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## **Influence and role of USA in the PR China and Japan relations\*\***

*Abstract*

*This paper presents the significance of US role in the PR China and Japan relations. Geographically, USA is considered Pacific power, not East-Asian power, but strategically, East Asia was and remains of extreme importance in the national security concept of the USA. The main strategic interest of the USA in the region is to prevent any power from dominating the region. The paper first analyses strategic and economic interest of the USA in the region. Special attention is given to military cooperation between the USA and Japan. Article V of the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security obliges the US to take the sides and opt for its treaty ally Japan, thus additionally complicating dispute on Senkaku /Diaoyu Islands. Maintaining status quo, Japanese jurisdiction over islands, is a part of the US wider strategy. Paper further analyses regional power balance and the US Asia Pivot Policy, that is, strategic removal of the US focus from by strengthening military relations with China's neighbours. The paper shall also explain the impact of potential conflict between PR China and Japan to the US interests.*

*Key words: East Asia, Military Alliance, Article V, Asia Pivot, Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security, containment*

### **1. Introduction**

The relations between the PR China and Japan are to the great extent determined by the influences and interests that the United States of America has in the region, whereas the USA – Japan alliance prevents establishment of mutual trust.<sup>1</sup> The Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands dispute does not solely concern the bilateral issue between Japan and China, but also takes into account the USA regional interest and the role in this problematic matter. The Asia Pivot or the US rebalance policy with its military, diplomatic and economic element, represents an additional challenge for the region.

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1 James Przystup, "China, Japan, and the United States", in: Michael J. Green and Patrick M. Cronin (ed), *U.S. –Japan Alliance -Past, Present and Future*, Council on Foreign Relations Press New York, 1999, p. 35

## **2. The US Strategic and Economic Interest in the region of East Asia**

The United States of America has a strategic and economic interest in this region for which their impact on the bilateral relations between Japan and China is huge.

In economic sense, both China and Japan are exceptionally important for the USA – China is the second and Japan is the third world's economy, and both are outstandingly important commercial and financial partners to the USA. The United States of America is the greatest importer of Chinese goods, exceeding the European Union, while China and the US are second by size commercial partners to each other<sup>2</sup>. While annual volume of trade in 1979 amounted to \$2.45 billion, in 2013 the total annual value of commercial exchange exceeded \$500 billion. According to the same source, the value of two-way investments surpassed \$100 billion. On the other hand, within the framework of regional mechanisms, PR China and the USA mostly have inconsistent interests (in multi-lateral and mini-lateral regional institutions).<sup>3</sup> China perceives "ASEAN +3" as one of the major instigators of the cooperation within the East Asia, and does not advocate for strengthening of the East Asia Summit (EAS). The USA supports the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), which excludes China, while China advocates for the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), which on the other hand excludes the USA<sup>4</sup>. China and the USA have opposing interests in negotiations over the Free Trade and Cooperation Agreement between China, the Republic of Korea and Japan. China has invested great efforts in multi-lateral diplomacy in the region and took advantage of the US absence from the region during the "War on Terror", which, in economic sense, reflected on better cooperation and its share in trading activities within the framework of mechanisms<sup>5</sup>. Thus, the US share in total trading activities with ASEAN declined from 17.6% in 1993 to 10.6% in 2008. During the same period, China's share in total trade with ASEAN increased from 2.1% in 1993 to 11.3% in 2008<sup>6</sup>.

China became a challenge for the US leadership in the Asia-Pacific Region, not only in military sense, but with wider consequences on economic and diplomatic domination of the United States in the region<sup>7</sup>. China's growth and potential domination in the region led to refocusing, rebalance or redirection of the US politics – the Pivot, by

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2 Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the United States, Wang Yi, Chinese Foreign Minister, "Build on past progress to develop a new model of major country relations between PR China and USA", updated 31.12.2013. Available at: <http://www.china-embassy.org/eng/zt/zmjjzn/t1114118.htm>, (accessed 15.01.2014)

3 Jae-kyung Park, "China-US Relations in East Asia: Strategic Rivalry and Korea's Choice", April 2013, *Center for Strategic International Studies*, Available at: [file:///C:/Users/korisnik/Downloads/130404\\_Park\\_ChinaUSRelations\\_Web.pdf](file:///C:/Users/korisnik/Downloads/130404_Park_ChinaUSRelations_Web.pdf), (accessed: 24. 06. 2014.), p. 3

4 Jae-kyung Park, "China-US Relations in East Asia: Strategic Rivalry and Korea's Choice", April 2013, *Center for Strategic International Studies*, Available at: [file:///C:/Users/korisnik/Downloads/130404\\_Park\\_ChinaUSRelations\\_Web.pdf](file:///C:/Users/korisnik/Downloads/130404_Park_ChinaUSRelations_Web.pdf), (accessed: 24. 06. 2014.), p. 3

5 Ibidem, p.3

6 Ibidem, p.3

7 SD Muni, Vived Cadha (ed.), „Asian Strategic Review 2014-US Pivot and Asian Security“, *Institute for Defense Studies and Analyses*, New Delhi, 2014., p 21

which the USA demonstrates its “renewed energy return” to the region<sup>8</sup>. The US Pivot has essentially three elements – military, diplomatic and economic. The aim of this policy is “reinforcing of American leadership in matters of regional security and ensuring American economic prosperity through deeper engagement with economies of the Asia-Pacific”<sup>9</sup>. Rapid growth, dynamism and future of the Asia-Pacific region are the key reasons for the US economic interest. The Asia-Pacific region has become a key destination for US exports as total export of goods by the US to the region in 2012, has been worth \$942 billion. This constitutes 61 per cent of the total exports of US goods in that year. As of August 2013, nineteen rounds of TPP negotiations have taken place among twelve countries<sup>10</sup>. China’s fast growing military modernisation was causing concern and discomfort in the US strategic community. The US will be putting its best efforts to maintain its strategic influence in the Asia-Pacific region in order to provide security assurances to its allies such as Japan, Australia, South Korea, Philippines, etc. and also to secure its own interests in this region<sup>11</sup>.

From the geographic perspective, the United States is a Pacific Power, not East-Asian power, but strategically, the East Asia was and remains of extreme importance in the national security concept of USA. The main strategic interest of the USA in the region is to make sure that no rival great power dominates it. Countries of the East Asia have large populations, significant military forces, and exceptional economic and technological abilities. Washington is currently facing a series of diplomatic and security challenges in the East Asia, such as strengthening of China’s powers and North Korea’s endeavours to become an accepted member of the club of nuclear power nations.

The global financial crisis, that eventually evolved into the global economic crisis, seriously jeopardised the stability of the US and European economies, and in some way pointed out the decline of the West and raising of the rest of the world.<sup>12</sup> In terms of formal relations between the USA and PR China, and as cited on the official web page of Embassy of the People’s Republic of China in Washington, the situation is better now than thirty five years ago, when relations were officially established. Official state visits were rare in 1979. In the course of last five years, presidents of two countries have officially met fourteen times<sup>13</sup>. Two countries have established over ninety mechanisms for dialogue and cooperation between the two countries, such as the US-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue and the US-China High-Level Consultation on People-to-People Exchange (CPE)<sup>14</sup>. Moreover, PR China and the USA have 41 pairs of sister province/state and 201 pairs of sister city relationships between PR China and the

8 Jae-kyung Park, “China-US Relations in East Asia: Strategic Rivalry and Korea’s Choice”, april 2013, Center for Strategic International Studies, Available at: file:///C:/Users/korisnik/Downloads/130404\_Park\_ChinaUSRelations\_Web.pdf, (accessed: 24.06.2014.)

9 Rukmani Gupta, „US Pivot to Asia and China“ in SD Muni, Vived Cadha (ed.) *Asian Strategic Review 2014-US Pivot and Asian Security*, Institute for Defense Studies and Analyses, New Delhi, 2014, p. 105

10 SD Muni, Vived Cadha (ed.), *Asian Strategic Review 2014-US Pivot and Asian Security*, Institute for Defense Studies and Analyses, New Delhi, 2014., p.17

11 Ibidem, p.18

12 Richard J Samuel, *Securing Japan-Tokyo’s Grand Strategy and the Future of East Asia*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London, 2008, p.70.

13 Embassy of the People’s Republic of China in the United States, Wang Yi, Chinese Foreign Minister, “Build on past progress to develop a new model of major country relations between PR China and USA”, updated 31.12.2013. available na: <http://www.china-embassy.org/eng/zt/zmjzn/t1114118.htm>, (accessed 15.01.2014)

14 Ibidem

United States. In 1979, only several thousand Chinese and Americans visited the other country. Nowadays, over ten thousand Chinese and Americans fly across the Pacific Ocean for mutual visits, and it is hard to keep a record of many more Chinese and Americans who interact with each other through the Internet and mobile phones<sup>15</sup>.

Until recently, relations between PR China and the US could be settled for an accurate but inelegant description: that the countries are "neither friends nor foes".<sup>16</sup> Minxin Pei<sup>17</sup> explains that this designation seems reasonable, but only at first glance. In his view, the United States and China are clearly not allies, they share no overriding security interests or political values, and their conceptions of world order fundamentally clash. Whereas Beijing hopes for a post-American, multipolar world, Washington is trying to preserve the liberal order it leads, even as its relative power wanes. Yet, he believes that the two countries are not adversaries either, and do not see each other as ideological or security threats<sup>18</sup>. This statement is to a certain extent contested by the results of the recent Gallup Politics Survey<sup>19</sup>, showing that 20% of Americans view China as the United States' greatest enemy today, while 16% of respondents named Iran and North Korea as the greatest US enemies. This is the first time that China is atop the list since Gallup first conducted the survey in 2001. The reason for such result is not exclusively in an increased antagonistic view of China, but in the fact that the American public is taking a less antagonistic view of Iran<sup>20</sup>. Another Gallup Poll shows that Americans have unfavourable and mostly divided opinion of China, i.e. 53% of Americans see China very or mostly unfavourably, while 43% of US adults say they have a very or mostly favourable opinion of this Asian power. These data have been mainly consistent since the Tiananmen Square protests, when Americans' favourable ratings of China plummeted<sup>21</sup>.

The US-Japan alliance and obligations arising from it are critical for the US role in the region. The Sino-Japan conflict over the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands in the East China Sea obliges the US to take the sides and opt for its treaty ally Japan. Both China and Japan in past years took more decisive and strident positions, with Japan demanding from the USA to declare explicitly that the alliance does not only apply to the indisputable Japanese territories but also to the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands.

This issue is not only legal or academic, since the Treaty imposes the obligation of the US to provide a military aid for Japan in cases of need. In addition, the United States has 47,000 troops in Japan, 65% of which are deployed in Okinawa, near Taiwan. The sole fact that the intervention of the American forces in an eventual Taiwan Strait dispute would be organised from the Japanese territory is sufficient to burden the relations<sup>22</sup>.

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15 Ibidem

16 Minxin Pei, "How China and America See Each other", *Foreign Affairs*, April/March Issue, Available at: [http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/140755/minxin-pei/how-china-and-america-see-each-other?cid=soc-facebook-in-review-essays-how\\_china\\_and\\_america\\_see\\_each\\_other-030114](http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/140755/minxin-pei/how-china-and-america-see-each-other?cid=soc-facebook-in-review-essays-how_china_and_america_see_each_other-030114), (accessed 2.03.2014.)

17 Ibid.

18 Ibid.

19 Gallup Politics, Available at: <http://www.gallup.com/poll/167501/far-fewer-americans-say-iran-no-enemy.aspx>,

20 Jeffrey M Jones, "Far Fewer Americans Say Iran is Number one Enemy", *Gallup Politics*, updated 20. february 2014. Available at: <http://www.gallup.com/poll/167501/far-fewer-americans-say-iran-no-enemy.aspx>, (accessed 2.2.2014.)

21 Andrew Dugan, "Americans View China Mostly Unfavorably", 20.02.2014, *Gallup Politics*, Available at: <http://www.gallup.com/poll/167498/americans-view-china-mostly-unfavorably.aspx>, (accessed: 20.02.2014)

22 "Sino Japanese Relations -Issues for U.S. Policy" (ed.)Emma Chanlet Avery, Kerry Dumbaugh, Willam H Cooper, in *Congressional Research Service*, p.20. updated:19/12/2008, Available at: <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R40093.pdf> (accessed 3.10.2013.)

Akira Kato<sup>23</sup> believes that it is little known that Kuba Island and Taisho Island, as parts of the Senkaku Islands, are still under the exclusive control of the US military as outlined in the 1960 US-Japan Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA). The Japanese Ministry of Defence, since 1972, has been leasing Kuba in the Senkaku Islands to the US military as a bombing range along with Taisho. Although both islands have not been used by the US military since 1978, and Article II (3) of SOFA states that “The facilities and areas used by the United States armed forces shall be returned to Japan whenever they are no longer needed for purposes of this Agreement”, they have not yet been returned to Japan. Neither Tokyo nor Washington has explained the reason why the islands are still allocated for use by the US military<sup>24</sup>. This is just another proof of the US role in the Senkaku dispute.

With nearly 100,000 troops deployed in Northeast Asia, the US is still a dominant military power in the region<sup>25</sup>. Regardless of the military presence, the US participation in regional economic institutions suggests a declining impact in the region. Hence, Samuels<sup>26</sup> argues that, even though the United States is increasingly dependent on Asian finance and goods, Asian regional trade and financial system function without American leadership, and increasingly without the US presence. It became evident that since Beijing took over the diplomatic leadership from the US in the Six-Party talks on North Korean nuclear weapons program, the USA would not be able to disarm the North Korea peacefully without Chinese support<sup>27</sup>.

### **3. The US-Japan Military Alliance**

The military alliance between the US and Japan prevents establishment of trust and cooperation between PR China and Japan, and has a very important role in the territorial dispute between two countries.

The Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between Japan and the United States was first signed in 1952 in San Francisco following the signing of the Peace Treaty. When the Treaty was first signed, both sides felt as winners – Japan regained its independence, the United States, as the most dominant power in the region, provided their security, whereas Japan was able to devote itself to economic recovery. The US was given the opportunity to establish itself as the Western Pacific force, with military troops and bases in Japan, as well as the opportunity to defend South Korea and Taiwan, and restrict influences of the Soviet Union and PR China<sup>28</sup>. The US patronage over Japan had the “greenhouse” effect that enabled Japan to develop “without expenses and

23 Japanski profesor političkih nauka na Obirin Univerziteta u Tokiju

24 Akira Kato, The United States: The Hidden Actor in the Senkaku Islands, *Asia Pacific Bulletin*, 2/4/2013/, available at: <http://www.eastwestcenter.org/sites/default/files/private/apb205.pdf>. (Accessed 6.10. 2013.)p.2

25 Richard J Samuel, *Securing Japan-Tokyo's Grand Strategy and the Future of East Asia*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London, 2008, p. 71

26 Richard J Samuel, *Securing Japan-Tokyo's Grand Strategy and the Future of East Asia*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London, 2008.

27 Ibidem, p. 71

28 Georg R. Packard, United States-Japan Security Treaty at 50, *Foreign Affairs*, updated: april 2010. Available at: <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/66150/george-r-packard/the-united-states-japan-security-treaty-at-50> (accessed: 3.09.2014.)

uncertainties, with a full participation in international political and security issues"<sup>29</sup>. In a way, Japan had become a military satellite of the US, getting in return a chance to focus on mercantilist program and efforts to catch up with the West economically<sup>30</sup>. In addition, the US provided technology that accelerated Japanese production after World War II, and "wide opened the gates", i.e. markets for Japanese goods<sup>31</sup>.

The new Treaty was signed on January 19th 1960, by Japanese Prime Minister Nobusuke Kishi and the US Secretary of State Christian Herter. The United States agreed to help defend Japan against any foreign adversaries, while in return got ports and bases for deployment of their armed forces. The Treaty survived major changes in world politics, such as the Vietnam War, the collapse of the Soviet Union, the rise of PR China, and regardless of commercial disputes, disagreements and deep cultural and historical differences between Japan and the US, the alliance has lasted longer than any other alliance between two great powers since the 1648 Peace of Westphalia<sup>32</sup>. The Treaty parties recognize that an armed attack against either Party in the territories under the administration of Japan would be dangerous to its own peace and safety. The Treaty envisages that both parties would act to meet and oppose the common danger. The Treaty also included provisions on the further development of international cooperation and on improved economic cooperation. Japan and the United States in January 1960 in Washington signed the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA – Agreement under Article VI of the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between Japan and the United States of America regarding Facilities and Areas and Status of United States Armed Forces in Japan)<sup>33</sup>.

The preamble to the New Special Measures relating to Article XXIV of the Agreement under Article VI of the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between Japan and United States of America (signed on September 11th 2000) states that this Treaty contributes to the to the security of Japan and the maintenance of international peace and security in the Far East<sup>34</sup>.

The security partnership between two countries has come into the spotlight and has been increasingly written about due to the strained relations between the People's Republic of China and Japan, the events related to the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands and North Korean nuclear tests and threats. The Japan-US Security Consultative Committee (SCC) commonly known as "two-plus-two" (for its membership of the Japanese foreign and defence ministers and the US secretaries of state and defence) plays a central role in the security partnership between two countries<sup>35</sup>. The SCC has been responsible for a number of key moves in the bilateral security relationship, including:

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29 Karl J Fields, Elizabeth Norville, "Japan and the International Political Economy", *Razvojni resursi i razvojne politike zemalja Azije*, Master studije: Regionalne studije Azije – Rider, p. 269

30 Ibidem

31 Ibidem

32 Georg R. Packard, United States-Japan Security Treaty at 50, *Foreign Affairs*, updated: april 2010. Available at: <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/66150/george-r-packard/the-united-states-japan-security-treaty-at-50> (accessed: 3.09.2014.)

33 Document Archive, Available at: <http://www.niraikanai.wvma.net/pages/archive/sofa.html>, (accessed: 13.10.2013.)

34 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, Available at: <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/n-america/us/security/agree0009.html> (accessed: 13.10.2013.)

35 "The Japan-US Security Partnership", *Nippon*, updated: 28.04.2014. Available at: <http://www.nippon.com/en/features/h00053/>, (accessed: 28.04.2014.)

the establishment of the Special Action Committee on Okinawa, an agreement on consolidation and reduction of US military bases on the island, and the 1997 revision of the Guidelines for Japan-US Defence Cooperation. At the most recent "two-plus-two" meeting, held on October 3<sup>rd</sup> 2013, the sides agreed to revise the Defence Guidelines again by the end of 2014 and to expand collaboration in 15 areas, including cyber security and space. At the vice-ministerial level, there are five frameworks for consultation: the Security Subcommittee, the Joint Committee, the Subcommittee for Defence Cooperation, the Ballistic Missile Defence Executive Steering Committee, and the Cyber Dialogue<sup>36</sup>. The Security Subcommittee discusses major security issues. On the Japanese side, members include the Japanese director generals of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' North American Affairs Bureau and the Ministry of Defence's Bureau of Defence Policy. The American participants include the assistant secretaries of state and defence<sup>37</sup>. The Joint Committee cooperates as necessary in implementing SOFA. The Subcommittee for Defence Cooperation is a framework for study and consultation on guidelines needed for emergency joint response from Japanese and US forces and on other matters related to defence cooperation. The Ballistic Missile Defence Executive Steering Committee is a consultation body for cooperation between the allies' defence authorities that aims to mutually clarify systems, roles, and duties for the implementation of ballistic missile defence and related strategies<sup>38</sup>. The Cyber Dialogue team, which convened for the first time in May 2013, is a consultative body for bilateral cooperation through exchange of information about international threats in cyberspace, development of concrete methods to protect infrastructure<sup>39</sup>. Working committees also meet when necessary to draw up specific policy. They cover the following five areas: extended deterrence; chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear defence; information security; space; and roles, responsibilities, and capabilities<sup>40</sup>. The Comprehensive Dialogue on Space has also been held since 2013. Here discussions cover topics ranging from resource and disaster management to environmental monitoring, scientific discovery, and national and international security<sup>41</sup>.

One of the most problematic issues in the US-Japan military alliance is related to the US Marines stationed on Okinawa, which hosts 65% of all the US military forces, even though it is one of the poorest among 47 prefectures in Japan<sup>42</sup>. Local population is against the presence of the US troops in the Futenma military base, especially in light of past incidents that occurred there<sup>43</sup>. Negotiations were held in May 2006, in order to relocate the Air Station Futenma from the city of Ginowan, to build a new airstrip, and to redeploy 8,000 marines to US bases in Guam. In April 2013 two sides agreed that Futenma base and another five American bases will be turned over to Japan by

36 "The Japan-US Security Partnership", Nippon, updated: 28.04.2014. Available at: <http://www.nippon.com/en/features/h00053/>, (accessed: 28.04.2014.)

37 Ibidem

38 Ibidem

39 Ibidem

40 Ibidem

41 "The Japan-US Security Partnership", Nippon, updated: 28.04.2014. Available at: <http://www.nippon.com/en/features/h00053/>, (accessed: 28.04.2014.)

42 Instutue for Policy Studies, Available at: <http://closethebase.org/us-military-bases/incidents-involving-us-military-in-okinawa/>

43 The number of criminal offences involving US soldiers from 1972. amounted to 5584 cases, out of which 559 cases refers to murders, burglaries and rape.. ( source: Instutue for Policy Studies, Available at: <http://closethebase.org/us-military-bases/incidents-involving-us-military-in-okinawa/>

the end of 2020<sup>44</sup>. In October 2013 the US agreed to use reconnaissance unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs, drones) in Japan, that in return agreed to invest US\$3.1 billion to redeploy 5,000 marines from Okinawa to Guam. Ministers agreed to revise the Defence Guidelines for the first time after 1997, so as to expand the collaboration to the war on terrorism and strengthening of allied forces in the event of attack against Japan<sup>45</sup>.

The US-Japan military alliance is faced with a variety of other challenges. One of them is Article V of the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between Japan and the United States of America stipulating the obligation of the US to side with Japan. Regardless of the neutrality of the US, which initially acted formally regarding this issue, following the Japan's pressure it officially states that disputed islands are among issues regulated by the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between Japan and the United States of America. According to Article V of the Treaty, the US and Japan agree that an "armed attack against either Party in the territories under the administration of Japan would be dangerous", and that each Party would act to meet the common danger. On several occasions, in 1996 and then in 2004, State Department clearly noted that Article V of the Mutual Security Treaty applies to the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands. Similar language was used in 2007 and 2008 following the discovery of two Chinese maritime survey ships within the Senkaku's territorial waters<sup>46</sup>.

When in November 2013 tensions escalated after the Chinese Ministry of National Defence suddenly announced an Air Defence Identification Zone (ADIZ) over the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands, the United States Secretary of Defence Chuck Hagel repeated that the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security applies to the disputed islands. The United States has been called to increase its role as a mediator in the escalation,<sup>47</sup> while Junichiro Koizumi, in his September 2013 speech, stated that the United States had an even bigger role – not only to mediate, but to create a new framework of cooperation in the region<sup>48</sup>. In April 2014, American President Obama clearly reaffirmed that the US-Japan Mutual Cooperation and Security Treaty covered the disputed Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands, in the event of an armed attack on the territory of islands<sup>49</sup>.

The manner in which PR China perceived the Treaty and the military alliance between the US and Japan altered over time. During the Cold War, Beijing had a twofold approach to the US-Japan alliance – official disapproval and rejection, on one hand, and informal approval and tolerance, on the other<sup>50</sup>. For China, this alliance was in a way the key to Asian regional security, which was important in terms of its focus on internal economic development. The end of the Cold War brought deterioration in Sino-American relations, and, as noted by James Przystup, China began to scrutinize the US intentions, and actions of the Clinton's administration were seen as an attempt

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44 M. Taylor Fravel, *Explaining Stability in the Senkaku Diaoyu Islands Dispute*, p.148

45 *Ibidem*

46 *Ibidem*

47 Beina Xu, „The US–Japan Security Alliance“, *Council on Foreign Relations*, 3.12.2013. Available at: <http://www.cfr.org/japan/us-japan-security-alliance/p31437>, (accessed 4.1.2014.)

48 *Ibidem*

49 Ankita Panda, Obama: Senkaku covered under US-Japan Security Treaty, updated: 24.04.2014. Available at: <http://thediplomat.com/2014/04/obama-senkaku-covered-under-us-japan-security-treaty/> (accessed: 24.04.2014)

50 Richard L Samuel, *Securing Japan*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London, 2008, p. 152.



to contain or restrict China during that period<sup>51</sup>. Such perception of the US-Japan alliance is still true today, when China realises that the policy goal of the strategic shift of the US focus from the Middle East to the Asia-Pacific region is the containment of China.

On the other hand, global and regional changes, economic and military strengthening of China as well as fear that it may not be able to rely on USA for ever, forced Japan to reform and change the name of the Agency into Ministry of Defence in 2007<sup>52</sup>, and also to start with the plans to reform Japan Self-Defence Force so as to respond contemporary challenges and as Samuels writes, to contribute to the stable functioning of international security with modern military forces<sup>53</sup>. Global and regional competition with China for access to energy sources also impacts territorial disputes and slows down economic growth. Regardless of its power status, Japan is facing with big challenges in internal politics and geopolitical reality<sup>54</sup>. Japanese economy is also facing difficulties and Japan is still recovering from Fukushima nuclear catastrophe aftermath, low birth rate, old population and lack of resources and working forces. Chinese impressive growth and improved standard of its population, and greater role in international politics, all represent challenge and threat for Japan. Regardless of the great contribution which Japan is giving to UN (the second biggest donor), because of Chinese repudiation, Japan cannot become the member of UN Security Council. When talking about security risks, Japan now faces, instead of earlier kidnapping of its citizens, North Korea armed with nuclear rockets<sup>55</sup>. Japan also fears dependence on the Chinese industrial development and economic fall of USA<sup>56</sup>.

New defence plans from Tokyo and Washington are more adjusted. NDPG, National Defence Program Guidelines published in 2013 and QDR, US Quadrennial Defence Review, state short-term and long-term challenges ahead of alliance due to the strengthening and positioning of China. National Defence Programs of both countries are part of the wider national strategy. Japan is currently in the process of "normalization" of its security role and as we stated it aims to realize right to the collective self-defence, at least in some scenarios and in that sense aims to find the method to alleviate three principles with regard to the ban on military equipment export<sup>57</sup>.

Shinichi Kitaoka, deputy chairman of the Advisory Panel, when discussing changes in the interpretation of Constitution banning the right to collective self-defence on the Conference held in Tokyo on the 21st of February 2014, stated five conditions necessary for Japan to accomplish right to self-defence, since Article IX of the Constitution bans use of armed forces in the international disputes. The first condition is when nation or state near Japan is attacked, the second condition is situation where ignoring of

51 James Przystup, "China, Japan, and the United States", in: Michael J. Green and Patrick M. Cronin (ed), *U.S. -Japan Alliance -Past, Present and Future*, Council on Foreign Relations Press New York, 1999, p.35

52 Richard L Samuel, *Securing Japan*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London, 2008, p. 152

53 Ibidem

54 Mitrovic Dragana, „Geopolitics of Energy as Border Issue“ in: Dimitrijevic D., Mitrovic D., Ladjevac I. (ed), *The Meaning of Borders and Borders Issues in the Age of Globalization: Asia and Europe*, Institute of International Politics and Economics, Belgrade, 2012.

55 Richard L Samuel, *Securing Japan*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London, 2008, p. 152.

56 Richard L Samuel, *Securing Japan*, ibid. p. 152.

57 Patrick M Cronin, "Three hidden time bombs in the us japan alliance", *The Diplomat Magazine*, 28.02.2014., available at <http://thediplomat.com/2014/02/three-hidden-time-bombs-in-the-us-japan-alliance/> (accessed 28.02.2014)

the issue would endanger Japanese security. The third condition is when Japanese ally is attacked and requires help from Japan. The fourth condition is when prime minister deliberates all conditions and receives approval from the Diet. And the fifth and final condition requires permit from the third nation in case that Self-Defence Force needs to pass through territorial waters of the third party in order to help ally who is attacked. These five conditions as presented by the panel should become the basic course for the new interpretation of the Article IX of the Japanese Constitution<sup>58</sup>.

It remains to be seen in what direction the alliance of USA and Japan will go. For the time being they have joint interests and seemingly joint values which is enough for the alliance. Vital interests they share in the region are preventing China to overtake greater role in the region. Other joint interests according to the Samuels are to provide naval routes safety and communication in the East and South Chinese Sea, to maintain the role of the leader in the regional and global institutions, maintain the peace on the Korean peninsula, maintain the peace in Taiwan Strait and combating terrorism<sup>59</sup>.

Analysing Japanese security strategy, Samules states that in the future this alliance will be "more fluid" during the next two decades and it will be guided by strategic decisions made in Tokyo and not only in Washington<sup>60</sup>.

#### **4. Regional Balance Power and Asia Pivot**

What became obvious is that China has bigger role in the region and neighbouring countries, usually allies of US, simultaneously tried to maintain good relations with China<sup>61</sup>. Any, more significant, change of power balance between the two countries shall impact change of attitude and relations in the region. China has adopted firm stance in the foreign policy since 2010<sup>62</sup> acting more resolutely in maritime and land disputes with its neighbours. Fast military modernization represents discomfort with US and East Asian neighbours. As opposed to that, Beijing viewed Washington response i.e. Asia Pivot as an attempt of containment of Chinese power<sup>63</sup>. PR China sees Asia Pivot or politics of strategic focus move from the Middle East to Asia Pacific region as an attempt of US to strengthen China containment, thus trying to strengthen military alliances with neighbours of PR China. Asia Pivot thus endangers relations and trust between PR China and Japan hence impacts stability in East Asia. USA, from their side, is trying to preserve its hegemony in new conditions<sup>64</sup>. Besides that, US allies see America return or Asia Pivot as possibility to strengthen its territorial claims vis-a-vis

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58 "Abe Panel Defines Conditions to Exercise Right of Collective Self- Defense", Asahi Shimbun, Asia and Japan Watch, 22.02.2014. Available at: [http://ajw.asahi.com/article/behind\\_news/politics/AJ201402220052](http://ajw.asahi.com/article/behind_news/politics/AJ201402220052) (accessed, 22.02.2014.)

59 Richard L Samuel, *Securing Japan*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London, 2008, p 152

60 Ibidem, p 153

61 Choi Kang, "A Changing East Asia and US Foreign Policy", Council on Foreign Relations, available at : <http://www.cfr.org/south-korea/changing-east-asia-us-foreign-policy/p28385>, (accessed:7.7.2013)

62 China's Foreign Policy Aggressiveness, Australian Centre on China, Canberra University, available na: <http://www.thechinastory.org/yearbooks/yearbook-2012/chapter-1-chinas-foreign-policy-aggressiveness/>(accessed:15.11.2013.)

63 Natalie Liu, „China Sees Threat in US Pivot to Asia“,Voice of America, 7/6/2014/ Available at: <http://www.voanews.com/content/china-sees-threat-in-us-pivot-to-asia/1677768.html> ( accessed:6.07.2014.)

64 D Muni, Vivek Chanda, *US Pivot and Asian Security*, Institute for Defense Studies and Analyses, New Delhi, 2014,p.13

China. „Asia Pivot“ represents for Japan strengthening Japanese and American military relations, justification for greater military spending and change in the Constitution enabling Japanese army to be transformed from Self-defence forces (JSDF - *jietai*) to military forces<sup>65</sup>, and to Japan from economic super power to also become political super power. US is encouraging Japan to greater military investment because majority of funds would go for US produced arms systems<sup>66</sup>, which additionally endangers relations and trust between PR China and Japan thus impacting stability in East Asia.

American strategy Asia Pivot as its key fields of work states: “strengthening bilateral security alliances, strengthening working relations with new powers including China; engagement in the regional multilateral institutions, expanding trade and investments, military presence, development of democracy and human rights”<sup>67</sup>. The Obama’s administration process of rebalancing is the part of wider diplomatic and economic strategy. Pivot Strategy components can be separated in five categories: deployment of military forces (60% of US military forces will be deployed in Asia Pacific by 2020 and 40% in other regions<sup>68</sup>); strengthening and building partnerships with: India and Singapore, redefining traditional links with Japan, Republic of Korea, Australia, Philippines, and Thailand and creating new partnerships with Indonesia, Vietnam and Malaysia<sup>69</sup>; strengthening the roles of USA in the regional mechanisms and preventing domination of China in ASEAN and EAC, expanding economic activity via TPP and not less important ideological component with domination of American values with the highlight on the democracy and human rights<sup>70</sup>.

US administration announced deployment of US forces near China: The US has announced the deployment of military forces closer to China: the Seventh Fleet in the Western Pacific and the Fifth Fleet in southern China; stationing Marines in Australia and the opening of new drone bases in several countries in Southeast Asia. The deployment of the Navy in the Pacific and the Atlantic will change from the ratio of 50:50 to 60:40 by 2020. Number of US military forces will remain 20,000 in Korea, 8,000 in the Air Force and 500 Marines; It is planned to open a military base in Kam wound in Vietnam; four battleships will be anchored in Singapore for repairs for the Fifth and Seventh Fleet; reopening logistics base in Subic Bay and the General Staff of the Special Operations Unit (Joint Special Operation Task Force) in Zamboanga in the Philippines, re-deployment of 9,000 Marines from Okinawa to Guam, Hawaii, the United States and Australia. Remaining 10,000 marines and 400 infantry and navy and 7,700 members of air-force will remain in Okinawa<sup>71</sup>.

65 Shamshad Khan, „Japan’s Response to US Pivot to Asia“, in D Muni, Vivek Chanda (ed), *US Pivot and Asian Security*, Institute for Defense Studies and Analyses, New Delhi, 2014, p.175

66 Eoin McDonnell, *Prepare for the Worst?-The Sino Japanese Dispute in the East China Sea*, Institute for the International and European Affairs, March 2013, Dublin, p. 20

67 Hillary Rodham Clinton, „America’s Pacific Century“, in *Foreign Policy Magazine IIP Digital*, 11.11. 2011., Available at: <http://iipdigital.usembassy.gov/st/english/article/2011/10/20111011161233su0.8861287.html#axzz30Ph1DmRw> (accessed: 12.12.2013.)

68 SD Muni, Vived Cadha (ed.), „Asian Strategic Review 2014-US Pivot and Asian Security“, Institute for Defense Studies and Analyses, New Delhi, 2014., p 21

69 Ibidem, p.21

70 Ibidem p.11

71 PK Guatam, „Military Dimension of US Pivot and its implications“, in SD Muni, Vived Cadha (ed.), *Asian Strategic Review 2014-US Pivot and Asian Security*, Institute for Defense Studies and Analyses, New Delhi, 2014, p.69

The chances that Japan and China will deepen and improve their relation are currently small considering mistrust and disturbed bilateral relations and numerous open issues that are no way to end soon. Amongst them are objections of China to strengthening militaristic and right-wing forces, as Chinese call them, in Japan, ignorance of historic facts from the period of Japanese Imperialism and the II World War (“historical issue”), Japan’s distrusts Chinese growing investments in the military, Chinese economic growth and growing role of China in the region and territorial disputes with regard to the Diaoyu/Senkaku islands in the East Chinese Sea. There are no fears that greater cooperation between Beijing and Tokyo would endanger the US interests.

One of the key issues for USA is how to position towards growing China and how to balance its influence. There are various opinions on that topic. Some think that Chinese growing power is not only a challenge to US but a threat to its regional and global interests<sup>72</sup>. There is also an opinion that alliance between USA and Japan is an important basis for impact and power of USA in the region and for the maintenance of stability in this part of the world hence instigating hostility between China and Japan as a counter balance to Chinese growth would be counterproductive because it would endanger stability in the region. Pursuant to this opinion, the approach acceptable would pertain to strengthening and expanding alliance between Japan and USA and help to Japan to strengthen its capabilities<sup>73</sup>.

## **5. Impact of China and Japan Dispute to USA Interests**

USA is facing certain risks in case of dispute between China and Japan. Shiella Smith states risks for US in case of the conflict. First of all it is risks from arm conflict with China. US military forces are deeply integrated with Japanese defence forces and are providing help in reconnaissance, security and information, and training defence abilities of Japanese army. In case of conflict, according to the research, US will be required to offer logistic support as well as military cooperation. Direct arm conflict with China would disturb vital economic, political and strategic interests of USA. US response to China-Japan conflict would, according to her understanding, impact future alliance between US and Japan as well as other alliances in the Asia Pacific region<sup>74</sup>. This and similar stances are quite common however do not take into consideration all other important aspects and are rather one-sided.

Professor Kato states that PR China and Japan dispute has wider implication to USA<sup>75</sup>. First of all it is about the transfer of power on the global level – the issue of supremacy between current hegemon USA whose power is declining and growing China, where China thorough territorial disputes is testing whether USA has capacity to maintain

72 Sino Japanese Relations - Issues for U.S. Policy” (ed.) Emma Chanlet Avery, Kerry Dumbaugh, Willam H Cooper, in *Congressional Research Service*, p.20. updated:19/12/2008

73 “Sino Japanese Relations - Issues for U.S. Policy” (ed.) Emma Chanlet Avery, Kerry Dumbaugh, Willam H Cooper, in *Congressional Research Service*, p.20. updated:19/12/2008, Available at: <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R40093.pdf> , (accessed 3.10.2013.)

74 Sheilla A Smith, “Sino- Japanese Clash in the East China Sea”, Council on Foreign Relations Press, updated 4/ 2013, available at, <http://www.cfr.org/japan/sino-japanese-clash-east-china-sea/p30504>, (Accessed 10.10. 2013).

75 Akira Kato, The United States: The Hidden Actor in the Senkaku Islands, *Asia Pacific Bulletin*, 2/4/2013/, available at: <http://www.eastwestcenter.org/sites/default/files/private/apb205.pdf>. (Accessed 6.10. 2013.)

the world order. He also emphasises that the fundamental cause of dispute is in the fact that China is not democratic country and states that based on the history lessons and experience, this dispute would be resolved once China becomes the democratic state<sup>76</sup>.

When stating the risks, it is important to state the risk to regional stability. Chinese dispute with Philippines in the South China Sea became important precedent because leaders in the region see Chinese moves as unpredictable. Dispute with Japan will not be decisive only for Japan but also other countries in the region that are adjusting to the China's growth<sup>77</sup>. In that sense, Kevin Rudd<sup>78</sup> thinks that the main task in Asia in the period to follow will be avoiding confrontation between USA and China and preserving strategic stability that will influence regional prosperity. He thinks that "these tasks are difficult to fulfil since both sides will require understanding, peaceful action regardless of provocation and managing domestic and regional stakeholders who have power to separate them"<sup>79</sup>. This process will require deeper and more institutionalized approach based on the strategic framework which accepts reality of competition and importance of cooperation. This new approach would determine practicality through structured plan based on the regular meetings between the leaders of both countries<sup>80</sup>.

We conclude that USA has strategic and economic interest in the region and great influence to China and Japan relations. Military alliance between US and Japan additionally prevents establishing better relations between China and Japan and has important role in the territorial dispute between those two countries. Article V of the Joint Security Agreement between US and Japan commits US to take a stance and sides with its ally Japan. "Asia Pivot" or politics of strategic focus change from the Middle East to the Asia Pacific Region, which China sees as an attempt to strengthen "containment" of China through reinforcement of military alliances with Chinese neighbours endangers relations and trust between China and Japan. USA encourages Japan to increase military investment since most of the funds would be allocated to the purchase of US-made military systems which additionally disturbs relations and trust between China and Japan, hence impacts regional stability. In case of the conflict between the two countries, USA is facing risks and direct armed conflict with China would disrupt vital economic, political and strategic interests of USA.

## **6. Conclusion**

Pursuant to the literature review and synthesis of results, we hereby confirm the hypothesis according to which the relations between China and Japan great deal depend on the interests and influence of USA in the region, whilst the alliance of USA and Japan prevents establishing mutual trust between China and Japan. We showed that China

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76 Ibidem

77 Sheilla A Smith, "Sino- Japanese Clash in the East China Sea", Council on Foreign Relations Press, updated 4/ 2013, available at, <http://www.cfr.org/japan/sino-japanese-clash-east-china-sea/p30504>.(Accessed 10.10. 2013)

78 Kevin Rudd, Former prime minister of Australia

79 Kevin Rudd, „Beyond the Pivot – A New Roadmap for US-China Relations“, *Foreign Affairs*, April 2013, available at: <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/138843/kevin-rudd/beyond-the-pivot>, accessed 3.05.2013

80 Ibidem

sees Asia Pivot as an attempt of containment hence relations between China and Japan are additionally disturbed which reflects to the overall stability in the region of East Asia. From their side USA aims to preserve hegemony under the new circumstances<sup>81</sup>. Besides, USA allies see American return or Asia Pivot as a possibility to determine their territorial claims vis-a-vis China. Asia Pivot for Japan represents strengthening of Japanese-American military relations, justifying military expenditures and change of Constitution which would enable Japanese Army to transform itself from Self-Defence Force (JSDF - jietai) to military force<sup>82</sup>, and changing its status from economic super power to political super power. USA is encouraging Japan to increase military expenses since majority of funds would go for purchasing of weapons and system of US production<sup>83</sup>, which additionally endangers relations and trust between China and Japan thus impacting stability in East Asia.

The current stalemate with Diaoyu/Senkaku islands additionally point at important role of USA in this matter. As we showed, USA are important factor in this dispute and besides being Japan's ally, it also has its own interests in the region thus making this dispute more of trilateral issue. Escalation of dispute in the trilateral relations may represent great challenge for the future cooperation of the three countries and will pose China opposite Japan and USA<sup>84</sup>. Analysing these questions and stating influential authors who tackled these issues (Mitrović, Fravel, Svejn) we conclude that besides national resources in the nearby waters, island issues are also historical and political and very complex. Unresolved issue with regard to Diaoyu islands have historical importance for China as it represents a reminder of Japanese militarism, whilst for Japan it represents strategic point in the chain of islands and critical geopolitical point aiming to balance Chinese fast growth. Maintaining status quo, means prolongation of Japanese jurisdiction which is a part of US wider geo strategy<sup>85</sup>.

In case the crisis in the relations deepens and continues, besides economic damage that both countries shall suffer, dispute shall slow down the process of establishing free trade zone thus impact South Korea too and other Asian countries. Economic damage so far is visible in both countries. We argue that the potential conflict between the second and third economy, potentially involving the first as well, would impact the global economic stability. We also point at potential consequences on the global oil price, since China is the biggest oil importer, and Japan or its allies may block the energy supply routes, hence the whole world would feel the consequences of oil price raise and impact to the global production and chain of supply. Based on the above mentioned, we hereby conclude that there are sufficient economic, domestic, political and regional factors which would lead to conflict between China and Japan. On the other hand there are developed trade and economic relations that would expectantly prevent conflict. In case of conflict, both regional and global stability would be en-

81 D Muni, Vivek Chanda, *US Pivot and Asian Security*, Institute for Defense Studies and Analyses, New Delhi, 2014, p.13

82 Shamshad Khan, "Japan's Response to US Pivot to Asia", in D Muni, Vivek Chanda (ed), *US Pivot and Asian Security*, Institute for Defense Studies and Analyses, New Delhi, 2014, p.175

83 Eoin McDonnell, *Prepare for the Worst?-The Sino Japanese Dispute in the East China Sea*, Institute for the International and European Affairs, March 2013, Dublin, p. 20

84 Ibidem, p. 144

85 Michale D Swaine, "Chinese Views and Commentary on the East Sea Air Defence Identification Zone", Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 3 February 2014, Available at: <http://carnegieendowment.org/2014/02/03/chinese-views-and-commentary-on-east-china-sea-air-defense-identification-zone/h01f> (accessed: 3.02.2014)

dangered. Events that recently happened, additionally worsened relations and made them risky and sensitive to accidental incidents and unwanted military interactions. We conclude that dangerous tension continued due to very strong emotional and political engagement of both sides, contributed also by historical issues and presence of military forces of China, Japan and USA nearby.

Even though we reached the hypothesis confirmation that both Tokyo and Beijing do not want to use force so as to accomplish their interests in the political dispute, we hereby conclude that it is impossible eliminate possibility that one party would decide for that option due to the certain circumstances. In that case, East Chinese Sea Conflict would become regional issue since consequences would be spread to the region and would have global impact to all stricter of international political and economic relations.

By presenting the role of USA in the two countries relations through theoretical analyses, analyses of documents and officials' statements, and synthesis of results, we aimed to modestly contribute to this current topic in the national literature. Cooperation and relations of the two countries are of crucial importance for the region and world thus their conflicts draw attention of both domestic and foreign public. Unresolved historical issues and disputes arising from different understanding of the common historical event represent current topic for many societies, including ours. Currency of the territorial dispute additionally highlights disturbed relation between China and Japan and requires theoretical analyses of domestic authors who wrote on this subject (Mitrovic) and foreign (Fravel), hence analyses of official statements from both countries so as to offer updated paper providing the insight in the current situation. Presenting the impact of USA to China and Japan relations through analyses of economic and strategic impact of USA in the region and military alliance between USA and Japan we hereby confirmed hypothesis on the importance of US role for the relations of China and Japan thus additionally contributed to the analyses of this topic.

The paper uses literature recommended by the Regional Studies of Asia Department of the Faculty of Political Science, thus providing various insights to the topic from the Asian point of view hence impartial stance in processing and analysing hypotheses as presented in the paper.

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