst company, reported that the Yuan-class submarines may be equipped with air-independent propulsion (AIP). AIP allows diesel submarines to remain submerged for weeks at a time, which decreases their chance of detection by enemy forces.[16] Technology such as the AIP is very advanced and only the most modern militaries have such systems employed in their services. The area-deniability factor of this weapon is that it poses a threat to any ships passing through their operational zone. Together with the Kilo and Yuan-class submarines, the Chinese navy currently operates 60 submarines and has plans to expand its fleet in the coming years, greatly increasing its A2/AD capabilities.[17] China has also domestically produced an array of sophisticated surface combatants ranging from corvettes, frigates, destroyers, and cruisers. These vessels are equipped with significant missile capabilities, making them effective tools in an A2/AD strategy. Furthermore, China has embarked in a domestic carrier development program, demonstrating the growing sophistication of the indigenous military industrial complex.[18]

The PLA has also set up an extensive conventional cruise and ballistic missile capability to make up for its lack of aerial and naval superiority. By making use of its significant geographical advantage as a continental power and its capable missile development programs, China has produced an impressive stockpile of short to long range missiles capable of striking American assets on land, air, and sea.[19] The Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) estimated that by 2006 China had over 900 SRBMs and was increasing its inventory annually at a rate of more than 100. These SRBMs have a range of less than 1000 km but effectively cover most of the Chinese coast and will be complemented in the future by mid-range ballistic missiles (MRBM) capable of reaching targets 3000 km away. Coupled with the S-300 SAM systems, the Sunburn, and Sizzler ASM, the PLA is quickly creating an effective A2/AD umbrella which can potentially impede the freedom of movement by the United States and Japan in the event of a regional conflict.

The Assassins Mace

The term Assassin's Mace emanates from Chinese folklore about a hero who wields such a weapon in order to overcome a more powerful

opponent. In military terms it is strategy that calls for the capacity to "rapidly and decisively seize the initiative and turn the tide to one's advantage when confronting a conventionally superior foe."[20] Assassin's Mace is essentially an extension of A2/AD but is more focused on asymmetrical and unconventional approaches to warfare. The core concept of keeping the enemy away from key interests encapsulated by A2/AD is augmented by the capability to land a decisive blow on the enemy should they wish to engage. In this regard Assassin's Mace also encompasses indigenous research and development of weapons that can effectively deter the opponent or strike a decisive blow should tensions escalate to armed conflict.[21] Because the focus of these weapons is modern regional militaries, particularly the U.S. and Japan, China has sought to identify their key military assets that, while powerful, are also very vulnerable. This includes assets like satellites, command and control centers, American Nimitz-class super carriers and Wasp-class Landing Helicopter Docks, or Japanese helicopter destroyers like the Hyuga and Izumo-class Helicopter Destroyers.

Key Assassin's Mace-type platforms that have been identified by the Pentagon have been Anti Satellite weapons (ASAT), sea mines, and conventional ballistic missiles. Regarding ASAT technology, the PLA proved in 2007 that it is capable of taking down satellites with missiles. The PLA also appears to be "developing other kinetic and directed-energy (e.g., lasers, high-powered microwave, and particle beam weapons) technologies for ASAT missions. Foreign and indigenous systems also give China the capability to jam common satellite communications bands and GPS receivers."[22] Weapons like these could potentially blind the United States and Japan in the event of an armed conflict and, therefore, have the potential to change its course.

The PLA Navy also has a current estimated inventory of 50,000–100,000 mines of which there are over thirty varieties. These range from traditional moored or drifting mines to sophisticated remote controlled and rising mines. These mines can be directed to a location and sit at the bottom of the ocean waiting for an acoustic or magnetic signature to trigger its launching mechanism. Rising mines are particularly troubling because they are essentially torpedoes that rise from the bottom of the ocean to strike the unsuspecting target. These mines are said to be very effective anti-submarine weapons.[23] Coupled with the fact these mines are much more difficult to sweep and that the United States does not currently have significant mine countermeasure assets in the region,

the PLA Navy hopes that in the event of a conflict it can swiftly lock American vessels out of its operational zone in order to achieve its goal.[24] However, it is important to note that Japan currently operates 26 mine countermeasures (MCM) vessels, which is indicative of its concern with China's vast sea mine arsenal. It is also "illustrative of Tokyo's strong commitment to MCM that all these crafts are of 1980s or newer vintage."[25] This essentially makes Japan the best-equipped state in the region to meet any potential PLA mine-laying operation.

The last piece of China's Assassin's Mace arsenal that is publicly known is the development of the *Dong Feng*-21D (DF-21D) ASBM. They PLA has prioritized ballistic and cruise missile programs to serve as a deterrent to formal Taiwanese independence or any involvement by outside forces in a mainland-Taiwan conflict. The DF-21D is a notable platform because this missile is theoretically capable of attacking large naval vessels such as the American Nimitz-class aircraft carriers or the Japanese Hyuga and Izumo class helicopter destroyer. The missile has maneuverable reentry vehicle (MaRV) technology which would allow the warhead to maneuver or change its trajectory once it reenters the atmosphere, thereby enhancing its evasiveness. This technology would increase the missile's survivability by making it more effective against existing defensive countermeasures.[26]

The Assassin's Mace line of weaponry is exotic and has been product of a conscious understanding that China's capabilities do not yet match those of the United States and Japan. Although it appears that China does not seem intent on challenging American supremacy globally, it is concerned that the United States and Japan may challenge its position as a regional power in the coming decades. However, most of the details regarding Assassin's Mace weapons remain classified. Nevertheless, the Pentagon, the Japanese Ministry of Defense, and other analysts continue to monitor their development closely because of their potential to alter the status quo.

China's South China Sea Policy

China's contemporary activities in the SCS began with its expulsion of Vietnamese forces from the Paracel Archipelago in the 1970s. After a period of relative calm, Beijing acquired its foothold in the Spratly Archipelago in 1988 by taking Fiery Reef from Vietnam after a brief naval battle.[27] A few years later in 1995, tensions in the SCS flared up

again after the Philippine government discovered that China had occupied Mischief Reef, one of the features that it claimed as its own and located within its exclusive economic zone.[28] These events were largely possible due to domestic and regional realities that facilitated China's assertiveness, namely the Second and Third Indochinese War, and the American military withdrawal from the Philippines in 1992 and the subsequent deterioration of the Philippine armed forces. However, they provide the stage for China's growing securitization of the SCS as it incorporates the area into its "core interests." This "core interest" narrative lends itself to the CCP's efforts to remain in power by serving their role as the guarantors of China's territorial integrity and sovereignty. Furthermore, the strategic position and existing resources attributed to the SCS by Chinese officials reveal that they perceive this space as crucial for the political and economic stability of the country. This again goes at the heart of the twin pillars of CCP's legitimacy, as a result, they also serve as a catalyst for China's securitization of the South China Sea.[29] In other words, the role that the SCS plays for China's stability, and consequently the CCP's survival, has resulted in its securitization, thus facilitating greater assertiveness and physical presence in the region.

As previously indicated, China claims sovereignty over the entirety of the SCS features. It currently occupies the following 7 features in the Spratly archipelago (Table 4.1).

It maintains military facilities in all 7 of these features. Most installations have concrete buildings, helipads, antennas, search lights, radars, and naval guns.[30] In 2013, evidence emerged that China was undertaking a significant island-reclamation project involving the features in controlled in the Spratly archipelago. The reclamation efforts have added

Table 4.1 Spratly archipelago features occupied by the People's Republic of China

International name	*Chinese name*
Cuarteron Reef	Huayang Jiao
Fiery Cross Reef	Yongshu Jiao
Gaven Reef	Nanxun Jiao
Hughes Reef	Dongmen Jiao
Johnson South Reef	Chiguo Jiao
Mischief Reef	Meiji Jiao
Subi Reef	Zhubi Jiao[a]

[a]"China Island Tracker," *Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative*, 2018, https://amti.csis.org/island-tracker/china/

3200 acres of land to the contested features.[31] This added space has allowed for the construction of airstrips, harbors, garrisons, and weapon's platforms. Although other claimants in the SCS have conducted reclamation projects and have built military installations in several features, China's reclamation efforts are unprecedented in size and scope.[32] These upgrades will pave the way for more effective power projection into the SCS by China's armed forces. However, as previously indicated, the reclamation efforts will have no bearing on the legal status of the features.

Furthermore, China has occupied the Paracels since its eviction of Vietnamese forces in 1974. In the Paracel Islands China has established the Sansha administrative city on Woody Island, known as Yongxing in Chinese. Nearly 1000 residents currently live there and the PRC plans to build:

> a municipal office complex, an airport expansion, a military supply facility and supply hub for fishery and maritime surveillance vessels. It also intends to build a new port, a desalination plant capable of handling 1,000 tonnes of sea water daily, a 500-kilowatt solar power station, as well as "environmentally friendly" rubbish and waste-water treatment facilities.[33]

China hopes that the settlement on the island will demonstrate administrative control of the area and its habitability in order to cement its claims.[34] Consequently, it has undertaken island reclamation projects in the Paracel Islands as well. As the staging point for SCS power projection, the upgrading of the features of the Paracels is seen as a natural process by Beijing.[35]

Another effort to exert control of the SCS has been the imposition of fishing bans in the area since 1999.[36] These bans have been enforced by Chinese maritime agencies which habitually interdict fishing vessels from other states, particularly Vietnam and the Philippines. Some of these encounters have led to confrontations where Chinese vessels have opened fire on foreign fishermen, as was the case in March 20, 2013 when Chinese authorities fired upon Vietnamese trawlers, setting one ablaze.[37] For their part the Philippines and Vietnam have consistently defied these bans, and in the case of the Philippines, instituted their own fishing ban to counter the Chinese. While China claims that these bans are merely efforts to replenish fish stocks in the area, neither the Philippines nor Vietnam believe that China is acting on the grounds of food security but rather to further cement its control of the SCS.[38]

China's growing military capabilities, aided by foreign weapon acquisitions and domestic production, allow it to project power further beyond its territorial waters. Although the PRC has opted to maintain its newer and more capable military vessels away from disputed zones, its civilian maritime enforcement agencies operate former PLA Navy (PLAN) ships that are armed with guns and helicopters.[39] China's principle maritime forces are:

- China Maritime Surveillance (CMS), under the Ministry of Land and Resources;
- Fisheries Law Enforcement Command (FLEC), under the Ministry of Agriculture;
- China Coast Guard (CCG), a paramilitary People's Armed Police (PAP) force under the Ministry of Public Security;
- Maritime Safety Administration (MSA) and China Rescue and Salvage (CRS), under the Ministry of Transportation;
- Anti-Smuggling Maritime Police, under the General Administration of Customs.[40]

Besides operating former PLAN vessels, these agencies are supported by aircraft and UAVs. These official vessels and aircrafts augment PLA enforcement capabilities in asserting control over the disputed areas. Analysts contend that China's improved naval facilities provide China with an expanded range of coercive tools that can be deployed against rival claimants. As a result, many argue that China is pursuing a strategy of maintaining the status quo while simultaneously "strengthening actual control of the waters surrounding the disputed reefs and islands, including through official patrols in rival claimants' territorial waters."[41] Its substantial submarine and subsurface vessel capabilities allow China to patrol vast stretches of disputed territory in a way that other rival claimants are unable to challenge with their current capabilities.

China has also been pursuing the purchase of longer-range fighters to patrol the SCS area. The PLA's current fleet of SU-27s is only capable of conducting quick fly-overs of contested territory in the SCS due to their limited internal fuel capacity, its inability to carry external fuel tanks, and the lack of external fueling capabilities.[42] This is one of the main reasons why China has pursued the acquisition of the Russian-made SU-35 fighter. The SU-35 is among the best non-stealth fighters in the world and possesses a much longer effective range than its SU-27 predecessor.

Its internal fuel capacity alone is 20% greater than its predecessor. More significantly, the SU-35 can carry external fuel tanks; allowing it to loiter in contested areas for much longer periods of time. It is also important to point out that "the Su-35, would likely be able to outfly and outshoot any Philippine or Vietnamese aircraft (or surface vessel for that matter) largely rendering competing territorial claims a moot point."[43]

The SCS is important to China not only because of its energy reserves or marine resources but also because it is a strategic location traversed by China's SLOC and can potentially serve as a buffer zone. A buffer zone in the SCS would allow the PLA to monitor the naval movements of potential rivals like the United States and Japan in the region. This would essentially help China protect the mainland more effectively, particularly the coastal regions where most of China's industry and commerce reside.[44] In essence, as has been discussed above, the SCS's relevance not only intersects with the political and economic security of China, but more importantly, the survival of the CCP. As a result, it has become increasingly securitized, which provides the rhetorical basis for greater assertive policies and actions in the region.

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CHAPTER 5

Japan's Normalization

Abstract This chapter evaluates the ongoing normalization processes within Japan. Political and military normalization are evaluated by presenting evidence that despite serious constitutional limitations, Japan has begun to pursue an active foreign policy that has been characterized by increased security cooperation with countries that have ongoing territorial disputes with China. Furthermore, Japan's military is slowly moving out of its traditional support role under the United States–Japan alliance and has begun to acquire assets which allow it to project military power. The end of the chapter presents Japan's South China Sea policy and concludes that Japan's strategic competition with China, and concerns over the security of its sea lanes of communication has led it to embrace deeper economic and military cooperation with Vietnam and the Philippines.

Keywords Japan · Normalization · Power projection · Alliance · South China Sea

Background

Japan has been undergoing a "normalization" process for several decades. However, in order to make the claim Japan has been undergoing a process of "normalization"; it is necessary to address the implications

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of that claim. Japan is the only sovereign country in the world which has relinquished its rights to wage war or maintain armed forces. Furthermore, for a country that remains an economic powerhouse despite two decades of stagnation and sluggish recovery, Japan has been a bit player in the provision of regional and global security.[1] These two points make a case for "abnormality" since there is no precedent for either of these characteristics being attributed to any country in history. In essence, there has been no country that has willingly given up its right to wage war; and, while Japan was forced to accept the current constitution after its defeat in World War II and subsequent unconditional surrender, its continued adherence to Article IX is arguably self-imposed. In other words, Japan is well within its rights to amend or do away with its current constitution outright if it so desired. Additionally, there is no precedent for a country with such formidable global economic weight to not be directly engaged in providing for regional and global security.[2]

It does appear, however, that Japan has slowly begun to turn the corner on some of these issues. Since the aftermath of the first Gulf War, Japan has sought a more active role in peacekeeping operations around the world and has continued to expand on the roles of the JSDF. These changes have been welcomed by the United States which has been actively trying to get Japan to become more engaged in regional security matters as well as to provide more capabilities for itself while the United States has been preoccupied with the Global War on Terror. However, Japan's gradual "normalization" has also made some of its neighbors wary, particularly China. The historical legacy and ongoing territorial disputes between the two countries has generated a process of mutual securitization. As a result, any move taken by Japan toward "normalization" is perceived to be akin to remilitarization and a return to the imperial past by many Chinese officials. Nevertheless, it is clear that Tokyo has committed itself to "normalizing" its status, thus placing the reinterpretation of Article IX of its constitution at the top of the political agenda.

Article IX

At the heart of Japan's "abnormality" is Article IX of its constitution. The Japanese constitution is often referred to as the "pacifist constitution" among scholars since both the preamble and the famous Article IX express explicit principles of pacifism. For example, the preamble states that:

> We, the Japanese people …resolved that never again shall we be visited with the horrors of war through the action of government….
>
> We … desire peace for all time … and we have determined to preserve our security and existence, trusting in the justice and faith of the peace-loving peoples of the world.[3]

Following the spirit of the preamble, Article IX legally establishes the pacifist ideology by which Japan has operated since the constitution's adoption in 1947. Article IX states that:

1. Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as a means of settling international disputes.
2. In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized.[4]

The first paragraph is interpreted to mean that while Japan renounces war as a sovereign right, it is authorized to defend itself. Most legal scholars and government officials in Japan agree with this line of thinking, although some argue that even wars of self-defense are explicitly prohibited. The second paragraph is more contentious since the majority of scholars agree that under this paragraph Japan is denied a "standing military or quasi-military force. The only ways to resist foreign aggression are through police power and an ad hoc militia (citizens with weapons)."[5] Under this definition, the existence of the JSDF is in clear violation of the constitution. As a result, the government has opted to construe the JSDF in a different manner than the "war potential" referred to in Article IX, paragraph II. In essence, since the first paragraph does not forbid the right to self-defense, it is within the states' right to establish standing forces in order to provide for self-defense. The government believes that so long as the established forces are not greater than the minimum requirement for self-defense, they do not constitute "war potential."[6]

This interpretation of Article IX led to the creation of the JSDF in 1954. The JSDF's primary purpose is to provide for the security of Japan in the event of an invasion.[7] Despite their creation, however, the JSDF remains constrained by the legal ambiguity surrounding Article IX. One of the biggest points of contention arises from the fact that Article IX

forbids the Japanese from participating in collective defense treaties, meaning that Japan is not allowed to participate in a war even if it is to assist an ally. This is important since Japan signed a Security Treaty with the United States in 1951. The treaty has been revised a number of times but the core components remained the same until 1997 (which will be discussed in further detail below). The core components of the treaty, especially since 1960, have been for Japan to provide the United States with sites for the establishment of bases as well as to maintain an adequate force for self-defense. In other words, a force like the JSDF is required by the treaty. In return, the United States would provide Japan with financial assistance, military protection, and coverage under the American nuclear umbrella.[8] The treaty essentially states that in the event that Japan came under attack, the United States would have to assist Japan in the defense of their territory whereas if the United States came under attack, Japan would not be required to respond.

The Normalization Process

The "normalization" of the JSDF has been a gradual process that is still ongoing. There have been a number of factors that have compelled Japan to pursue "normalization." These factors have been both internal and external. The first external factor occurred in the early 1990s. On the eve of the first Gulf War, Japan was asked to participate in the US-led coalition to liberate Kuwait. The restrictions of Article IX paralyzed Japanese officials and the decision was made to simply allocate $13 billion to fund the United Nations' campaign in the Persian Gulf. Japanese officials were humiliated to see their country's monetary contribution, as a substitute for military support, turned into a source of contempt by other countries.[9]

The JSDF has historically been prohibited by law from being deployed beyond Japanese territory. Consequently, in order for the JSDF to be dispatched outside of Japanese territory, legislation must be passed through the Diet. Immediately after the end of the Gulf War in 1992, Japan enacted the Law Concerning Cooperation for United Nations Peace Keeping Operations and Other Operations (PKO Law). This law allowed the JSDF to participate in U.N.-sanctioned peace-keeping operations albeit under serious restrictions. For example, JSDF troops deployed on these missions could not be deployed to combat zones. Their role primarily revolved around providing medical

care, constructing roads, and running refugee camp operations.[10] The passing of this law has been noted by many to be the starting point of Japan's movement toward "normalization" since it marked the first time since WWII that Japanese troops were being deployed overseas. Since passing of the PKO, Japan has deployed JSDF units to "Cambodia, Mozambique, the Golan Heights, Rwanda, and Honduras."[11]

The second external factor occurred during the mid-1990s when the validity of the United States–Japan alliance was being questioned considering that their mutual foe, the Soviet Union, no longer existed. In other words, there was a need to validate the treaty by expanding its scope in order to account for the changing international environment. In 1996 Washington and Tokyo began talks on establishing new guidelines for the alliance. By 1997 the two countries had agreed to a new set of provisions which would reaffirm the bilateral defense cooperation between the two countries as well provide for breaking new ground. Of particular importance is Part V of the guidelines which called for "Cooperation in Situations in Areas Surrounding Japan That Will Have An Important Influence on Japan's Peace And Security, stipulates details of Japan's cooperation with the US military."[12] This provision is not only constitutionally problematic for Japan due to the implications that Japan may have to serve alongside the United States during a conflict in the region, but also for neighboring countries that see this development as potentially threatening to their interests. As mentioned above, China is especially concerned that this provision paves the way for Japanese participation in a cross-strait conflict between China and the United States over Taiwan.

Perhaps more important than the external factors, however, has been the shifting domestic attitudes within Japan regarding the normalization of the JSDF since the early 1990s. As a result, there has been growing support for reinterpreting the constitution in order to make the JSDF unquestionably legal under Japanese law. For the first time since the end of WWII, polls showed that nearly 60% of the Japanese population approved of amending the constitution.[13] This approval has been accredited to the overall satisfaction of the Japanese public with the JSDF's participation in peace-keeping operations around the world as well as more localized regional threats that they perceive. Their immediate concern has been North Korea and its nuclear and ballistic missile programs. Repeated missile tests that have violated Japanese airspace have prompted the JSDF to heavily invest in ballistic missile defense.

This has resulted in a joint venture between the United States and Japan. The BMD program utilizes a number of platforms such as early warning radars, Aegis-equipped cruisers, and Patriot missile batteries to track and destroy incoming missile threats.[14] However, while North Korea presents an immediate threat to Japan's security interests, Japanese officials agree that China will become their primary rival in the mid to long-term. China's assertive actions, continued military modernization, and lack of defense budget transparency has provoked fear in Japan over a potential clash with China in the future. Consequently, more and more people in Japan are becoming concerned with security issues and, therefore, more supportive of the ongoing "normalization" of the JSDF.

As a result of these internal and external pressures to "normalize" the JSDF, the Ministry of Defense (MoD) was created in 2007 to replace the Japanese Defense Agency which had been founded in 1954.[15] The elevation of the defense department from agency to ministry level allowed for more power concentration and influence in security policies. Since the creation of the MoD, debates emerged regarding the lifting of export bans on military equipment. The core argument was that lifting the export ban would provide Japanese weapons manufacturers some economies of scale when producing weapons. This would allow the Japanese military complex to remain competitive in addition to profiting from technology transfers with other developed countries. The export ban makes indigenous weapons production very costly and makes these companies increasingly unable to innovate because they cannot conduct business with foreign defense firms.[16] This was seen as a critical shortcoming for Japanese firms because other countries with developed military industrial complexes are able to reduce costs by exporting variants of their products to other countries.

As a result, in 2011 Japan eased its export ban and set forth a new set of criteria for arms sales and production. The new criteria for transfers of defense equipment emphasize the need to cooperate with the United States and other countries in the development of defense equipment. It also allows for the sale of military equipment for peaceful uses on a case by case basis. For example, defense equipment transferred to another party cannot be used for purposes outside of the agreed framework between Japan and the recipient. Furthermore, no weapons sales will be made to conflict areas where the provision of military equipment

could aggravate the situation.[17] This relaxation of the ban allowed Japan to participate in the production line of the Lockheed F-35 stealth fighter. Consequently, former Prime Minister Noda approved a decision to buy 42 of the stealth fighters. Tokyo expects to win some contracts to produce components for the fighter right in Japan. It is expected that "Mitsubishi Heavy Industries Ltd., IHI Corp. and Mitsubishi Electric Corp. will participate in production of the planes, the defense ministry said."[18] In fact, Japan is slated to "spend some ¥1.6 trillion ($20.8 billion) on the program over the next 20 years, and hopes to offset some of the costs of procuring and partially producing the aircraft domestically by exporting components to other F-35 buyers. The rising cost associated with producing military hardware that could technically be used only in Japan was a major factor prompting the export-ban reassessment."[19]

Growing regional tensions with China since the early 2000s have empowered legislators to pursue a draft on a number of new amendments to the constitution. In other words, the securitization of China has paved the way for constitutional revisions that would have previously been out of the question. These amendments would provide for the legality of the JSDF under Japanese law. Other provisions allow for the right to collective self-defense which would enable Japan to aid American troops in a combat capacity rather than simply provide rear-line support. These changes would also allow Japan to participate in peacekeeping activities without needing new legislation every time the JSDF is deployed overseas. A draft incorporating these various amendments was released in 2005 but did not go up for a vote due to the political deadlock in the Diet at the time.[20]

However, in 2014 as tensions with China were at their highest in recent years, Prime Minister Abe formed an advisory panel in order to assess possible reinterpretations to Article IX that could pave the way to easing constitutional restrictions on the JSDF. The core focus was on collective self-defense which would allow the JSDF, for the first time, to come to the aid of third parties in the event of a conflict. Although the JSDF would still operate under restrictions not regularly applicable to other armed forces, it would no longer be primarily relegated to serve a rear-line support role. Another important goal of the Abe administration was to ensure that this law was permanent, thus ending the requirement

of having to legislate every operation that the JSDF was deployed through the Diet on a case by case basis. While these reinterpretations resulted in several protests by Japanese citizens concerned with the erosion of the pacifist constitution, growing Sino-Japanese tensions since 2005 meant that public backlash was comparatively minor and political will to make these changes had grown.[21] In other words, bilateral disputes and perceived threat from a rising China galvanized Japanese "normalization." The new legislation passed the Diet on September 19, 2015 and took effect on March 29, 2016. It legalized collective self-defense, allowed JSDF to serve combat roles in PKO missions, and importantly, these changes were now permanent law, thus ending Diet approval for all JSDF operations and improving the efficiency with which they could be deployed.[22]

Streamlining the decision-making process for security purposes had been a concern or Japanese officials for some time. As indicated above, this was one of the main reasons for upgrading the JDA to the MoD in 2007. Building on this effort, in 2013 Prime Minister Abe approved legislation to create a National Security Council (NSC) based on the American system. This new body replaced the existing nine-member Security Council and provide a more centralized decision-making body composed of the prime minister, the chief cabinet secretary, the minister of foreign affairs, and the minister of defense.[23] "The reduced membership is intended to facilitate prompt decision-making in national security and crisis management."[24] Another objective of the new NSC is to make it a "headquarters" for the numerous intelligence agencies that are spread out among the different ministries. This would allow for better communication and information sharing among the different bodies and subsequently facilitate better policy making during a crisis.[25]

As is evidenced, the "normalization" of Japan has taken place primarily along the political realm. In other words, "normalization" has been primarily focused on the legality of the JSDF and its mission, in addition to the re-evaluation of Japan's role in regional and international security affairs. However, another important component of the "normalization" process has been the expanded power-projection capabilities of the JSDF in order to meet its growing mission profile. Thus, "normalization" also implies changes to the military capabilities of a force that originally intended to serve a purely defensive or rear-line support role,

to one which can undertake missions beyond the home islands. This "normalization" has been accelerated as a result of Japan's securitization of China.[26]

Capabilities of the JSDF

Although relatively small, the JSDF maintains a level qualitative superiority exceeded only by the United States.[27] Furthermore, Japan remains one of the top 10 military spenders in the world.[28] This indicates that despite having a pacifist constitution, Japan has been able to develop one of the most capable military forces in the world. Consistent with the "normalization" process, the JSDF has been acquiring weapon systems that go beyond the scope of self-defense and into the area of power-projection capabilities. Every branch appears to be moving forward with acquisitions that facilitate power projection in order to meet the growing mission profile of the JSDF as well as manage the changing security dynamics of the region.

Ground Forces

For its part "the Ground Self-Defense Forces (GSDF) established a Central Readiness Group (CRG) in 2007, combining the elite 1st Airborne Brigade, 1st Helicopter Brigade, 101st Nuclear, Biological and Chemical (NBC) Unit and the Special Operations Group (SOG)."[29] The CRG serves as a rapid-reaction force which allows Japan to react immediately in the event of a terrorist attack or other internal crises. These forces are also responsible for training troops headed for overseas deployment.[30] This indicates that Japan is progressively enhancing its capability to deploy forces overseas at a moment's notice in the same manner that other modern powers are equipped to do. Acquiring this capacity enhances Japan's power-projection capabilities significantly and elevates the JSDF to a place occupied by a handful of modern militaries that possess this capability.

Two other events helped galvanize further reform within the GSDF in order to enhance its efficiency and operational capabilities. The main external influence was the ever-growing tensions between Tokyo and Beijing over the disputed Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands in the East China

Sea, especially since 2010. Furthermore, as indicated above, the changing conditions in the South China Sea, particularly China's increasingly assertive behavior, were perceived as a legitimate threat to freedom of navigation and Japan's SLOCs. That Tokyo has understood the evolution of the SCS disputes as connected with those of the ECS is instructive to how it perceives the changing maritime environment. The main internal influence occurred in 2011 when the triple disasters devastated the northeast coast of Honshu Island, Japan's main island. The response necessary for a disaster of this magnitude exposed organizational and operational limitations of the JSDF, and particularly, the GSDF.[31]

These events led to the formation of the Ground Component Command (GCC) in 2018, thus centralizing command of the five regional armies that make up the GSDF. The creation of the GCC not only constituted the largest reorganization of the GSDF since its founding in 1954, it allows it to respond to situations that require faster mobilization of joint forces consisting of land, sea, and air components on a national level, such as attacks by ballistic missiles, attacks against remote islands, and large-scale disasters.[32] In other words, the creation of the GCC addresses the organizational limitations that were becoming increasingly exposed as a result of the changing security environment in East Asia as well as the natural disasters that regularly plague Japan.

The maritime disputes and the triple disasters also led to increasing self-reflection of Japan's archipelagic geography and reassessment of the capabilities that the GSDF needed in order to more effectively meet these challenges. This led the GSDF to develop and train an amphibious brigade alongside US Marines beginning with the 2013 Dawn Blitz exercise.[33] This brigade which could not only respond to natural disaster at a moment's notice throughout the entire Japanese archipelago, but also more effectively defend the home islands, especially the contested islands in the East China Sea.[34] The Amphibious Rapid Deployment Brigade (ARDB) was established in 2018 with 2100 personnel with the aim of increasing that number to 3000.[35] Demonstrating the GSDF's shift from a northern strategy based on armored divisions tasked with protecting Japan from potential Russian invasion in Hokkaido, the ARDB will be based out of Sasebo on Kyushu facing the East China Sea. Furthermore, units from the ARDB will be deployed in Amami Oshima, Miyako Island, and Ishikagi Island

along the Ryukyu Island chain, highlighting the southern shift in the GSDF's strategic priorities and its efforts to complement the existing naval and air assets of the JSDF.[36]

Naval Forces

In recent decades the Maritime Self-Defense Forces (MSDF) has engaged in the production of vessels that enhance the JSDF's ability to secure its extensive SLOCs, and just as important, its power-projection capabilities. The first of these vessels are the three Osumi-class landing ship tanks (LSTs) that were commissioned from 1998 to 2003. These ships have a flat-top deck which allows it to operate a contingent of helicopters to assist in landing operations. The ship carries Landing Craft Air Cushion-class hovercraft (LCAC) which can be used to ferry troops to shore as well as tanks and other armored vehicles. These ships saw action in 1999 and 2003 when they were deployed to East Timor and Iraq respectively.[37] In 2014 the MSDF began an upgrade program to enhance their transport capability related to amphibious operations. These upgrades were necessary for the ships to accommodate the equipment that Japan's amphibious forces would need in order to respond to any potential threat to the Japanese archipelago, particularly contested islands in the East China Sea.[38]

The second ship type that was introduced were two Hyuga-class helicopter destroyers which were commissioned from 2007 to 2009. These ships are classified as helicopter destroyers since they have a flat-top deck to accommodate a large contingent of helicopters. Furthermore, the Hyuga-class ships possess sub-deck hangars to store a larger contingent of aircraft.[39] As helicopter destroyers, the Hyuga-class ships serve the primary function of anti-submarine warfare (ASW). This is a capability that is increasingly important as regional navies, especially China's, have expanded their contingent of modern and sophisticated submarines, thus presenting a potential threat to Japan's SLOCs in the event of a conflict. In other words, these ships fulfill the two main missions of the JSDF of protecting the home islands and their SLOCs.[40]

The third ship type that was introduced were two Izumo-class helicopter destroyers which commissioned from 2015 to 2017. The Izumo-class destroyers serve as the flagships of the MSDF, taking over this role

form the smaller Hyuga-class. Much like the Hyuga-class ships, however, the Izumo-class helicopter destroyers serve the crucial mission of ASW in addition to command and control operations, humanitarian aid and disaster relief operations, and international peace cooperation activities.[41] In other words, it has an expanded mission as a result of its power-projection capabilities.

The unveiling sparked intense debate within China where the Chinese Defense Ministry stated that: "We are concerned over Japan's constant expansion of its military equipment. Japan's Asian neighbors and the international community need to be highly vigilant about this trend."[42] Li Daguang, a professor as China's National Defense University of the People's Liberation Army, stated that the Izumo was essentially a "carrier in disguise," noting that "Japan tops the world in terms of its anti-submarine capability and the warship would further consolidate its advantage."[43] In essence, the Izumo-class ships significantly increase Japan's naval power by providing it with real power-projection capabilities. Furthermore, they complement a growing suite of vessels that are dedicated not only to the protection of the home islands, but are capable of maintaining the SLOCs open in the event of a regional conflict.

Air Forces

The Air Self-Defense Forces (ASDF) has also been keen on expanding their role and providing for more power-projection capabilities by acquiring tanker aircraft. The ASDF currently operates four Boeing 767 tankers and plans to double that capacity in coming years. Tanker aircraft provide the capability to perform in-flight refueling and therefore increase the range of fighter planes and interceptors. While the legal rationale for acquiring these tankers has been to provide for more efficient use of pilot time and allow aircraft to remain airborne during poor weather conditions which make landing difficult, it is clear that having in-flight refueling capabilities increases the ASDF's offensive and power-projection potential.[44] Not many countries have the expertise to operate in-flight refueling operations; this makes Japan's ability to do so an important step toward "normalizing" the JSDF.

These are but a number of the many acquisitions that Japan has been making as it continues to push for further "normalization" of its forces. Each branch has continued to maintain a qualitative superiority to their

regional competitors as current conditions do not allow for increased quantitative capabilities. Furthermore, while these new platforms serve to enhance the JSDF's ability to defend off the home islands, they also demonstrate growing power-projection capabilities.

Japan's South China Sea Policy

Japan's "normalization" process has a number of security implications, particularly in regards to the East and South China Seas. The increase in power-projection capabilities by the JSDF is alarming for many Chinese officials who contend that Japan is working with the United States on a containment strategy against China. They validate this belief by pointing to the revised guidelines of 1997 in which Japan could assist the United States in security matters in the region. As previously indicated, the fact that Japan has refused to rule out involvement in a Taiwanese contingency has unnerved Chinese officials.[45] Consequently, there continues to be an atmosphere of mutual suspicion on both sides, something that de-securitization between them extremely difficult.

However, among Southeast Asian countries, Japan's increasing willingness to challenge China has been a welcome development. For example, during a period of heightened tensions in 2012, former Philippine Foreign Affairs Secretary, Albert Del Rosario, stated that the Philippines "would welcome a rearmed Japan as a balancing factor in the region."[46] The Minister's statement reveals that despite the fact that Japan led a brutal occupation of the Philippines during WWII, China's increasingly assertive posture in the region has changed the political calculations of the country. The Vietnamese have also been active in strengthening ties with Japan in order to counter China. Former Vietnamese Prime Minister, Nguyen Tan Dung, has stated that "the relationship between the two countries is extremely important."[47]

For its part Japan has been active in Southeast Asia, particularly in the provision of training and hardware to regional coastguards.[48] "The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) funds the Coast Guard's seminars to train maritime authorities in Southeast Asia, and Japan's aid is critical in helping to create maritime patrol authority where local capacity is lacking."[49] This is especially true in the case of the Philippines. The purpose of this aid has been to strengthen the maritime capabilities of the SCS littoral countries in order to improve the safety of the SCS due to the chronic issues of piracy that plague the area. To that end,

Japan provided the seed money for the Anti-Piracy Center located in Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia.[50] Japan has also been providing coastguard ships to countries in the SCS region. For example, in 2006 Japan gave Indonesia 3 patrol vessels.[51] Furthermore, Japan has also provided a number of coast guard ships to the Philippines and Vietnam (this will be discussed further below).

Besides promoting maritime safety in the South China Sea, Japan has begun to participate in a number of naval exercises in the area in the past few years. In 2011 Japan joined the United States and Australia in a naval exercise in the South China Sea. The MSDF sent a destroyer to join ships from the other two navies off the coast of Brunei. These drills incorporated communications training and other measures. In a statement the MoD said that "The exercise is aimed at enhancing tactical skills of the Maritime Self-Defense Force and strengthening relations with the participating navies."[52] This initial exercise has paved the way for several other instances of Japanese participation in joint military exercises in and around the South China Sea with several Southeast Asian countries and the United States. These exercises have not only helped increased interoperability between participant countries, but have helped Japan increase its security profile in the region. This helps Tokyo it send a strong signal to Beijing about its concerns with freedom of navigation and its ability to protect its sea lanes. The most powerful signal, however, occurred in 2018 when the MSDF secretly deployed an Oyashio-class diesel submarine to the SCS in order to conduct a naval exercise with three other MSDF destroyers. This was the first time a Japanese submarine had conducted naval exercises outside of Japan, demonstrating its commitment to become a regular fixture in the South China Sea.[53]

All of these measures are indicative that as Japan "normalizes" it will seek a larger stake in regional security. This is expected to be matched by a more assertive China. If mutual securitization continues to plague the security relations between these two powers, the probability for heightened tensions and possible clashes will be high in the ECS and the SCS. It is clear that Japan has been more willing to confront what it perceives as Chinese incursions into its territory around the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands. It is also clear that Japan perceives China's increasingly assertive activities in the SCS as detrimental to its national interests and regional stability. These developments have prompted Japan to seek a more prominent political and security role in Southeast Asia in order to balance China.

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CHAPTER 6

Republic of the Philippines Case Study

Abstract This chapter introduces the Philippine case study. It provides a list of features in the South China Sea that the Philippines controls and explains the relevance of the South China Sea to the Philippines. Sino-Philippine disputes in the South China Sea are assessed to provide context for the Philippines' policy choices. In particular, it focuses on Sino-Philippine clashes in the South China Sea since the 1990s and how these events have galvanized the military modernization of the Armed Forces of the Philippines. The chapter provides an overview of the modernization program and the key acquisitions made, contending that while many improvements have been made, the AFP remains ill-equipped to defend its claims. It concludes by providing an account of Japan–Philippine relations and how mutual threat assessment in the South China Sea has prompted a deepening of economic and military cooperation between the two.

Keywords The Philippines · China · Japan · Military modernization · South China Sea · Territorial disputes

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Background

Located on the east end of the SCS, the Philippines is among the claimants to a number of features on the Spratly Island group. The Philippines had been a colony of the Spanish Empire from the sixteenth century until 1898 when control of the archipelago was ceded to the United States after the Spanish lost the Spanish–American War. In 1942, the islands fell under Japanese control as Japan expanded its empire through Southeast Asia. It would not be until 1946 that the Republic of the Philippines acquired its independence from the United States. Almost immediately the Philippines became an active claimant in the South China Sea.

The Philippines lays claim to 53 islands, islets, reefs, shoals, cays, rocks, and atolls with an area of 64,976 square miles; the largest of these is called Thitu Island. Collectively these features are known as the KIG by the Philippines.[1] The Philippines currently controls 9 features in the Spratly archipelago (Table 6.1).

As mentioned above, the most significant island occupied by the Philippines is Pag-asa or Thitu Island, as it is internationally known. The island houses a naval detachment as well as a runway that is maintained by the 570th Composite Tactical Wing of the Philippine Air Force (PAF). Pag-asa is also the only SCS feature occupied by the Philippines that has civilian residents, with at least five families residing on the island. It is here that the seat of the Municipality of Kalaya'an resides.

Table 6.1 Spratly archipelago features occupied by the Republic of the Philippines

International name	*Philippine name*
Commodore Reef	Rizal Reef
Flat Island	Patag Island
Loaita Cay	Melchora Acquino
Loaita Island	Kota Island
Nanshan Island	Lawak Island
Northeast Cay	Parola
Second Thomas Shoal	Ayungin Shoal
Thitu Island	Pag-asa Island
West York Island	Likas Island[a]

[a]"Philippines Island Tracker," *Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative*, 2018, https://amti.csis.org/island-tracker/philippines/

Besides the military structures, the island also has sports facilities, a municipal hall, a village hall, and a police station.[2]

The SCS is of significant strategic importance to the Philippines for a number of reasons, particularly its energy and marine resources as well as its strategic location as a main artery of trade. Together, these reasons provide justification for the Philippines' active diplomatic and military policy in the region.

Energy Resources

The International Energy Agency (IEA) stated that the Philippines annual energy needs in 2007 were 40 million tons of oil; a figure that is expected to grow at an average of 2.8% annually until 2030. In 2010, oil accounted for nearly 35% of the Philippines' energy consumption. This percentage translates to 282,000 barrels per day (bpd).[3] Considering the fact that the Philippines' own domestic production of oil is roughly 23,000 bpd, coupled with the fact that its own domestic policy toward its Muslim population has led to tensions with the Arab world and Indonesia, Philippine energy security is questionable. As a result, the Philippines finds itself in great need of raising the production of its own fields in Malampay and Palawan, both of which are located in the SCS.[4] Furthermore, the Philippines hopes to exploit the resources in Reed Bank which is said to have significant oil and natural gas deposits. However, in order to achieve this, it must maintain control of the Second Thomas Shoal which serves as a strategic gateway to Reed Bank. The Second Thomas Shoal is home to about 10 Philippine marines who are based on a World War II-era ship that was intentionally grounded on the shoal. This strategic location has come under direct Chinese pressure in recent years as Chinese ships have attempted to block Philippine vessels from attempting to resupply the marines.[5]

Marine Resources

Exploitation of marine resources in the SCS is also of vital importance to the Philippine state due to its heavy reliance on fishing for both consumption and as a source of income. According to a study performed by the Philippine Department of Agriculture: Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (DA-BFAR), commercial and municipal fishing brought in catches valued 67.4 billion Philippine Pesos (~$1.4 billion)

in 2001. Exports of tuna, crab, and octopus were valued at 10.7 billion Philippine Pesos (~$237 million) in the same year.[6] By 2011, fishery exports were valued at $871 million.[7] The DA-BFAR report goes on to state that fish are considered a staple food in the Philippine diet, contributing 12.3% of the total food consumption of Filipinos annually. Fish contributes 22.4% of the total protein intake of the average Filipino and is 56% of the animal protein consumed in the Philippines yearly.[8] This report is indicative of the fact that access to marine resources in the SCS is vital to the economic and food security of the Philippines.

Strategic Value

The Philippines also has strategic interests in the region which are motivated by two factors: freedom of navigation and international awareness. Since the Philippines is one of the only two archipelagic states in the region, the second being Indonesia, it is heavily dependent on the freedom of navigation in the South China Sea. The country has a total coastline measuring 17,500 km, of which 1200 km face the South China Sea directly.[9] Furthermore, over 41,000 ships pass through the SCS annually, making the SLOC vital to the economic wellbeing of the country.[10] This is highlighted by the fact that roughly 20,000 commercial vessels navigate Philippine waters annually.[11] The second factor is directly linked to the Philippine territorial claims in the South China Sea. This is due to the fact that "shippers and mariners do not use the Philippine sea lanes as extensively as the Strait of Malacca and the South China because voyages in the Philippine waters will take longer. Thus, the Philippines has to pursue its claims in the busy waterways of the Spratlys to promote its navigational rights."[12] This has inevitably led to more direct confrontations with China in the open waters of the South China Sea.

Sino-Philippine Disputes

The security relation between China and the Philippines has come to be dominated by the competing territorial claims they have in the Spratly Islands. These disputes escalated dramatically in 1995 when the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) discovered that the PLA had occupied

Mischief Reef and had erected wooden structures on the reef.[13] This was China's first major occupation in the SCS since its eviction of Vietnam from the Paracels and a number of features in the Spratly archipelago from the 1970s to 1980s.[14] This bold move by China was facilitated by the fact that the after the Cold War ended, the United States and the Philippines could not agree on negotiations over the future of American military bases in the country. As a result, by 1992 the last American "service personnel had been withdrawn from the Philippines."[15] In other words, the end of the Cold War provided China with more freedom of action. Furthermore, American statements of neutrality regarding the SCS issue, have emboldened Chinese authorities to take action.

These events led the Philippine government to believe that despite the sympathy it received from other countries regarding the confrontation in Mischief Reef, the issue would remain a bilateral problem.[16] Repeated confrontations would occur throughout the 1990s placing further strain on Sino-Philippine relations. There would be a relatively quiet period during the early 2000s as a result of China's "charm offensive." However, by 2009 the number of confrontations would flare up creating heightened tensions in the region once again. The most significant of the most recent clashes has been over the Scarborough Shoal; an area that was formerly administered by the Philippines but which China now controls.

The incident began in April 2012 when a Philippine surveillance aircraft spotted five Chinese vessels in the lagoon of the shoal. Upon dispatching a naval ship to investigate the Chinese vessels, the Philippine claimed that the fishermen were poaching "species protected under Philippines law and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna."[17] Two Chinese surveillance vessels soon arrived at the site and interposed themselves between the Philippine frigate and the fishing vessels. The two countries pursued a series of negotiations that spanned two months in an effort to de-escalate tensions over the shoal. However, in the aftermath, the Philippines withdrew its ships from the shoal based on the assumption that the US-led negotiations were finalized. Furthermore, an incoming typhoon threatened the safety of the sailors on the ships, causing both sides to leave the shoal. However, within days Chinese vessels had taken control of the shoal, thus resulting in a de facto transfer of administration to Beijing.[18]

The West Philippine Sea

Heightened tensions over the SCS disputes have seen the rise of nationalism in both China and the Philippines. Each side has taken unilateral measures to counter the other in the form of fishing bans, as discussed above, or by renaming the area as the Philippines has done. In 2012, through Administrative Order No. 29, former Philippine President Benigno Aquino III renamed the SCS as the "West Philippine Sea."[19] Aquino stated that the Philippines has the "inherent power and right to designate its maritime areas."[20] Despite Chinese protestations that the move violates the international standardization of geographic names, and that the name South China Sea is internationally recognized even by the Philippines, Aquino directed the National Mapping and Resource Information Authority to begin producing maps and charts of the Philippines reflecting the name change.[21] The Order stated that the Philippines

> shall deposit, at the appropriate time, a copy of this Order enclosing the official map reflecting the West Philippines Sea with the Secretary-General of the United Nations and notify accordingly relevant international organizations, such as the International Hydrographic Organization and the United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names.[22]

This unilateral move is not bound to make any significant changes to the status quo but it reflects the surging nationalist fervor that has come to the forefront as a result of these disputes. Additionally, this move represents an effort by Manila to challenge Beijing's own narrative about the South China Sea.

AFP Modernization

The withdrawal of American forces from the Philippines in 1992 and the Chinese occupation of Mischief Reef in 1995 proved just how far the AFP had atrophied. The Philippines air force found itself with a mere five F-5 fighters, while the navy possessed a single frigate, nine offshore patrol vessels, and eight amphibious landing craft, all of which are essentially WWII relics.[23] The Philippines has been among the weakest members of ASEAN in both military capability and defense spending.[24]

It currently spends ~$4.3 billion in defense annually, which amounts to 1.4% of the gross domestic product.[25] Although the figure compares favorably with Malaysia and Brunei, two other claimants in the SCS, being at the vanguard of the disputes along with Vietnam, in addition to necessitating a complete modernization of the AFP, means that the Philippines has a lot of ground to make up.

In the aftermath of Chinese seizure of Mischief Reef in 1995, the Philippine "congress introduced a defense modernization bill which called for the acquisition of modern jet fighters and patrol vessels."[26] The new bill was titled Republic Order 7898 and it was meant to accomplish its goal in 15 years.[27] The Order was to allocate $7.7 billion for the program over the span of those 15 years; however, the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis derailed the initiative.[28] The result was that for the span of the 15 years that RA 7898 remained active, only 55% of the 504 projects that were planned were implemented.[29] However, there have been some positive developments regarding the modernization of the AFP in recent years.

In 2012, Aquino signed RA 10349, also known as the Revised AFP Modernization Act.[30] This new plan would span 15 years and would be split into three phases, or horizons (2013–2017, 2018–2022, and 2023–2028). Following through on his pledge to modernize the AFP, Aquino ensured that the modernization of the AFP stayed on track. This is reflected in the fact that the government spent more than $395 million on AFP modernization in the first few months of his term in contrast to the $51 million annual average of the past 15 years.[31] Since the passage of the Revised AFP Modernization Act, the PAF has acquired 12 FA-50 light fighters from Korea in a deal valued at $361 million and plans to purchase another 12.[32] Furthermore, the PAF has been able to acquire light training aircraft, helicopters, and transport aircraft from Japan and the United States in recent years. These acquisitions allow the PAF to begin training a new generation of pilots, but more importantly, fill the crucial transport gap that has limited its ability to efficiently move around assets throughout the sprawling archipelago.[33]

The navy in particular has benefited greatly from the modernization program. In an address to the Navy, Aquino stated that the "Philippines would acquire two new frigates, two helicopters capable of anti-submarine warfare, three fast vessels for coastal patrols, and eight amphibious assault vehicles by 2017."[34] In 2015, the Philippines signed a contract to acquire two strategic sealift vessels (SSV) from Indonesia in a deal worth $92

million. The two SSVs were commissioned from 2016 to 2017. These vessels allow to carry out amphibious operations through their ability to transport a battalion of marines, landing craft, and armored support.[35] This is a crucial capacity for an archipelagic country that not only has several domestic insurgencies in remote places, but also has troops and civilians residing in contested features in the South China Sea. In fact, PT-PAL, the shipbuilder of the SSVs has stated that the Philippine government has placed an additional order of three more strategic sea lift vessels, highlighting how important this capability is for the Philippines. In 2016, the Philippines also contracted Hyundai Heavy Industries to build two frigates with anti-surface and anti-submarine warfare capabilities for $338.8 million, signaling an effort to develop a contingent of modern surface combatants.[36] This was viewed as a positive step for the navy since most of its surface fleet is composed of decommissioned vessels from the United States and other allies.

Despite his general efforts to ease tensions with China in order to promote greater investment, President Rodrigo Duterte greenlit phase 2 of the AFP modernization in 2018. The new phase will be focused on acquiring platforms that allow the Philippines to project power more effectively into contested waters and airspace in the South China Sea. With an outlay of $5.6 billion, phase 2 demonstrates the Philippines' most ambitious efforts yet. During this period the Philippines aims to acquire additional missile frigates and corvettes. However, the most significant item on the AFP's list is the acquisition of at least two submarines. Although submarines were not supposed to be part of phase 2 (they were slated for the phase 3), Vice Admiral Robert Empedrad lobbied heavily for their inclusion on this round, arguing that undersea operations are the trend in naval warfare and that the AFP's lack of this capability placed it in a severe disadvantage.[37] Acquiring these capabilities would finally place the Philippines in line with regional trends and capabilities, particularly since all of its neighbors operate submarines and modern surface vessels.

Japan–Philippine Relations

While Sino-Philippine relations have seen a turn for the worse since the 1990s, Japan–Philippine relations have strengthened. Japan remains one of the Philippines main trading partners despite China's growing dominance of regional trade.[38] This positive economic relationship was

reinforced in 2006 when Japan and the Philippines signed an economic partnership agreement.[39] The agreement was the first bilateral free trade agreement that the Philippines had ever signed, and has brought several benefits to both countries. In essence, it opens a large investment and trade market for Japan, while providing the Philippines with much-needed investment and added support for Filipino overseas workers. In particular, it facilitates the flow of remittances from Filipino workers working in Japan.[40] This is important since remittances make up a major component of the Philippine gross domestic product.[41] In addition to being an important trade partner, Japan has been the biggest source of financial aid to the Philippines. Through a span of 23 years until 2009, Japan contributed $9.4 billion in ODA accounting for 51% of all foreign loans into the Philippines.[42] Although Japan's share has dropped in the past decade, it still provides 44.83% of the total Philippine ODA, far ahead of the World Bank's 27.31% which is second largest aid provider.[43]

Japan–Philippine security relations have also seen positive developments, particularly in recent years as both countries have found a common cause against China. Numerous summits have occurred between the two sides in an effort to expand the scope of their bilateral relations into the security sphere. In 1998 Japan helped the Philippines create a civilian coast guard, and has continued to provide training to its personnel ever since.[44] In a 2011 summit between Philippine President Aquino and then Prime Minister Noda the two agreed to dispatch JCG vessels to the Philippines in order to strengthen the training for the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG). The two leaders also agreed to

> promote and cooperation between their defense authorities, such as reciprocal visits between the Chief of Staff of Japanese Maritime Self Defense Forces (JMSDF) and the Flag Officer of the Philippine Navy, port calls in the Republic of the Philippines by JMSDF vessels, and the holding of the Japan-Philippines Maritime Chief of Staff Meeting.[45]

Furthermore, in a similar summit in 2013 between former President Aquino and Prime Minister Abe, Japan stated that it would provide 10 patrol vessels to the PCG through its ODA program, in order to bolster Philippine maritime patrol capabilities.[46] This was an important commitment since it marked the first time that Japan offered to subsidize defense equipment through its ODA program. From 2016 to 2018 Japan delivered the 10 44-meter multi-role response vessels (MRRV)

and all had been commissioned by the Philippine Coast Guard (PGC) by 2018.[47] The PCG is also expecting the delivery of two 94-meter MRRVs from Japan by 2012. These larger MRRVs would be high weather/high endurance ships with a range of 4000 nautical miles that can be used for search and rescue as well as patrol the sea lanes in the South China Sea.[48] Like their smaller counterparts, these vessels will be funded through Japanese aid.

In a landmark summit between former Japanese Defense Minister Itsunori Onodera and former Philippine Defense Secretary Voltaire Gazmin in 2013, the two men discussed many topics including the importance of the rule of maritime law, the American rebalance to Asia and possible Japanese access to Philippine naval bases. Regarding the rule of law, Onodera commented that current situation in the SCS should not be changed with the use of force, alluding to the Chinese encroachment on the Scarborough Shoal in 2012.[49] Onodera also remarked that he and Gazmin agreed that Japan and the Philippines should work together to make the American rebalance in the region a reality.[50] In a more significant development, Gazmin indicated that Japan could potentially be offered access to naval bases in the Philippines in the same manner as the United States. He said that "as far as Japan is concerned, we do welcome other countries, particularly Japan, since Japan is a strategic partner in accordance with our existing protocols."[51] However, it is important to note that if the Philippine government is serious about providing Japanese forces access to its bases, it would need to negotiate a Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) in the same manner as it has done with the United States.[52]

In 2016, Japan the Philippines signed a defense agreement to facilitate the transfer of Japanese defense equipment and technology to the Philippines. The Philippines was the first country in ASEAN with which Japan signed this type of agreement with, signaling the important of the Japan–Philippine strategic partnership. This agreement is important since it allows Japan to expand the production base of its defense industry, something that was seen as one of the motivating factors behind Tokyo's ease of arms exports limitations, but it also helps the Philippine acquire much-needed defense equipment and technology transfers.[53] In other words, Japan is playing a crucial role in the capacity-building efforts of the Philippine government.

The pattern has been very clear. As the ECS and SCS disputes with China have escalated, Japan and the Philippines have found common

ground to expand their bilateral cooperation from the economic into the security realm. The two countries share common interests in protecting the freedom of navigation and SLOCs in the South China Sea. Furthermore, while Japan professes neutrality on the SCS disputes, it is clear that it has opted to balance against China by providing assistance to the Philippines in the form of monetary aid, coast guard training and the provision of coast guard vessels. To further highlight these developments, Onodera expressed his concerns with the deteriorating situation in the SCS and the potential effects this could have on the East China Sea. In a telling statement to his counterpart, Gazmin, Onodera said that:

> in the East China Sea and the South China Sea, we are both facing common concerns, and those issues of concerns should be based on the rule of law and we agreed on that. We agreed that Japan and the Philippines, as good neighbors, to further strengthen our defense cooperation.[54]

Although it is certain that the two countries have come closer as a result of China's increasingly assertive policy toward its maritime territorial disputes, Japan still hopes that ASEAN solidarity on the SCS disputes will pave the way for a united front to China and ultimately result in a peaceful resolution to the conflict. However, in order to make that happen, Japan feels that it must increase its security commitments in the SCS in order to convey to both China and ASEAN that as a regional power, Japan is interested in the amicable resolution to the disputes.[55] Therefore, the growing number of economic and defense cooperation agreements between Japan and Southeast Asian countries are considered a tool to provide a proper balance to China and ensure a more equitable negotiation process.

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CHAPTER 7

Socialist Republic of Vietnam Case Study

Abstract This chapter introduces the Vietnamese case study. It provides a list of features in the South China Sea that Vietnam currently controls and explains the relevance of the South China Sea to Vietnam. Sino-Vietnamese disputes are assessed to provide context for the Vietnams' policy choices. In particular, it focuses on Sino-Vietnamese clashes in the South China Sea since the 1970s and how these events have galvanized the military modernization of the Vietnamese People's Army. The chapter provides an overview of the modernization program and the key acquisitions made, revealing that Vietnam's military capability outstrip that of the Philippine's but still lags behind that of China's. It concludes by providing an account of Japan–Vietnam relations and how mutual threat assessment in the South China Sea have prompted a deepening of economic and military cooperation between the two.

Keywords Vietnam · China · Japan · Military modernization · South China Sea · Territorial disputes

Background

Like the Philippines, Vietnam has endured centuries of colonization by foreign powers. However, Vietnam is the only country in Southeast Asia to have ever been part of the Chinese Empire. This began with

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the annexation of the northern territories of Vietnam by Han Imperial troops in 111 BCE. However, as the Tang Dynasty collapsed in 907 CE, the Vietnamese began a 20-year struggle that would eventually gain them independence for the first time in nearly a thousand years.[1] From this point forward, Vietnamese rulers sought to preserve their hard-won independence by accepting a tributary status to successive Chinese dynasties. These agreements would at times be broken due to repeated Chinese attempts to reconquer the area during the Yuan, Ming and Qing Dynasties, however, no invasion of Vietnam would be successful until the French formally made it a colony in 1885. Its colonial status would be preserved until the devastating French defeat at Dien Bien Phu in 1954. The resulting Geneva conference split the country in two at the 17th parallel, a situation which would endure until 1976. In 1976 the country was reunified to under the Socialist Vietnamese Republic (SRV).[2] In other words, Vietnam has established a long history of wars of decolonization, especially three consecutive Indochinese Wars during the second half of the twentieth century that culminated with the Paris Peace Accords in 1991. It is in this context that Vietnam's role as the most assertive opponent of China's claims in the East Sea, the official name Hanoi uses for the South China Sea (SCS), must be understood.

As previously mentioned, Vietnam lost control of the Paracel archipelago to China after a naval battle in 1974. Furthermore, it lost a number of features in the Spratly archipelago after the 1988 Fiery Reef naval battle. Despite these setback, however, Vietnam controls the largest number of features (21) in the Spratly archipelago, which it calls Truong Sa (Table 7.1):

In addition to its substantial holdings in the Spratlys, Vietnam, in stark contrast to the Philippines, has some of the most heavily fortified structures in the area. The largest feature in the group it controls is Spratly Island proper. The island has a "solid runway, a pier, at least 35 building structures, around 20 storage tanks, at least 20 gun emplacements, at least 5 battle tanks and some parabolic disk antennas and a spoon rest radar."[3] Furthermore, in April 2009, "Philippine aerial surveillance found a two newly-constructed two-story building in the Lagos Island with 12 newly-installed light posts and 12 wind mills."[4] Southwest Cay is also heavily fortified, sporting gun emplacements, bunkers, barracks, a helipad, and polarized dipole array antennas.[5]

Much like the Philippines, Vietnam has economic and security interests in the SCS. The SCS continues to provide a significant amount of

Table 7.1 Spratly archipelago features occupied by the Socialist Republic of Vietnam

International name	*Vietnamese name*
Alison Reef	Bai Toc Tan
Amboyna Cay	Dao An Bang
Barque Canada Reef	Bai Thuyen Chai
Central Reef	Dao Truong Sa Dong
Collins Reef	Da Co Lin
Cornwallis South Reef	Da Nui Le
Discovery Great Reef	Da Lon
East Reef	Da Dong
Grierson Reef	Dao Sinh Ton Dong
Ladd Reef	Da Lat
Landsdowne Reef	Da Len Dao
Namyit Island	Dao Nam Yet
Pearson Reef	Dao Phan Vinh
Petley Reef	Da Nui Thi
Sand Cay	Dao Son Ca
Sin Cowe Island	Dao Sinh Ton
South Reef	Da Nam
Southwest Cay	Dao Song Tu Tay
Spratly Island	Dao Truong Sa
Tennent Reef	Da Tien Nu
West Reef	Da Tay[a]

[a]"Vietnam Island Tracker," *Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative*, 2018, https://amti.csis.org/island-tracker/vietnam/

energy for the country, and potential reserves could all but guarantee energy security for decades to come. Likewise, the marine resources of the SCS continue to provide a vital role in the Vietnamese economy. Because much of Vietnam's economic security relies on the bounty of the SCS, it is among the most politically active in pursuing its claims in the region.

Energy Resources

Vietnam is currently one of the top oil producers in the area. State-owned company PetroVietnam singularly accounts for 26% of Vietnams' total production by producing 24.4 million tons of oil annually.[6] Unfortunately, oil production has been declining since 2004, which has motivated Vietnam to extend exploration contracts to foreign firms in an effort to locate and exploit new fields. This has directly led to confrontations with China over disputed areas in the SCS.

Nevertheless, there have been positive developments in recent years which could potentially ensure Vietnamese energy security for the foreseeable future. In 2013, successful exploration led to an increase in proven reserves from 0.6 billion barrels to 4.4 billion barrels. Much of Vietnam's waters remain underexplored as a result of its ongoing disputes with China, which leads the EIA to predict that further exploration may result in larger proven reserves. This discovery places Vietnam as the third largest holder of proven oil reserves in Asia.[7] More importantly, the discovery comes at an important time since oil consumption in Vietnam nearly doubled from 250,000 bpd in 2006 to 445,000 bpd in 2016. For the short term, Vietnam is expected to remain a net oil importer due to the fact that its current fields have already peaked, as well as the fact that its only operational refinery, Dung Quat, has a refining capacity 130,000 bpd, although an upgrade will raise the capacity by another 40,000 bpd. Furthermore, efforts to bring a second refinery, Nghi Son, online should add another 200,000 bpd refining capacity.[8] However, despite the recent discoveries and increased refining capacity, Vietnam faces the challenge of trying to exploit these offshore reserves while simultaneously trying to deter Chinese obstruction.

Vietnam is currently self-sufficient in natural gas, although it is projected to fall short of supply by 2025. With 24.7 tcf of proven natural gas reserves, Vietnam is not lacking the resources to exploit.[9] Rather, it lacks the expertise to do so. As with its oil industry, Vietnam has relied on granting exploration and extraction contracts to numerous foreign firms. Nevertheless, Vietnam faces the same dilemma with its natural gas fields as it does with the oil fields. That is, the threat of Chinese obstruction in disputed maritime areas.

Marine Resources

Having a coastline of 3260 km and an EEZ of more than 1 million km^2, marine sources are a vital component of the Vietnamese economy and its food security.[10] Since 2006 Vietnam has been a major seafood exporter, consistently ranking among the top 10 globally.[11] Over the past decade, the industry has grown at an average of 7.9% annually, contributing to 4–5% of Vietnam's gross domestic product. Vietnam also has the second largest amount of fishers in the region after China.[12] In addition to fishing, aquaculture is a major component of the seafood industry, comprising approximately 65% of Vietnam's total

fisheries exports and employing around 4 million workers throughout the country.[13]

Like the Philippines, Vietnam relies on fisheries and aquatic products for its food consumption. It is estimated that fish provide 30–40% of the protein in Vietnamese diets. In 1995, the National Institute of Nutrition in Hanoi estimated that the annual fish consumption per capita in Vietnam was 18.5 kg.[14] In other words, unimpeded access to its EEZ is crucial to Vietnam's economic and food security. Consequently, repeated clashes between Chinese maritime vessels and Vietnamese fishermen are among the top concerns for the Vietnamese government as it tries to expand an already lucrative industry.

Sino-Vietnamese Disputes

Sino-Vietnamese security relations are among the most complex and conflict-prone in the region. In essence, "two millennia of Chinese overlordship, combined with an intense relationship over the past 60 years characterized by extremes of amity and enmity, have shaped Vietnam's China psyche to deeply ambivalent: respect for a fraternal socialist country whose economic reforms Hanoi seeks to emulate, coexisting with deep resentment, bordering hatred, of Chinese condescension, bullying and perceived attempts to control the country's political destiny."[15]

The amity that existed between the CCP and the Communist Party of Vietnam degenerated almost as soon as the SRV was founded in 1976 as a result of the PRC takeover of the Paracels two years prior. Hanoi's earlier position supporting Beijing's claims to the SCS was repudiated as the former restated its claims to the Paracel and the Spratly archipelagos.[16] South Vietnam's loss of the Paracels in 1974 resulted in its first occupation of six Spratly Island features as a form of retaliation against China. Although the occupation was initially conducted by South Vietnamese forces, upon reunification, SRV troops seized control of the islets and continued to occupy 15 more.[17]

The disputes between the two countries in the SCS remained relatively stable until 1988. In 1988 Chinese and Vietnamese naval forces clashed in the Spratly Islands over Fiery Cross Reef. The battle would end with the withdrawal of Vietnamese forces after incurring heavy losses. Three Vietnamese naval vessels and 72 sailors were lost in that battle.[18] This event marked China's first occupation of a Spratly Island feature. The 1974 seizure of the Paracel Islands by China, as well as the

1988 battle that allowed China to gain a foothold in the Spratly Islands, were facilitated by the changing power dynamics in the region.

The events of 1974 were made possible partly because of Sino-American rapprochement and because of US troop withdrawal from Vietnam in 1973. Consequently, "the U.S. role was confined to helping the South Vietnamese escape from the islands."[19] In the case of the 1988 events, the Chinese were aided by the fact that the Soviet Union had begun to withdraw aid to Vietnam and was pursuing a normalization of relations with China after decades of growing enmity between the two former allies. The Soviet Union's position as a military ally for Vietnam had effectively ended, giving China the opportunity to enforce its claims militarily.[20] The Chinese reasoned that neither power would be concerned over the SCS disputes. Their calculations would be proven correct by the relatively muted response from both the United States and the U.S.S.R. in the aftermath of the Fiery Reef clash.

The disputes remained heated through 1992 when the Vietnamese government accused China of drilling for oil in Vietnamese waters and landing troops in a reef. In that same year, the Chinese government seized 20 Vietnamese cargo ships which were transporting goods from Hong Kong.[21] Even though military clashes between the two countries have not been commonplace since the early 1990s, the confrontations have merely switched to the civilian sphere. The numerous Chinese maritime enforcement agencies have been accused of harassing fishermen and oil exploration ships in the disputed seas. Vietnam claims that since 2005 the Chinese have seized 63 fishing boats along with 725 crew members. These fishermen are then required to pay exorbitant fines for their release.[22] In similar fashion, Vietnam accuses these agencies of obstructing its energy companies from conducting oil and natural gas exploration in its waters. In 2012 for example, Chinese vessels cut the seismic cables of a ship belonging to Vietnam's state-owned energy company, PetroVietnam.[23] Although China and Vietnam have settled on the demarcation of their respective EEZs and marine borders along the Gulf of Tonkin, the EEZs and territorial disputes in the SCS remain unresolved issues between the two neighbors.

It is clear that Sino-Vietnamese security relations have been largely unstable due to Vietnamese perception of a "China threat." During the Shangri-La Dialogue in 2013, former Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung delivered the keynote address in which he made his security perception of China very clear by stating that "somewhere in the

region, there have emerged preferences for unilateral might, groundless claims, and actions that run counter to international law and stem from imposition and power politics."[24] The statement was made in clear reference to China's assertive posture in the SCS. China's military modernization and increasingly assertive SCS policy has been a major concern for Vietnamese leaders, not only because of their proximity to mainland China but also because Vietnam's military capabilities are significantly inferior to those of the People's Liberation Army. Nonetheless, while Vietnam neither possess the resources to match Chinese military expenditure nor is it able to meet a serious PLA challenge on the SCS, it has been pursuing a strategy of minimum credible defense in order to deter further Chinese incursions into what it believes are its territorial waters. This has led to increasing defense budgets and modernization programs for the Vietnamese military.

VPA Modernization

The Vietnam People's Army (VPA) is the official name for the active military services of Vietnam. Like the PLA it encompasses the three main services: the ground forces, navy, and air force. Through the late 80s and early 90s the VPA saw a significant decrease in funding. This was due to the suspension of financial assistance from the Soviet Union as well as the fact that Vietnam's economy was unable to support any substantial acquisitions. However, increased Chinese activities in the SCS as well as economic growth prompted Vietnam to begin modernizing its armed forces. The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) estimated that by 2017 Vietnam spent roughly $5 billion in defense, amounting to 2.3% of its gross domestic product.[25]

Because the focus of Vietnam's security agenda has been the SCS, its modernization program concentrates on acquisitions that enhance its naval and air capabilities. Russia has been the main benefactor of Vietnam's foreign purchases. Since 2009 the VPA has acquired 24 SU-30MK fighters to supplement its existing inventory of Flanker fighters and enhance its air wings.[26] Vietnam's geographical proximity to the Spratly Islands, where it maintains roughly 600 troops, allows these fighters to conduct longer sorties than their counterparts based in Southern China. These fighters come equipped with modern Russian anti-ship and anti-air missiles, which significantly increase Vietnam's air force which has relied on obsolete MIG 21 fighters for decades. To

enhance its defenses Vietnam has also acquired two S-300 SAM platforms and two K-300 Bastion-P coastal defense systems.[27] The acquisition of the Bastion-P platform is particularly important as it can engage surface ships, carrier battle groups, and even landing craft, making them perfectly suited for a SCS contingency. Considering that Vietnam's entire coastline faces the SCS and that the platform has a range of 300 km, most of China's features in the area are within range.[28]

In addition to enhancing its air and coastal defense capabilities, the VPA has been procuring a substantial amount of naval hardware. The most significant of these acquisitions has been the purchase of six Kilo-class submarines from Russia in a deal valued at $2.1 billion.[29] These submarines were commissioned from 2014 to 2017. This is an important milestone since it makes Vietnam the operator of the most modern submarine force in Southeast Asia. Furthermore, as a littoral country bordering the SCS, Vietnam's capability to operate submarines allows it to establish a crucial capability that is increasingly necessary to defend its maritime claims. While the acquisition of Kilo-class submarines has been the most important naval purchase of the VPA, the navy has also sought to upgrade its complement of surface combatants. To that end, the VPA has ordered six Gepard-3.9-class frigates from Russia.[30] The first two Gepard frigates were commissioned by 2011 and were configured for a surface attack, while another two were commissioned by 2017 and were configured for anti-submarine warfare, indicating Vietnam's concern with China's growing submarine capabilities. Another two are still in production, with undetermined specifications.[31] The Gepards are the largest surface combatants of the VPA displacing 2500 tons and having an operational range of 5000 nautical miles.[32] These vessels will complement the eight Molniya-class missile corvettes that the VPA has commissioned from 2007 to 2016.[33]

There are also indications that Vietnam is developing its domestic shipbuilding capability. Roughly "$3.8 billion is reported to have been invested to build 30–40 400-ton warships."[34] Another investment has been made to construct a large harbor at Haiphong. When completed, it will be the second largest naval base in the country after Cam-Ranh Bay. This harbor will have the capacity to dock 40,000-ton warships and about 40–60 naval vessels and submarines.[35] Aiding the indigenous production of weapons have been key technology transfers and assistance form key partners. For example, six of the Molniya-class corvettes were domestically produced after Vietnam secured a production license.

This is in addition to the licensing of Russia's KCT-15 anti-ship missile. Furthermore, as a major stakeholder in the Haiphong port, Damen, a Dutch shipbuilder, will be assisting Vietnam with the production of civilian and military vessels.[36]

While few details exist about Vietnam's military doctrines, it appears that its acquisitions program indicates a similar approach to the one taken by the PLA. In essence, it is pursuing its own A2/AD strategy against China in the SCS. Due to the fact that China borders the SCS and possesses military capabilities far exceeding those of its Southeast Asian neighbors, Vietnam may find it difficult to put such a stratagem in play. However, a modernized and capable VPA could present a credible enough force to deter further encroachment into the SCS by China, or at the very least safeguard its current possessions in the Spratly archipelago. Considering that China's own SLOC must pass through Vietnam's EEZ, this is a viable strategy to pursue.

Japan–Vietnamese Relations

Like many Southeast Asian countries, Vietnam endured Japanese Imperial occupation during WWII. However, since 1973 when the Japanese officially recognized the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRVN), the government that would eventually reunify the country in 1976, the two sides have enjoyed relatively stable relations. Japan has been a top trading partner with Vietnam since the 1970s. By 1976 Japan had become the SRV's second largest trading partner after the Soviet Union.[37] During the Cold War, Japan became the largest contributor of foreign aid to the new Vietnamese government outside of the communist bloc. The aid took the form of grants that were essentially war reparations during this period.[38] Since the end of the Cold War, Japan has remained Vietnam's largest donor, although the nature of the aid has changed from grants to concessional loan due to Vietnam's increasing standards of living.[39]

Since the end of the Cold War, Japan has remained a key trading partner of Vietnam.[40] That relationship has only strengthened since 2009 when the two countries signed the "Agreement Between Japan and the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam for an Economic Partnership."[41] This was the first bilateral free trade agreement signed by Vietnam. The trade agreement aimed to lower tariffs and promote economic cooperation between the two countries.[42] Economic cooperation has resulted

in a deepening of cooperation in the energy sector in particular. This is evidenced by the 2017 memorandum of cooperation on energy fields signed between the two countries.[43] This memorandum let to the setup of a working group in 2018 to facilitate Japanese investment and technology transfers in the Vietnamese energy sector, which includes not only the power plants, but also the power grid, energy efficiency, and energy conservation.[44] In essence, Japan has become a leading investor in Vietnam's industrial sectors and, consequently, a key facilitator to Vietnam's economic development.[45]

In addition to the growing economic ties, much progress has also been achieved in the security sphere. Mutual concerns over China's assertive posture on the ECS and SCS have brought both countries closer in discussions over the security of the SLOC and the territorial disputes they have with China in their respective areas. In a 2011 meeting between former Japanese "Defense Minister Yasuo Ichikawa and his Vietnamese counterpart, Phung Quang Thanh," the two sides "signed Memorandum on Defense Cooperation and Exchange."[46] During the summit, Ichikawa told Thanh that "the relationship between Japan and Vietnam [had] entered a new stage of development" and that Vietnam was a "strategic partner for peace and stability in Asia, and we want to deepen our partnership."[47] Under the provisions of this memorandum the JSDF and the VPA will conduct military exchanges and Vice-Minister-level officials from each country will have a regular dialogue.[48]

As with the Philippines, the Japanese have pledged to provide the Vietnam Coast Guard a number of patrol vessels. The two sides settled on an order of six vessels that would be funded through ODA programs.[49] In a 2013 summit, Japanese Prime Minister Abe and former Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung discussed their concerns over maritime peace and stability, particularly the SCS.[50] Prime Minister Abe chose Vietnam as his first destination after taking office, indicating the importance of Vietnam as a strategic partner for Japan in the region. In a sign of reciprocity, the Vietnamese invited Japanese Defense Minister Itsunori Onodera to visit the naval facilities in Cam Ranh Bay. According to the Vietnamese, Onodera was the first foreign defense or military-related official to ever be invited at the base.[51] In a conference after his visit to the naval base, Onodera was asked about future security cooperation with the Vietnamese. He indicated that the two countries had been performing field exercises in underwater medicine.[52] In fact, Japan has been assisting Vietnam in this field since 2012.

This is a particularly important skill set as Vietnam increases its maritime capabilities.[53]

As Vietnam's military has modernized it has increasingly looked to Japan in order to improve the aptitude and training of its forces. This has resulted in several training sessions and seminars over the years between the two countries.[54] Additionally, as Vietnam begins to fill gaps in its inventory it may look increasingly to Japan as a source of hardware. China's substantial marine mine inventory could prompt the Vietnamese to purchase MCM vessels from Japan, while simultaneously securing training from one of the most capable MCM forces in the world.

Notes

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CHAPTER 8

Conclusion

Abstract The conclusion analyzes Japan's role in Southeast Asia, particularly that of an economic driver through foreign direct investment as well as development aid. Furthermore it highlights Japan's growing security profile in the region through the establishment of strategic partnerships and capacity-building efforts. The chapter also evaluates the growing enmity between China and Japan and how that has affected not only their bilateral relations but also the region as a whole. It then proceeds to demonstrate how China has become effectively securitized by Southeast Asian countries while Japan has become de-securitized by the same group of states. This has implications for the preferences of alignment in the region.

Keywords Securitization · China · Japan · Southeast Asia · Capacity-Building

Japan and Southeast Asia

Japan has become increasingly proactive in Southeast Asia, especially since Shinzo Abe began his second tenure as Prime Minister in 2012. A distinguishing characteristic of this proactivity has been Abe's efforts to make Japan a key player in the region's security affairs. Much of this has been motivated by Japan's growing concern with China's rise and its

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assertiveness in the ECS and SCS disputes. In other words, it has been the result of Japan's securitization of China. Since a number of Southeast Asian countries have securitized China's actions, Japan has found natural strategic partners in the region with which to cooperate. It should be noted, however, that a more proactive Japan does not necessarily mean military security guarantees to its Southeast Asian partners, rather Japan serves the role of strategic partner for capacity-building efforts throughout Southeast Asia, in addition to being a clear political and economic alternative to China.

By pursuing deeper economic integration and relaxing its weapons export guidelines, Japan has positioned itself as a credible strategic partner to Southeast Asian countries. Through its ODA programs Japan is able to subsidize weapon purchases of China's smaller neighbors. By facilitating military capacity-building in the Philippines and Vietnam, Japan is assisting these countries' efforts to build a minimum credible defense against growing Chinese capabilities. Furthermore, by pursuing a proactive political agenda in the region, Japan is able to externalize its securitization of China and, alongside its Southeast Asian partners, promote a securitized narrative about China's activities in the region.[1] This arrangement is meant to ensure that the security of its SLOC and freedom of navigation is not at the mercy of an increasingly capable People's Liberation Army. At the same time, by limiting its agreements to economic and capacity-building, in addition to supporting narratives that uphold international norms and regional stability, Japan can ensure that it does not become a party to an armed conflict in the SCS unless it chooses to do so on its own terms.

China and Japan: Growing Enmity

Despite significant economic interdependence between China and Japan, the enmity between the two powers has not abated. Mutual suspicion between the two powers in East Asia has fostered an environment of rising nationalism and increasing securitization language toward each other. China's assertive policies and military modernization have done much to give an impetus to Japan's normalization process. During his 2012 campaign, Shinzo Abe ran on a nationalist campaign and on a promise to be tougher on China, indicating the salience of the securitization of China during this period. Japanese leaders perceive that China's increasingly assertive policies in its territorial disputes is a result of the substantial

military expenditures of the PRC as well as the patriotic education to which Chinese students are exposed. In the 2014 World Economic Forum at Davos, Abe explicitly stated that he perceived China's 10% annual increases in defense spending as a provocation. He further indicated that a reduction of tensions between the two countries would not occur so long as China continued its military build-up. Abe went as far as likening Sino-Japanese relations to that of Germany and Great Britain on the eve of World War I, explaining that despite deep economic ties the two countries ultimately went to war with each other.[2] This illustrated the extent to which Abe and his political allies had securitized China's activities in the region.

Abe's confrontational approach toward China appears to be informed by his belief that the Chinese educational system is essentially "anti-Japanese." He believes that the emphasis on patriotic education in China creates a "'deeply ingrained' need to spar with Japan and other Asian neighbors over territory. This is due to the fact that the ruling Communist Party uses the disputes to maintain strong domestic support."[3] In order to meet this challenge, Abe has sought to increase defense spending in Japan. In 2013 he approved the first defense budget increase in 11 years. The JSDF and the JCG will receive a 0.8 and a 1.9% increase respectively.[4] In that same year Abe's cabinet promulgated Japan's first-ever national security strategy (NSS). The document explicitly identified China as a potential threat; stating that:

> China has been rapidly advancing its military capabilities in a wide range of areas through its continued increase in its military budget without sufficient transparency. In addition, China has taken actions that can be regarded as attempts to change the status quo by coercion based on their own assertions, which are incompatible with the existing order of international law, in the maritime and aerial domains, including the East China Sea and the South China Sea. In particular, China has rapidly expanded and intensified its activities in the seas and airspace around Japan, including intrusion into Japan's territorial waters and airspace around the Senkaku Islands. Moreover, China has shown the move that appears to unduly infringe the freedom of overflight above the high seas by establishing its own "Air Defense Identification Zone" over the East China Sea.[5]

The document also calls for strengthening the unity of ASEAN and promotes progress toward the finalization of a CoC in the South China Sea. Furthermore, the reinforcement of the US–Japan alliance is viewed

as a key priority to maintaining peace and security in the region.[6] Since Abe took the premiership, Japan's defense spending has grown each year. And while the spending remained within the 1% of GDP threshold that has been the norm since the 1970s, Abe has called for breaking that limit, citing the changing security environment in the region.[7] In essence, Japan's securitization of China is marked by rhetoric that demonstrates the threat posed by China's actions, while simultaneously highlighting the positive role that Japan plays by upholding international law and regional stability. It is also marked through empirical changes in policy that facilitate a more proactive security agenda in the region.

Chinese officials have responded in kind. They see Japanese military normalization as a dangerous development and often equate it with a return to militarism and fascism. In response to a recent visit to the controversial Yasukuni Shrine by Prime Minister Abe, Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Hua Chunying commented that the visit was proof of lingering militarism in Japan, declaring that "militarist aggression is the darkest demon in the country's history. Japan will truly regain trust from its Asian neighbors and the international society only if it dares to face and beat the demon in its history and its mind, or it will remain in the dock of history.[8] Chinese Foreign Minister, Wang Yi echoed Mrs. Hua's statements by saying that the Yasukuni Shrine was a "symbol of Japanese militarism." The minister also stated that the world "should never allow fascist and militarist ideas to revive themselves in any shape or form."[9] The reference to Japan's imperialist period was implicit.

Tokyo's military budget increases and actions in Southeast Asia have also been a concern for Beijing. In response to Japan's NSS, state-run Xinhua published an article declaring that Japan's new role as a "proactive contributor to peace" is merely a "phony coat" to "conceal Japan's wild ambition to become a military power."[10] The authors claim that "in military terms, being "proactive" means acting proactively or even making preemptive strikes."[11] In more official and direct statements, Defense Ministry spokesman Geng Yansheng said that "China is firmly opposed to Japan's relevant actions," referring to Japan's NSS.[12] Spokesman Geng claimed that Japan was playing up "China's military threat" and that this would increase regional tensions. He went on to express that:

> On the one hand, Japan claimed that it is a peace-loving country, and that it adheres to a defensive defense policy and will not be a military power. On the other hand, Japan is peddling the so-called "proactive pacifism."
>
> On the one hand, Japan claimed that it respects freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law, but on the other hand, it repeatedly denied its history of aggression during the Second World War, challenged the post-war international order and hurt the feeling of the people of the war-victim countries.
>
> Japan has on the one hand claimed to strengthen international coordination, safeguard peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region, and make efforts to ensure security and prosperity of the international community, but on the other hand it sticked to the Cold War mentality and beefed up military alliance with relevant countries.[13]

The spokesman also noted that Japan has been proactively wooing other countries in order to create regional confrontation and roil the regional situation.[14] Japan's defense cooperation agreements with a number of Southeast Asian countries serve as the basis for this belief.

Using more provocative language, PLA Air Force Colonel, Dai Xu, called on China to wage a short and decisive war against one of the claimants in SCS or Japan. He argued that a border clash like the 1962 war with India would deliver long-term peace. Col. Dai claims that US support for its allies is weak and that China should call this bluff and "respond to these empty provocations with something real."[15] Dai called Vietnam, the Philippines, and Japan, America's running dogs in Asia, adding that "we only need to kill one, and it will immediately bring the others to heel."[16]

This escalation of securitization rhetoric between the two countries directly impacts the security of the region. Japan sees China's assertiveness on security matters as a threat to its national interests. This inevitably leads Japan to conduct balancing actions in the form of economic and defense cooperation agreements with Southeast Asian countries who share Japan's concerns about China. On the other hand, Beijing sees Tokyo's actions as a move toward militarism and as a containment strategy that aims to encircle China with pro-US-Japan ASEAN members. This results in patterns of growing enmity which consequently lead to deteriorating bilateral relations and increased tensions. As a result, the tense political environment has not been conducive to conflict resolution measures or cooperation on security matters.

The Securitization of China

China's geographic centrality as well as its economic and political clout gives it inherent advantages in East Asia. All ASEAN members as well as Japan are intrinsically connected to China through economic interdependence as well as the security preoccupations of the rising power. Since China's economic reforms in the late 1970s every country in the region has benefited from increased Chinese investments as well as market opportunities in the mainland. China's "charm offensive" of the early 2000s did much to build good-will among Southeast Asian countries which had been concerned with China's aggressive SCS policy throughout the 1990s. However, events that have occurred in recent years have done a lot of damage to China's image in the region. A 2013 poll conducted by the Pew Research Center indicated that both Japan and the Philippines' (Vietnam was not polled) view China's military power negatively. The poll showed that 96% of Japanese and 68% of Filipino respondents considered China's growing military power as a "bad thing."[17] The same poll asked "how big are territorial disputes between China and your country?" to which 82% of Japanese and 90% of Philippine respondents answered it was a "big problem."[18]

A similar poll conducted in 2017, this time including Vietnam, showed similar results. The poll showed that 90% of Japanese, 90% of Vietnamese, and 66% of Filipino respondents see China's growing military power as a "bad thing."[19] Furthermore, many countries in the region have interpreted China's rise to be a threat. The poll revealed that 92% of Vietnamese, 89% of Japanese, and 77% of Filipino respondents considered China's rise to be a threat to their country. These results demonstrated that any gains made by China's "charm offensive" had all by disappeared.

The negative downturn in China's image has not gone unnoticed in Beijing. The Global Times, a pro-government publication, conducted its own poll and found similar results. The poll involved more than 14,400 respondents from 14 countries which included the United States, Russia, Japan, India, Vietnam, and South Korea.[20] The data showed "that the closer you are to China, the more likely you are to have a negative view of it. Some 25.4 percent of respondents from the neighboring countries said they like China, 10.6 percent lower than those from the non-neighboring countries."[21] According to the poll some 29.4% describe China as "belligerent" and 28.1% say it is "complicated." Only 13.3% of

the respondents thought of China as peaceful. Perhaps even more troubling was the fact that people from neighboring countries believed that their country would have a competitive or confrontational relationship with China within the next 10 years, indicating that China is viewed as a threat by the citizens of neighboring countries.[22]

In 2013, regional tensions spiked as a result of China's unilateral declaration of an air defense identification zone (ADIZ) in the East China Sea. This move has sparked fears among Southeast Asian countries that China may soon do the same in the South China Sea. The Chinese Defense Ministry has reinforced such fears by stating that it will "establish other air defense identification zones at an appropriate time after completing preparations."[23] Due to the fact that neither Vietnam nor the Philippines possesses the capabilities to deter China from adopting an ADIZ in the SCS, they find the prospect of a SCS ADIZ as a serious threat to their claims in the region. Former Philippine Foreign Secretary, Albert Del Rosario, stated that a SCS ADIZ presents the threat that "China will control the air space [in the South China Sea] … It transforms an entire air zone into China's domestic air space."[24]

Former Philippine President Aquino was one of the staunchest critics of China since taking office. In a 2014 interview, Aquino made an international plea by asking the nations around the world to support the Philippines in resisting China's assertive claims in the South China Sea. He likened the situation of his country to that of Czechoslovakia in the late 1930s when the West accepted Germany's demands for the Sudetenland. He stated: "If we say yes to something we believe is wrong now, what guarantee is there that the wrong will not be further exacerbated down the line?"[25] He went on to say: "At what point do you say, 'Enough is enough'? Well, the world has to say it—remember that the Sudetenland was given in an attempt to appease Hitler to prevent World War II."[26] His remarks are indicative of his country's concerns for China's military buildup in the South China Sea. These remarks could have been fueled by reports from China that the PLA has drawn up plans to seize Thitu Island from the Philippines in 2014. The report said that "there will be no invasion into Filipino territories," negating Philippine sovereignty claims to the island and that "the battle is aimed at recovery of the island stolen by the Philippines from China."[27]

Although Aquino's successor, Duterte, has moved the Philippines away from a direct confrontational approach with China, developments in the South China Sea have demonstrated that he is also willing to

challenge China on competing claims. For example, in 2018 a Philippine military aircraft was warned off airspace near contested features in the South China Sea, prompting a rebuke from Duterte. During a speech in Davao, Duterte criticized Beijing stating that China "cannot create an island. It's man-made and you say that the air above this artificial island is yours. That is wrong because those waters are what we would consider international sea. And the right of innocent passage is guaranteed."[28] In other words, the changing environment in the SCS has prompted Duterte, who refrained from enforcing the 2016 arbitration that ruled in the Philippines' favor, to begin challenging the legality of China's actions based on the landmark ruling.[29]

Access to vital oil and marine resources is an area where China's actions have elevated tensions in the region. China's recent efforts to develop oil and gas in contested territory have led to condemnation from the Vietnamese who see China's actions in the vicinity of the Paracels as illegal. Vietnamese Foreign Ministry Spokesman Luong Thanh Nghi asked China to "cease all activities that violate Vietnam's sovereignty."[30] This could be a growing problem for the Vietnamese who have experienced Chinese interference while conducting their own oil and gas surveys. China has also demanded that the Philippines cease giving out contracts to oil companies in the Spratly archipelago as it considers these territories its own. Duterte has warned that China's unilateral extraction of resources from the SCS at the expense of other claimants could result in a war.[31] These events directly affect Vietnamese and Philippine energy security and have the potential to lead to further clashes between the claimants.

China's unilateral imposition of fishing bans in the SCS has also met deep criticism from Vietnam and the Philippines whose economies and population are heavily reliant on the fishing industry. A fishing ban imposed on January 1, 2014 obliged foreign fishing vessels to obtain approval before entering waters which the local Hainan government says are under its jurisdiction. This resulted in instantaneous responses from Vietnam and the Philippines regarding the ban. Vietnamese Foreign Ministry Spokesman Luong Thanh Nghi called the new ban "illegal and invalid" and seriously violate Vietnam's sovereignty over the Hoang Sa (Paracels) and Truong Sa (Spratlys) islands. "Vietnam demands that China abolish the above said wrongful acts, and practically contribute to the maintenance of peace and stability in the region."[32] Furthermore, former Philippine Defense Secretary Voltaire Gazmin was quoted saying

that "China is projecting itself as a superpower," adding that "they have been aggressive lately." Furthermore, he stated that "we are not following the rules of China in our own territory, why are we going to follow them if we fish in our own seas."[33] Chinese fishing bans have become a regular feature of the SCS disputes, prompting challenges from other claimants usually in the form of counter-bans or outright defiance.

Heightened tensions and an increasingly negative opinion of China in the region have led to more frequent use of securitizing language aimed at China by Japan, Vietnam, and the Philippines. This indicates that the PRC is quickly becoming the primary security concern among key East Asian countries. Consequently, many of the smaller states in the region have sought to balance China's influence and power with that of the United States and its primary ally in the region, Japan. America's pivot to the region has been generally welcomed by ASEAN states who have sought to reduce their exposure to China.[34] At the same time, countries like the Philippines and Vietnam are exploring the possibility of allowing the United States greater access to their naval facilities as a way to hedge against China.[35] As a key ally of the United States and as power in its own right, Japan has also been garnering support among ASEAN states in its efforts to maintain freedom of navigation in the region. Japan is increasingly being seen as another possible hedge vis-à-vis China by Southeast Asian states who share Japan's concerns about China's growing military capabilities and its implications for the freedom of navigation in the South China Sea.[36]

The De-securitization of Japan

Japan has had a tumultuous history with most countries in Asia as a result of its imperialist past. Brutal occupation of most of its neighbors and perceived inadequate apologies for the atrocities it committed during WWII have been a serious thorn in Japan's relations with its neighbors, particularly China and the two Koreas. Although the issue of its WWII legacy continues to plague Japan's bilateral relations with China and the Koreas, ASEAN countries have been more forgiving. In 2008 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan (MOFA) commissioned TNS, a Singapore-based market research company, to conduct an opinion poll in Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam regarding Japan. When asked if Japan was a trustworthy friend for ASEAN countries, 90% or more of the respondents from all six countries

answered yes.[37] When asked about what they presently thought about Japan's acts during WWII, 59% and or more of the people surveyed in all six countries said that while Japan did some bad things, it was not an issue now.[38] A Pew Research Center poll in 2013 reinforced the 2008 findings showing ASEAN countries that were surveyed have a 78% or more favorable view of Japan (again, Vietnam was not polled).[39] A 2015 iteration of the poll by Pew Research Center, this time including Vietnam, revealed that Japan continued to enjoy a positive image among Southeast Asian countries with Filipino and Vietnamese respondents having 81 and 82% favorable view of Japan respectively.[40]

Japan's image has been slowly repaired in Southeast Asia as a result of its generous ODA packages to Southeast Asian countries. Its soft power has also been on the rise due to its constructive participation in the Timor-Leste and Cambodian Peace Keeping Operations as well as its disaster relief assistance to countries struck by natural disasters. In the wake of the 2004 Tsunami, Japan provided a total of $697 million to the affected countries, almost double of China's $379 million contribution. Indonesia and Sri Lanka received the largest aid package at $250 million and $175 million respectively.[41] In response to the 2013 Haiyan Typhoon which devastated the Philippines, the Japanese government pledged $30 million and deployed it largest-ever relief effort overseas. A Japanese flotilla of three vessels made up of a cruiser, a cargo ship, a fuel supply ship, and eight helicopters was supplemented by 1000 JSDF troops on Philippine soil.[42] In a December 2013 summit between Prime Minister Abe and former President Aquino following the typhoon, Japan raised its contribution for emergency relief in the Philippines to $56.1 million.[43] This was a major upset for Beijing which endured worldwide criticism for its initial $100,000 offering. After international condemnation China pledged an additional $1.6 million and deployed a medical relief ship with a 51-person medical team to assist in the Philippines.[44]

As previously indicated, Japan has been critical in the provision of capacity-building for coast guards in Southeast Asia. It has provided funds and training for many in the region in order to promote safe navigation in the SCS and continues to encourage information sharing about vessels and individuals suspected of committing piracy and armed robbery in the high seas.[45] Japan has also been a mediator for the Mindanao Peace Process between the Philippines and the Moro Liberation Front (MILF). The MILF is one of the strongest Islamic separatist groups in the south of the Philippines and has fought the

central government for years in order to establish an independent country. In 2012 Japan successfully negotiated a framework between the two sides in which they agreed to work toward a peace settlement that would eventually lead to the creation of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM).[46] In 2013 Prime Minister Abe reaffirmed Japan's commitment to the Mindanao Peace Process and pledged "$2 million of emergency grant aid for the internally displaced persons arising from the armed conflict in Zamboanga City, Mindanao Island."[47] Additionally, in its efforts to promote stability in Southeast Asia, for the first time since WWII, Japan provided military aid to a foreign country in 2012 when it approved a $2 million package for its military engineers to train Cambodian and Timor-Leste troops in disaster relief and road building.[48]

Decades of investments, ODA, maritime cooperation, and peacekeeping operations in the region have effectively de-securitized Japan for many of the Southeast Asian countries. This is in contrast to China which while continuing to enjoy the position of top trading partner for most countries in the region, has increasingly been securitized by key states. This is a development that Japan has been eager to exploit. While economic ties between Southeast Asia and China continue to grow at a marked pace, and the United States continues to be the region's main stabilizing force and security provider, Japan is in a geostrategic position to fulfill both roles. Poor relations with China have prompted Japan to invest more of its money in Southeast Asia. In 2013 Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) from Japan to China plunged by 37% to $6.5 billion. Meanwhile, FDI to Southeast Asia's "four major economies — Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, and the Philippines — surged by over 120% to almost $7.9 billion."[49] Tokyo has also expanded its currency swap agreements with a number of Southeast Asian countries in order to help stabilize financial markets in Asia.[50]

There are also signs that the normalization of the JSDF has not been considered a threat by Southeast Asian countries as it has been by China and South Korea. This is evident in the numerous defense cooperation agreements that Japan has concluded with many ASEAN states like Vietnam and the Philippines as well as Indonesia. In an interview with the Financial Times, former Philippine Foreign Minister Albert Del Rosario said that his country was "looking for balancing factors in the region and Japan could be a significant balancing factor."[51] In a similar fashion, Indonesian Defense Minister Purnomo Yusgiantoro publicly expressed

support for Japan's plans to develop its armed forces, further indicating that many countries in the region are comfortable with Japan's efforts to play a more substantial role in the security of the region.[52] In other words, there has been receptivity to Japan's normalization and proactive engagement in the SCS disputes and regional security affairs in general.

Looking Ahead

The situation in the South China Sea is an ongoing process that continues to evolve on an almost daily basis. It is clear that China and Japan have interests in the SCS and their mutual securitization has led them to pursue different strategies to meet their economic and security needs. China's securitization of the SCS disputes has resulted in an increasingly assertive policy which is facilitated by emergent military capabilities. This has allowed Beijing to push Vietnam and the Philippines on these disputes, but as a consequence led to its securitization by these actors. As a result, these actors have gravitated toward hedging strategies that facilitate their capacity-building efforts and to internationalize the disputes by attempting to bring in the United States and its main regional ally, Japan, as partners. Japan, led by a nationalist Prime Minister and concerned over growing tensions with China over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands, has been pursuing a more proactive policy in Southeast Asia in order to secure its SLOC and ensure that China's claims in the SCS do not come to fruition. The explicit connection between the developments in the ECS and SCS for Japan means that they expect China to follow similar strategies in the Senkaku/Diaoyu disputes should they prove successful in the Spratly archipelago. In essence, it is not in Japan's interest to see China succeed in the South China Sea.

Although it is highly unlikely that Japan will forge mutual defense agreements with any other nation, it is positioning itself as a viable economic alternative to China and perhaps more importantly, as a provider of political support and military equipment and training. As a result of China's more assertive policies and its subsequent securitization by key states in the region, the prospects of productive negotiations seem unlikely in the near term. China, emboldened by its growing capabilities and American neutrality on the SCS disputes, continues to prefer bilateral negotiations. On the other hand, contending states, with Japan's explicit support, continue to advocate for a multilateral framework to resolve the disputes.

The intractability of the disputes, despite the PCA's invalidation of China's nine-dash map and accompanying claims, has resulted in the growth of military spending by Southeast Asian claimant states like the Philippines and Vietnam as they aim to develop a minimum credible deterrence against China. With the assistance of Japan, the United States, and other regional powers, these countries have succeeded in the gradual modernization of the armed forces. However, these programs will take years to mature. In other words, their ability to shape China's behavior through deterrence will remain limited. Nevertheless, increased military capabilities should allow the Philippines and Vietnam defend the features already under their control and allow them to more effectively patrol the SLOCs of the South China Sea, something that is at the heart of Japan's involvement in the dispute. Furthermore, the internationalization of the disputes in increasingly putting China in a difficult position as it is increasingly becoming apparent that its assertive policies in the SCS have had the unintended consequence of involving its main geopolitical rivals: Japan and the United States.

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Index

A
Active Defense, 47, 48
Air Self-Defense Forces (ASDF), 72
Amphibious Rapid Deployment Brigade (ARDB), 70, 76
Anti-Access/Area Denial (A2/AD), 48, 49, 103
Anti-Ship Ballistic Missile (ASBM), 38
Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), 82, 84–86, 91
Article IX, 62–64, 67
Assassin's Mace, 50–52, 57, 58
Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), 7, 9, 15, 84, 88, 89

B
Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD), 38

C
Capacity-building, 8, 9, 88, 110, 118, 120
Code of Conduct (CoC), 27, 28, 33
Core interest, 46, 53

D
Declaration of Conduct (DoC), 27, 28
De-securitization, 6, 9, 11, 15, 73, 117
Doctrine, 47–49

E
East China Sea (ECS), 6, 9, 14, 41, 69–71, 74, 88, 89, 104, 110, 111, 115, 120
East Sea, 96
Enmity, 6, 10, 37, 42, 99, 100, 110, 113

F
Freedom of navigation, 2, 3, 7, 9, 70, 74

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G
Ground Self-Defense Forces (GSDF), 69–71, 76

I
Island reclamation, 28, 54

J
Japanese Coast Guard (JCG), 40, 41
Japan's Self-Defense Forces (JSDF), 62–73

K
Kalaya'an Island Group (KIG), 23, 24, 80

L
Law on the Territorial Waters and the Contiguous Zone, 6, 7
Local War under Conditions of Informatization, 47–49

M
Maritime Self-Defense Forces (MSDF), 71, 74
Military modernization, 7–10, 45, 101

N
Nine-dash map, 20, 22, 26, 29
Normalization, 9, 10, 61, 62, 64–66, 68, 69, 72, 73

O
Official Development Assistance (ODA), 41, 87, 93, 110, 118, 119

P
Paracel archipelago, 20, 23, 96
Paracel Islands, 18, 22, 25, 99
Peace-keeping, 64, 65, 67
People's Liberation Army (PLA), 37–39, 41, 45–52, 55, 56
People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN), 51, 55, 58
People's War, 47, 49
Perception, 37–39, 43
Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA), 24, 29, 30, 34
Power-projection, 68, 69, 71–73

S
Scarborough Shoal, 18, 20, 83, 88, 91
SCS disputes, 2, 9, 10, 26, 27, 30, 84, 88, 89, 100, 110, 117, 120
Sea Lanes of Communication (SLOC), 2, 3, 6, 70–72, 82, 89, 110, 120, 121
Securitization, 6–11, 13–15, 37, 39, 40, 42, 46, 53, 62, 67, 69, 74, 76, 110, 112–114, 120, 121
Securitization Theory, 10, 13
Security, 37–44
Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands, 36, 39–41, 44, 69, 74, 111, 120
South China Sea (SCS), 2–15, 18, 20, 22–24, 26–34, 46, 52–56, 58, 59, 70, 73, 74, 77, 80–86, 88–91, 96, 97, 99–107, 110, 111, 113–118, 120–123
Sovereignty, 53, 58
Spratly archipelago, 20, 23, 25, 26, 30, 52, 53, 80, 83, 96, 99, 103
Spratly Islands, 18, 22, 23, 25

T
Terra nullius, 23, 24

Territorial disputes, 1–3, 6, 18, 28, 100, 104, 110, 114
Territorial integrity, 53

U
United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), 18, 22, 24, 26, 29, 32, 34

V
Vietnam People's Army (VPA), 101–104
Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA), 88

W
West Philippines Sea, 84

Y
Yasukuni Shrine, 36