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Master's Thesis of International Cooperation

Japan's Policy on the Taiwan Issue

Restrained Strategy or Choice by Default?

일본의 대만 정책
-절제된 전략인가, 기본 선택인가?

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Japan's Policy on the Taiwan Issue

– Restrained Strategy or Choice by Default? –

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Abstract

Despite being an important player, Japan has long been underestimated in heavily US-China-centric studies on the Taiwan Strait issue. Japan's Taiwan policy is commonly considered subordinate to the US Taiwan policy. This research argues that Japan is not simply following the United States, but that its Taiwan policy and Taiwan Strait strategy encompasses important considerations related to national strategy. A new perspective of alliance management is adopted to explain the evolution of Japan's Taiwan policy. It is found that Japan has been taking advantage of the Taiwan Strait issue to maintain the alliance, achieve normalization, and wield larger influence in Asia and the world.

Keyword : Taiwan issue, Taiwan Strait, Japan, US-Japan alliance, China, National strategy

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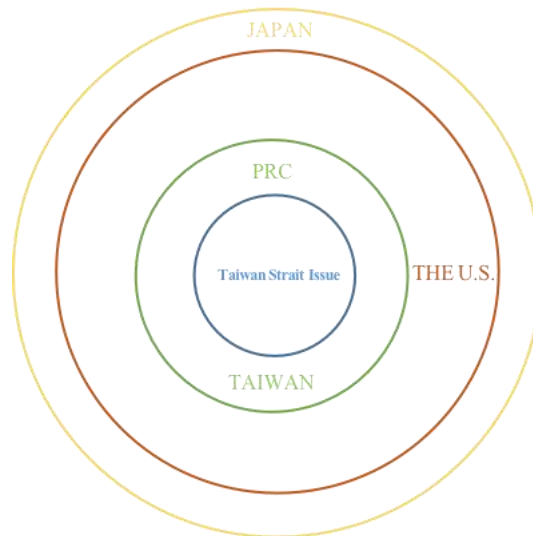
Chapter I. Introduction

1. Research Background

Historically, even though the Taiwan Strait issue may not be a decisive factor in the US-China relations, it is undoubtedly one of the issues that both sides cannot afford to look light upon. Since the entry of the 21st century, the Taiwan Strait issue has become more and more critical and sensitive and may be the very fuse that could lead China and the United States into a potential war. While currently there is no further escalations in the Taiwan strait and there seems to be no imminent threat of an armed conflict, the status quo is based on China's core interests being undermined and the balance is vulnerable to rapid collapse due to changes by any one party. The situation in Taiwan Strait becomes a major concern not only for China and the U.S. but for all countries in the region.

However, in current days, when talking about the Taiwan Strait issue, people naturally see it in the whole picture of the US-China rivalry, yet one of the consequences of focusing too much on the US-China big-power competition is that we often overlook another important player, Japan, in the Taiwan Strait issue. This research would like to focus on Japan's Taiwan policy and practices in the Taiwan Strait because their strategic nature has been seriously underestimated during the past decades. In addition, considering that Japan was once the colonist that ruled Taiwan for five decades, Japan has undoubtedly left a lasting legacy on Taiwan. Moreover, the Taiwan Strait issue has also long been arousing broad attention from academia. China, the United States, Taiwan, and Japan are the four major research subjects on this topic and they have constructed a basic framework or structure where each party interacts and has an impact on one another (Sang, 2019). To be specific, it is commonly received that the core of this interaction structure is centered on the direct stakeholders, mainland China and Taiwan; and the United States, the strongest country among the four and the most influential external party in the Taiwan Strait, plays a significant role in changing the course of the issue and can have an impact on the core constantly, especially on Taiwan; Japan, despite being one of the original causes of the cross-strait separation, now plays only a

marginal role in this structure but still tries to make a difference by engaging and influencing US strategy.



Four Actors in the Taiwan Strait Issue

Probably because most scholars consider the limited role of Japan as a relatively weak power in the development and resolution of the Taiwan Strait issue, the strategy and potential influence of Japan in the contemporary Taiwan Strait issue is often underestimated in the heavily US-China-centric studies. Even in those few studies that focus on Japan's policy towards Taiwan itself put too much attention on the characteristics of different terms of cabinets. In other words, they tend to concentrate on "trait explanations" and lack systematic and long-term studies of post-war Japanese policies and strategies on Taiwan related issues.

There are a few scholars trying to explore Japan's role in the Taiwan Strait issue actually, but Japan is normally seen as a subordinate and participant in the US policy toward Taiwan. Among those opinions, Japanese scholar Soeya Yoshihide argued in his article "Taiwan in Japan's security consideration" that Japan's post-war Taiwan policy was not a result of thoughtful consideration of its security priorities, but rather a default choice. Yoshihide believes that Japan does not have an independent strategy toward Taiwan and cannot play a role in the Taiwan strait issue comparable to that of the other three important players, which is the very point this research is intended to refute.

There is no doubt that post-war Japan was incapable of determining its foreign

policy with full independence and had to follow the US regional strategy to a certain extent, which resulted in an obvious follow-through nature in its Taiwan policy and makes it difficult to analyze Japan's true stance and intention on this issue. But it is worthy of attention that this does not mean that Japan's following behavior on Taiwan-related policy during this period was contradictory to its true position or what it believed to be the wise strategy to maximize its interests.

Based on that, this research is intended to address the imbalance in the study from an angle of "Taiwan in Japan's national Strategy" instead of the US-China factors in Japan's policy adjustments. It will start with the assumption that the knowledge base of Japan's Taiwan policy is built on the strategic perception of Taiwan strait derived from Japan's insight of the surrounding environment and its domestic situations and lessons learned throughout history. By examining the evolution of Japan's strategic perception of Taiwan strait and the historical changes in Japan's Taiwan policy, and also exploring the correlation between the two, the study can contribute to more comprehensive intellectual support for the analysis of Japan's policy toward Taiwan, as well as its function in Japan's broader national strategy.

2. Literature Review

Alliance and alliance management

Realists claim that the pursuit of security and the acquisition, maintenance, and expansion of power are prerequisites or guarantees for the accomplishment of state goals and that power plays a decisive role in international relations, either as the state's ultimate objective or as a key means of achieving national security (Morgenthau, Thompson, 1985). Holding a similar position on the definition of power, offensive realism also conceptualize the international system as inherently anarchic, hence postulating that a nation must act aggressively to protect its core interests, which supports their definition of power in a primarily military terms (Mearsheimer, Alterman, 2001). The realist study of power demonstrates the importance of the power possessed by the state, especially military power, in determining the course of state behavior.

Nevertheless, infinite power expansion is not only risky but also impractical in real international politics. As one nation develops more power, it sparks alarm and encourages neighbors to follow suit, which amounts to a snowball effect and the so-called security dilemma that will be discussed later.

An alliance is formal cooperation between states in response to a common enemy or a common security problem, and it reflects a set of mutual expectations that members have of each other's behavior in contingencies (Walt, 1990). Realist theory suggests that states ally because the expected benefits outweigh the costs to be born. In Morgenthau's realist politics, alliances were an inevitable product of a multi-polar system and also a diplomatic tool for the great powers to acquire more power. Arthur Stein, who focused more on international strategic interaction, also agrees that states form alliances to overcome deficiency of power when measures like arms build-up are no longer the best way to increase power, despite his disagreement with the realist conception of international cooperation and conflict.¹ According to Stein (1990), states join (and sustain) alliances to offset relative weaknesses and increase their security with the power of the coalition. On the one hand, an alliance allows states to fight a power struggle by the added power of an ally, against a powerful rival but not to be put at a disadvantage. On the other hand, it provides a guarantee that the competitor will not draw the same countries into its alliance, that is, to preclude the partner from allying against it so as to reduce the difficulty and new variables to the rivalry.

However, alliances are not formed once and for good. Extensive and sustained bargaining takes place between allied states after the formation of an alliance and it must be carefully and effectively managed for their common goals to be achieved, or for long-term returns (Ireland et al., 2002). Existing literature shed little light on management of security alliances among states but mainly focuses on firms and management capability (Robert et al., 1998, Schreiner et al., 2009, He et al., 2020). Nevertheless, Snyder (1984) proposes that states bargain in an alliance by giving each other enticing portions of the alliance's "payoff", and the two principal aims in this process are, first, to be in the most powerful coalition, and second, to

¹ Although there are many explanations for the formation of alliances, such as constraining and managing their allies, they are set aside as it is more than can be covered in this dissertation.

maximize one's share of the alliance's net benefits. Because those aims cannot be achieved without the alliance, the word "bargain" in this context can be seen as a synonym to "management" to some extent.

Reputation and reliability are two important elements in alliance. Reputation is a judgement used to "predict or explain future behavior",² as described by Mercer (2010), and the reputation of loyalty, which in some case could be substituted by credibility, is usually presented as a prerequisite for interdependence (Snyder, Diesing, 1978). Although reputation-skeptics like Mercer believe states should not worry about reputation costs, it is something that has been raising great attention and concern not only for academia but also policymakers (Snyder, 2007; Miller, 2012; Zhou, 2020). Simply speaking, if reputation is viewed as a form of credit, then consistent acts of support can build up "loyalty credit" with current or potential allies to be recognized in the future. Therefore, an instance of disloyalty not only increases the likelihood of the desertion of an ally but also shapes an image with a negative reputation for disloyalty, undermining the most important logic of alliance - interdependence. It is commonly believed that loyalty and reliability are necessary conditions to maintain an alliance.

Alliance dilemma

In realist theory, a security dilemma is a phenomenon in which security measures taken by a state reduce the security of other states and invite the similar reactions, which poses greater insecurity for the country itself (Jervis, 1978). Because security dilemma emerges from the interaction between states and is based on the assumption that states cannot clearly know each other's true intentions, such spiral of insecurity becomes a difficult predicament for states to escape from.

Similar to the interaction between states in international relations, there is security dilemmas in alliances, which consists of two phrases (Snyder, 1984). The first one, also known as the primary alliance dilemma, occurs before the formation of an alliance, when states decide whether or not to enter into an alliance. The mechanism by which the primary alliance dilemma is formed is similar to the N-person prisoners' dilemma. For two opposing camps, forming an alliance when

² Mercer, J. (2010). Reputation And International Politics. Choice Reviews Online. pp.6.

others do not serve the best interest, and the contrary the worst. While two rival coalitions is the second-worst for all players, it is more preferred than the second-best all-around abstention because both parties are worried about the worst outcome and are uncertain about others' true intentions. The second security dilemma in alliance, or the secondary alliance dilemma, arises after the creation of the alliance. It resembles cooperative/non-cooperative game theory, which is about whether allied states chose to cooperate or defect and it is what mainly to be discussed in the following paragraphs and what is happening now in the US-Japan alliance.

Two issues that are frequently brought up in the secondary alliance dilemma are how much commitment states should make to their allies and how much assistance to provide in certain confrontations with the adversary.³ This raises two concerns, i.e. the fears of abandonment and entrapment (Mandelbaum, 1981). If a state is too committed to its ally's interests, it may be forced into a war in circumstances not so relevant to itself; contrarily, if less committed, it may fear that the ally will withdraw when the necessary assistance is needed. Following that, in the second alliance dilemma there are both good and bad expected consequences, with "abandonment" and "entrapment" being the principle "bads" and less possibility of being caught in the risks of being abandoned or entrapped by the ally being the principle "goods".

Abandonment happens on ground of dependence on allies and asymmetrical dependence between allies can trigger the fear of abandonment. Beyond a merely lexical interpretation, the term "abandonment" in the context of an alliance can take many different forms and does not always signify the end of an alliance or the fall of an ally to an adversarial coalition. In the case of the alliance dilemma between the U.S. and Japan, what the the U.S. and Japan are really concerned about is more like implicit "defection" such as fail to fulfill certain commitments or fail to provide assistance in emergency because it is unlikely that the two countries would align with the biggest threat, China, at the moment. In other words, despite that the alliance remains intact, if both parties knows that the other cannot live up

³ Snyder, G. H. (1984). The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics. *World Politics*, 36(4), pp. 466.

to their expectations the interdependence and credibility that underlie the alliance can be greatly undermined and it is also a source of the risk of “abandonment”.

On the contrary, entrapment is being dragged into conflict by an ally for interests that are not shared or only partially shared between allies. Given that the interests of allies are not identical, states usually weigh the costs and returns when deciding whether to fight for an ally, and entrapment can occur when the state values the maintenance of the alliance more than the costs of involving in a fight to defend the ally's interests. The greater the reliance on the alliance and the stronger the commitment to the ally, the higher the likelihood of entrapment (Snyder, 1984). Moreover, the risk of abandonment and the risk of entrapment are somehow antagonistic, meaning that reducing one may increase the other. As a result, to resolve the problem of alliance security dilemma, states need a choice of strategy, where trade-off between the costs of the two scenarios are carefully taken in to account.

With the development of the traditional concept of the security dilemma in alliance, its connotations have also been explored in greater depth. The “adversary dilemma” was introduced by Snyder in 1981. According to his observations, when states consider alliance strategy, they also take complementary strategy in the adversary game into account. Similar to the alliance dilemma, there are two types of adversary game as well, before and after the alliance formation respectively, and interaction between alliance game and the adversary games can leave a significant impact on allies' choice in an alliance dilemma. To sum up, when an ally tries to enhance its alliance commitments to reduce the risk of abandonment, it adds to the security dilemma with its adversary. Conversely, if one party weakens alliance commitments to reduce the risk of entrapment, it may reduce tensions with the adversary, but it may also provide an incentive for the adversary to make further exploitation.

Hedging

Hedging, as a finance term, means limiting risk exposures in financial assets. The basic idea of hedging is initially to offset investment losses in one area with investment gains in the other, transforming and offsetting the risk of investment

losses and thereby reducing investment uncertainty (Bodie, Merton, 2002). The entry of the concept of hedging into the study of international relations has been divided into two main paths. One is a stricter definition of hedging, which emphasizes both balancing and bandwagoing and some scholars consider the limitation of the areas involved in a hedging strategic choice (Schweller, 1999; Art, 2004; Lim & Cooper, 2015). Another group of scholars advocates for a more flexible and open use of the concept of hedging, attempting to break out of the binary spectrum of balancing and bandwagoing to focus on the plurality of hedging instruments (Goh, 2006; Kuik, 2008; Wang, 2018).

The political dimension of risk was first introduced by Slovic (1987), whose work on the perception of risk contributed to risk analysis and policy-making. Yates (1992) adds a definitional perspective to the concept of risk by suggesting that “risk” consists of three basic elements: loss, significance and uncertainty. Miller (1977) also seeks relations between risk, uncertainty and decision-making in investment where investors assumed to pursue maximum value of investments have different estimates of expected returns. It was found that industries that have widest divergence of estimates may witness over-investment. Risk aversion is the propensity to choose outcomes with low uncertainty over those with high uncertainty—even when the returns of the latter is higher (Werner, Jan, 2008). It explains why people accept a more predictable but potentially less rewarding situation over a highly unpredictable but potentially more rewarding one. Simply speaking, risk aversion focuses more on decreasing losses or the chances of loss rather than increasing payoff. Interest objectives is another essential part in hedging because risking avoiding behavior is driven by security needs. Just like any other security strategy, its most fundamental or ultimate goal is to achieve and secure the national interests, for which every state will spare no effort to meet the end.

Furthermore, in a realist perspective, state responses to threats by balancing and bandwagoing as well as other means that fall between the binary spectrum, which includes soft balancing, hard balancing, indirect balancing, institutional balancing, engagement, limited engagement and economic pragmatism, etc. But the reality is that states do not resort to balancing or bandwagoing or any one single measure only, but prefers to use a complex combination of strategies. Generally, depending

on the external environment and internal motivations, states will adopt different combinations of instruments with offsetting effects, taking into account the risks and potential returns.

Japan is a common research subject on hedging strategy because it is located in the most complicated venue of power and institute rivalry and has close entanglements with China and the United States, two big powers in the current world. Heginbotham and Samuels (2002) identify Japan's security strategy as one of "double hedging". On the one hand, Japan formed an alliance with the United States and has been relying on the U.S. against security threats in the region. On the other hand, it opens doors to other potential partners, even those who might be identified by the U.S. as threats, for economic benefits. Yasuhiro Matsuda (2012) also argues that the perception of China as a threat has directed Japan to adopt an approach of engagement and hedging. While strengthening alliance with the United States and making China compliant to "rules", it is equally important for Japan to attract cooperation of China. Although Matsuda admits that Japan has not yet developed a hedging strategy on the national strategy level, he calls for a multilayered, multilateral framework beyond political perspective, which is a prototype for the idea of multidimensional hedging in later sections.

With reference to the definition of the concept and connotation of hedging by the above-mentioned scholars, multidimensional hedging in this research will be defined as a strategy that includes risk aversion, interest objectives, and multiple instruments with certain offsetting effects in different arenas.

3. Methodology

This research will mainly take a qualitative approach to study Japan and its roles in the future course of the Taiwan Strait Issue based on a content analysis of the materials and a diagnosis and interpretation of events and incidents. Specifically, a comparative study approach will be adopted to distinguish between different Japanese administrations and the policies and main characteristics of Japan and the U.S toward Taiwan after World War II, with a special focus on "three historical

periods”, which are generally considered to be influenced by changes in US Taiwan policy and its Asia-Pacific strategy. For a clearer distinction, this study draws on Sang (2019), Liff (2022), and Jiang(2017) for the delineation of the historical phases of Japan’s Taiwan policy. The three phases are set as 1952-1972; 1972-1992; 1992-2022.

The qualitative textual materials used in this thesis include original text of treaties, historical documents, government statements, meeting minutes, news reports, etc. Audio or visual materials was also used to reduce the partial interpretation of a particular event or incident. Furthermore, this study continues to explore the underlying reasons for the changes in Japan’s policy toward Taiwan from a strategic view, that is, a new alliance management perspective, as well as the main manifestations and characteristics of Japan’s Taiwan policy at the current stage in the new international context, including the crisis management mechanism of the US-Japan alliance in the Taiwan Strait and Japan’s role. I argue that Japan’s practice in the Taiwan Strait and Taiwan related policy are not a default choice under US leadership, but a sophisticated and ambitious strategy to achieve risk avoidance and return maximization under the strategic framework set by the United State. This study will also explain how Japan will influence and rationally make use of the Taiwan Strait issue to achieve its national interests in terms of both its ability and willingness to do so.

The main body of this research will be divided into the following five parts. The first part will focus on Taiwan in Japan’s strategic considerations, illustrating Taiwan’s strategic importance to Japan and the value Japan places on the Taiwan Strait from historical and geopolitical perspectives, as well as considering the uncertainty of the Taiwan Strait in the new international environment and the high-risk perceptions of Japan, respectively. The second part will review the evolution of Japan’s Taiwan-related policies and practices after World War II in three historical phases, each with a more distinct dominant strategy. The third part of this study will adopt a new approach by analyzing the reasons for Japan’s change in Taiwan policy after the second World War from the perspective of alliance management, emphasizing Japan’s autonomy in it. Specifically, it will use alliance theory to explain how Japan used the Taiwan issue to maintain its alliance with the

United States, change its disadvantaged position in the alliance, and resolve the alliance dilemma. In the fourth part, Japan's strategy regarding Taiwan in the face of intensified US-China rivalry and new alliance dilemmas in the new era will be examined, including Japan's contribution to, and its role in, the US-Japan crisis management mechanism in the Taiwan Strait, as well as the main strategic options adopted in response to the new threat, which I define as multidimensional hedging. The final part is a conclusion to this research.

Chapter II. Taiwan in Japan's Strategic Consideration

1. The Importance of Taiwan to Japan: A Historical & Geopolitical Perspective

When people talk about the importance of Taiwan, geopolitics is a prerequisite on which a consensus has been reached among scholars in the research on Taiwan (Emmers, 2009; Lim, 2009; Ye, 2018; Lasater, 2021). Geographically, Taiwan is not only of vital strategic importance to Asian countries like China and Japan, but for the United States, and it is also a focal point for disputes arising from the three countries' opposing strategic goals. This is, somehow, the fundamental reason for China's uncompromising defense of sovereignty and territorial integrity, and equally the underlying cause of the constant intervention from the U.S. and Japan in the Taiwan issue.

Taiwan's exceptional geographic location, which is strongly characterized by its strategic position and military importance, may be explained by one of two widely accepted geopolitical theories. According to Mahan, the proponent of the "Marine Power Theory", marine power is essential to a nation's growth, wealth, and security. Any country that can rule the oceans and sea lanes can control the exchange of goods throughout the world and, as therefore govern the world (Mahan, Alfred Thayer, 1890). As an important island in the Western Pacific Ocean, Taiwan is a bastion for maritime powers as it controls important strategic places such as the Taiwan Strait and the Bashi Channel and is one of the most important hubs for maritime traffic connecting Southeast and Northeast Asia, the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean. Moreover, the location and shape of Taiwan and the Taiwan Strait has given it an even more sophisticated strategic significance. Halford John Mackinder, a pioneer of the Land Power Theory, advanced his Heartland Theory (Mackinder, 1904) in which he emphasized the significance of the "inner crescent" to either maritime powers or land powers. It was said that land powers have to align themselves with the powers of the "inner crescent" so as to

tilt the balance of power between land and sea in favor of land power, to win world hegemony. In a similar vein, sea powers are also supposed to need the help of the “inner crescent” nations in order to gain an edge over land powers. Situated at the center of an island chain in the western Pacific Ocean, Taiwan and the Taiwan Strait fit into the definition of the “inner crescent”, a strategic area where maritime and land powers are contested. More evidence can be found in what politicians, strategists, and geographers commented on Taiwan. US general Douglas MacArthur once made an analogy of Taiwan as the “unsinkable aircraft carrier”⁴ and there is countless references to Taiwan as a “pivot” in the Pacific in coverage and commentary.

The Japanese government had realized the value of Taiwan to Japan more than a hundred years ago when it first formulated an ambitious vision of the world. Historically, Japan has centered its foreign policy on geographically proximate, resource-rich, and strategically significant neighbors, which could date back to the formation of Japan’s national strategy after the Meiji Restoration. In a document submitted to the foreign minister in 1891 by Yamagata Aritomo, the prime minister of Japan at that time, the term “Line of Interest”⁵ succinctly summarized the importance of the neighboring countries and underscored that in order to maintain national independence, it was not enough to guard the sovereignty line, but that constant attention must be paid to the defense of the neighboring areas with which Japan had close ties “to ensure that they become [Japan’s] sphere of influence”.⁶

This strategic guideline set the tone for Japan’s expansionist foreign policy for the next century. Soon after the establishment of the Meiji regime, the Japanese government embarked on a systematic process of foreign expansion. From the Kuril Islands, the Korea Peninsula, to China and the Ryukyu Islands, Japan employed a variety of methods, both diplomatically and militarily, to bring under its control those countries and regions in its immediate vicinity that were considered to be important to its security and had the potential to expand its sphere

⁴ National Affairs: AN UNSINKABLE AIRCRAFT CARRIER - TIME. (1950, September 4). Retrieved February 5, 2023, from <https://web.archive.org/web/20091125150338/http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,856644,00.html>

⁵ “Line of Interest” means “the area closely related to the security of our sovereignty line”.

⁶ 林茂、辻清明:《日本内閣史录》1,第一法规出版社1981年版,第149页。

of influence.

Taiwan has a unique significance in this context. On the one hand, Taiwan was part of China, which up to that time had been the country with the greatest international influence in Asia and a long-standing model to Japan, and the conquest of China had been a constant ambition of Japan since the Meiji era. On the other hand, situated across the sea from mainland China and bordering the Ryukyu Islands to the northeast, Taiwan provided the best entry point for Japan to divide and conquer China. In 1872, Japan unilaterally declared the abolition of the Ryukyu Kingdom and the establishment of Ryukyu Prefecture, and only a year later, the Japanese government sent an envoy to the Qing Empire to negotiate the Taiwan issue, denouncing the Qing government for the murder of Ryukyu natives by the indigenous inhabitants of Taiwan. When the Qing official suggested that the Ryukyu islanders were not Japanese nationals, the Japanese envoy retorted by claiming: “Now that Japan had the great Restoration, there should be no one who is not one of its people... What is the harm in calling the Ryukyu people ours? I would like to ask your officials what you are going to do with the natives who have committed atrocities.”⁷

The intention of Japan’s request was to force the Qing government to acknowledge its possession of the Ryukyus and to create a pretext for its further intervention in Taiwan. In April 1874, Japan set up the “Taiwan Indigenous Affairs Bureau” together with the “Outline of the Treatment of Indigenous People in Taiwan”. The Outline stated that “the indigenous tribes of Taiwan are beyond the reach of the Qing government and thus It is the duty of the Japanese Government to take revenge for the murder of our people, the Ryukyu people”. It also took the opportunity to send six people to Taiwan to “reconnoiter the terrain”.⁸ In May 1874, Japan launched its first war against Taiwan, which ended in failure due to a lack of preparation and strong opposition from the Qing Empire. 20 years later, Japan started the Sino-Japanese War, which led to the Qing government ceding

⁷ 日本外务省：《日本外交年表并主要文书，1840～1945》上册，东京，原书房，1955年，第53页，translated by the author.

⁸ 日本外务省：《日本外交年表并主要文书，1840～1945》下册，东京，原书房，1955年，第54页，translated by the author.

Taiwan and a protracted and traumatic colonial history. During the fifty years when Taiwan was a Japanese colony, the Japanese colonial government erected an authoritarian governorship along with a strict police network that kept the Taiwanese population and their economic lifelines under control. The so-called “imperialization campaign[The Kominka Movement]”, which forbade the use of the Chinese language, the performance of Chinese opera, and any other Chinese-related cultural activities, was an attempt by the Japanese to integrate Taiwan for effective control of its ideologies. The Taiwanese were also forced to adopt Japanese names so as to be Japanese “Komin[皇民]”

By the time of the 1930s, Japan had built up a “Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere” that was well suited to securing its political and economic interests in East Asia with its superior military power and the wealth and resources it had captured in China. Taiwan, the most geographically and strategically crucial island in Japan’s southern route, not only provided markets and resources but also played an irreplaceable role in defense as Japan’s most important military base in the Pacific. When World War II closed with Japan’s defeat, Japan declared its unconditional surrender by signing the Cairo Declaration and accepting the Potsdam Proclamation’s Armistice, formally handing over sovereignty over Taiwan and the Pescadores. Yet until now, the importance of Taiwan to Japan remains unchanged, as reflected in the close economic ties between Japan and Taiwan that remain a legacy of Japanese rule in Taiwan. During its 50-year colonial history, Taiwan developed a typically exploitative colonial economy, specializing in the production of sugar, salt, rice, palm oil, sulfur, timber, and other war and subsistence resources for Japan. Even after its freedom, Taiwan’s economic development never managed to fully break away from the colonial economy. Instead, it adapted to a dependent economic development model due to the lingering Japanese effects and reconnection of the Japanese economic and political forces to the island, the most typical manifestation of which was the extensive network of Japanese Original Equipment Manufacturing (OEM) industries in Taiwan. For example, until 1990s, more than 60% of Taiwan’s IT industry is under OEM production by Japanese-owned enterprises, which rely heavily on imports from Japan for their core technologies and key components.

Observing the process of Taiwan's economic development also highlights the strong economic linkages that exist between Japan and Taiwan. Based on the major industries and industrial strategies that drove Taiwan's economic development from 1950s to the beginning of the 21st century, scholars would generally classify Taiwan's economic development stages as:

- I. (1951-1960) The first import substitution period
- II. (1961-1970) The period of export expansion
- III. (1971-1978) The second import substitution period
- IV. (1979-2000) A period of accelerated economic upgrading and development of strategic industries

All four of these periods saw the penetration of Japanese business and money in Taiwan from the perspective of foreign financial support and investment. From the second period onward, the majority of the foreign corporations in Taiwan's export manufacturing zones and high-technology industrial zones were Japanese corporations, with the exception of the period prior to the 1960s, when economic support and investment primarily came from the United States. Even the key industries of clothing, food, housing, and transport, which were closely associated with the national economy during the industrialization period, were also heavily invested in by Japanese businesses. This, on the one hand, gave Taiwan a good opportunity to recover quickly after the war, and on the other hand, made Taiwan the perfect target for Japan to divide up, substitute, and even transfer secondary industries and technologies, and gradually consolidated Taiwan-Japan political and economic relations.

Existing records and studies have also derived conclusions that can verify the above arguments. Firstly, in terms of bilateral commerce, Japan has been Taiwan's biggest importer since the 1960s, and there has been a constant deficit that has tended to widen. Such a trade relationship reflects the special economic relations between Japan and Taiwan, which, as Professor Liu Jinqing of the Tokyo University of Economics suggested, is a "legacy of colonial economic relations"⁹.

⁹ In an interview between Chinese economics writer Chen Yingzhen and Liu Jinqing entitled "The False and Real Face of Taiwan's Economic Development", Liu acknowledges Taiwan's rapid growth as a "NIEs" (Newly Industrialised Economy), but argues that "NIEs" does not mean that Taiwan is free from its dependence on the U.S. and Japan, but that it has always been frontier, or "neo-colonial".

Secondly, transnational capital and technology investment, mainly from Japan and the United States, was an essential push for Taiwan's rapid economic development. But foreign trade and technology transfer under the control of transnational corporations also has plunged Taiwan's economy into such a high dependence on capital and technology imports that it has hindered the accumulation of indigenous capital and technology (Foo, etc., 2022), which become an obstacle to Taiwan's increased economic autonomy and industrial upgrading. Unlike South Korea, with which it shares a similar colonial history, Taiwan's industry is dominated by Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs), which partly reflects the failure of its indigenous capitalist accumulation. As a consequence, Taiwan has struggled to establish self-sufficiency in developing the materials and manufacturing equipment sectors to support its larger semiconductor industry in the same manner as South Korea did (Chen, Sewell, 1996). Last but not least, the complementary economic relations between Taiwan and Japan directly reinforce their dependency on each other. And history records that when political and economic conflicts and rivalries between Japan and its neighbors, especially with mainland China, intensify, the greater the economic dependence of Taiwan and Japan, and the closer the relationship between the two economies.

Since the beginning of the 21st century, economic and trade exchanges between Japan and Taiwan have been more vibrant and the scale continues to expand. In 2001, the bilateral trade between Japan and Taiwan totaled approximately 4,665 billion yen, and in 2022 the figure has reached 11,955 billion yen, almost tripled (Trade Statistic of Japan, Ministry of Finance, 2001&2022). As for 2022, Taiwan is Japan's NO.4 trading partner, and Japan is also one of Taiwan's most important sources of investment and imports. The economic cooperation between Taiwan and Japan is most prominent in the communication and semiconductor sector, where Taiwan needs to import significant quantities of integrated circuits, semiconductor machinery, and electronic wafers from Japan but also processes semiconductors for the electronics industry in Japan. Taiwan's significance to Japan has become even more self-evident with the strategic upgrading of the semiconductor digital industry and electronic chips in the US-Japan alliance blueprint. Furthermore, Taiwan is keen to have further economic ties with Japan. In recent years, while Japan has

continued to expand its direct investment in Taiwan, capital from within the island also has begun to flow to Japan. There has been a trend of Taiwanese companies purchasing parts of Japanese companies' businesses or even promoting mergers and acquisitions to accelerate bilateral economic integration.¹⁰ Chairman of the Taiwan Institute of Japanese Studies, Li Shih-hui, mentioned at a symposium that Taiwan hopes to advance in the Comprehensive Partnership for Progress in the Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) in 2023. And even if Taiwan cannot join the CPTPP, it hopes to sign an Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with Japan, to which he commented that "Taiwan-Japan economic and trade relations will change from transactional cooperation to strategic cooperation."¹¹

Owing to Taiwan's special strategic position, its close political and economic ties with Japan and their complex historical sentiments, in conjunction with Japan's geopolitical considerations of competing with China for regional leadership, mainstream Japanese society is more optimistic about maintaining the separation of the Taiwan Strait and has developed the following four representative views on the Taiwan strait issue:

- a) "Unresolved Status of Taiwan"
- b) "Taiwan as Japan's Lifeline"
- c) "Peaceful Independence of Taiwan"
- d) "Alliance of Marine States"

Supporters of the "Uncertain Status of Taiwan" advocates that the San Francisco Peace Treaty and contents related to Taiwan should be taken as the legal basis for identifying the sovereignty of Taiwan, which declared the renouncement of Japan's dominance over Taiwan, but did not specify the ownership. It denied from a juridical perspective that Taiwan is part of China and is one of the statements on Taiwan's independence supported by the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) and recently strongly advocated in Taiwan. Shoichi Kuriyama, former Japanese Ambassador to the United States and Japanese Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs, was the first to argue that a distinction should be made between "legal judgments"

¹⁰ Major M&A cases include: Sumitomo Metal Corporation (2003); NEC's semiconductor chip packaging plant in Takabatake(2004); investment companies of Shinsei Bank and Itochu Corporation(2004).

¹¹ 李世晖：政经不再分离 台日经贸转战略合作。(2022, December 16). 中国评论新闻. Retrieved February 13, 2023, from <http://www.crntt.com/>

and “political judgments” on the issue of Taiwan’s belonging. He claimed that “accepting” the People’s Republic of China’s position that Taiwan is an integral part of its territory would mean making an arbitrary determination of Taiwan’s belonging and denying the San Francisco Treaty, and that Japan is not legally entitled to comment on the question of Taiwan’s belonging as a Treaty signatory.

The majority of the Lifeline theory’s supporters are usually geopolitical realists. An avid advocate of this idea was Hiramatsu Shigeo, a former director of the Military Research Institute of Japan and a professor at Kyorin University. He warned that if Taiwan and the mainland ever unite, China will be able to control key sea routes for Japan, such as the Taiwan Strait and the Bashi Channel, hence strangling Japan’s maritime lifeline. Those who share such opinions are often sensitive to China’s maritime activities and supportive of providing military assistance to Taiwan in case of any contingency occurring in the Taiwan strait.

In contrast to gaining independence by force, advocates of peaceful independence for Taiwan seek a de facto independence that is based on the recognition of the international community. Proponents of this ideology contend that Taiwan will obtain worldwide recognition if it fulfills its duties and commitments to the international community. Uchida Katsuhisa, the former director of the Exchange Association’s office in Taipei, believes that the world will eventually accept Taiwan’s achievements and power as a “state” and recognize Taiwan’s “peaceful independence”. Based on similar arguments, adherents of the peaceful independence are often enthusiastic about supporting Taiwan’s “international space”. Some even proposed that China should take the initiative to nominate Taiwan for membership of the United Nations.

The fourth idea intends to link Japan and Taiwan closely through an alliance because of their similar geographical characteristics and external situations. Its core arguments come from Heita Kawakatsu’s <Theory of Maritime Federalism(海洋連邦論, 2001)>. According to Heita Kawakatsu, a former professor at Waseda University and the Kyoto International Centre for Japanese Cultural Studies, it is crucial to establish a Japan-led Maritime Consortium in Asia that includes Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Southeast Asian countries in order to confront an expanding

China. Together with the other three viewpoints, these ideas on Taiwan and the status of the Taiwan Strait are vigorously debated in both political and public opinion circles in Japan, which exemplifies Taiwan's value to Japan from a different angle.

2. Uncertainty in the Taiwan Strait and Japan's High Risk Perceptions due to Increased US-China Rivalry

As China and the United States normalize and intensify big-power rivalry in the Asia-Pacific region, it is becoming increasingly obvious that the United States is stepping up its use of the "Taiwan card" to stifle China's growth and reunification, which sparked more radical resistance in China. This has created a new dynamic of higher intensity and wider impact in the US-China conflict in the area, particularly in the Taiwan Strait, with the expanded scope and scale of involvement in China's attempts to resolve the Taiwan problem serving as a concrete representation. Due to this heightened competitiveness, there also have been some changes in the relationship between the U.S. and its allies in the Asia-Pacific area. Similar to what was put forward by Van Jackson, uncertainty in the process of power transfer between the U.S. and China, the intentions and political trust of states in a multi-polar system, and the complex network of relationships between Asian states have contributed to the overall creation of hedging strategies in Asia (Jackson, 2014). Caught between the two great powers, Asia-Pacific countries have been having a hard time simply balancing or bandwagoing but have had to hedge or insure against the high level of uncertainty in the Taiwan Strait created by the two countries in order to prevent collateral losses or maximize gains, and their Taiwan Strait policies have been subject to greater pressure than before.

Recent actions and developments in the Taiwan Strait are a constant reminder of the complexity and urgency of the Taiwan Strait Issue. Over the past year, we have seen increasingly frequent US warships crossing the Taiwan Strait. The US-Japan Security Consultative Committee ("2+2") Meeting has uncharacteristically discussed the Taiwan issue in March 2021. After the meeting, a joint statement was

issued specifically emphasizing the “importance of peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait”,¹² which was commonly taken by the Japanese media as an implication that the meeting addressed the issue of joint defense of Taiwan by Japan and the United States in case of armed conflict in the Taiwan Strait. The situation in the Taiwan Strait was discussed several times in other official meetings as well. On the same day as the US-Japan 2+2 meeting, Japan’s Defense Secretary Nobuo Kishi, who has always held a fairly vigilant attitude toward the situation in the Taiwan Strait and China’s maritime behaviors, and US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin had a bilateral meeting in which both sides agreed to cooperate closely in unexpected incidents in the Taiwan Strait. In addition, Japan also made similar references to the Taiwan Strait in the joint statement or announcement at the following G7 summit and NATO summit. Meanwhile, the U.S. continued and enlarged its selling of high-profile military weapons to Taiwan and further escalated US-Taiwan military cooperation through a memorandum of understanding to establish a Coast Guard Working Group (CGWG). The U.S. also has reiterated its support for Taiwan’s participation in international organizations, such as WHO and WHA, relaxed restrictions on US-Taiwan official contacts, and organized “unofficial delegations” to visit Taipei.

The outbreak of the Russo-Ukrainian War played as a siren to the U.S. and Japan to some extent, reinforcing their sensitivity and alertness to the situation in the Taiwan Strait. After the Ukraine crisis, a US delegation signaled American support for Taiwan on the front line of the battle for democracy shortly after the outbreak of crisis¹³ and the president Biden even drew a parallel between Taiwan and Ukraine and pledged to use military force if Taiwan came under assault from China, which ignited strong anger from the latter.¹⁴ These actions indicate that the Biden administration has made comprehensive adjustments to its policy toward Taiwan

¹²U.S.-Japan Joint Press Statement - United States Department of State. (2021, March 16). United States Department of State. Retrieved January 6, 2023, from <https://www.state.gov/u-s-japan-joint-press-statement/>

¹³U.S.-Japan Joint Press Statement - United States Department of State. (2021, March 16). United States Department of State. Retrieved January 6, 2023, from <https://www.state.gov/u-s-japan-joint-press-statement/>

¹³ McCarthy, A. E. B. S. C. A. W. C. (2022, March 2). US delegation signals Taiwan defense support under shadow of Russia’s Ukraine invasion., CNN. Retrieved January 28, 2023, from <https://edition.cnn.com/2022/03/02/asia/us-delegation-taiwan-ukraine-intl-hnk/index.html>

¹⁴ Wong, B. T. (2022, May 23). Biden vows to defend Taiwan in apparent US policy shift. BBC News. Retrieved January 28, 2023, from <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-61548531>

and is attempting to upgrade its relations with Taiwan, especially diplomatic and military relations.

A similar view is shared in Japan. Takako Hikotani, a professor at Gakushuin University International Center wrote that “the war in Ukraine has led to the realization that they cannot take their own security for granted.”¹⁵ Indeed, the Japanese government never will do, instead it started to include the the situations in the Taiwan Strait and even the Taiwan Issue in its official files. There is already a consensus in Japan that there are increasing signs that mainland China is accelerating its military activities in the Taiwan Strait and making increasing deterrent moves, so the likelihood of a military crisis breaking out in the Taiwan Strait is higher than it has been in decades. In July 2021, Japan’s Defence White Paper 2021 for the first time separates Taiwan from the US-China relationship section and discusses it in parallel. It also uses sentences like “stabilizing the situation surrounding Taiwan is important for Japan’s security and the stability of the international community”¹⁶, with a major concern for China’s ambition toward Taiwan and any unilateral change of the status quo. Although Japan did not directly write that it would support Taiwan militarily, by mentioning the United States’ clear stance of military support for Taiwan, linking its own security to Taiwan, and stressing that Japan should pay close attention to the situation in the Taiwan Strait with “a sense of crisis more than ever before”, Japan’s position on the matter of military support for Taiwan was made clear: in front of the risk of China’s military take-over of Taiwan, Japan and the U.S. need to send deterrent and warning signals at the prospect of such a “crisis”.

In addition to the military and geopolitical perspectives that the past administrations of the United States and its allies had seriously considered, there is a critical economic or strategic concern: Taiwan’s importance in the semiconductor supply chain. In an article titled “Taiwan Chip Industry Emerges as Battlefield in U.S.-China Showdown” by Reuters in 2021, it was reported in detail that both China and the United States are now trying to get rid of their dependence on Taiwan’s chip industry. According to Reuters, the US government has approved

¹⁵ How Japan Can Defend Taiwan. (2022, May 23). Retrieved January 28, 2023, from <https://www.tokyoreview.net/2022/05/how-japan-can-defend-taiwan/>

¹⁶ Defense of Japan 2021

the investment of billions of dollars to rebuild the chip manufacturing industry in the country and has successfully persuaded TSMC to build a factory in the United States. The CHIPS and Science Act, which aims to promote domestic research and production of semiconductors and other technologies such as artificial intelligence, advanced manufacturing, and clean energy, was formally signed by US President Biden on August 9, 2022. And in an effort to establish a chip alliance to check on mainland China in pertinent sectors, the United States proposed early in March that Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan join the “CHIP 4”¹⁷.

On the other side of the ocean, the Chinese government is also investing heavily to accelerate the pace of upgrading the chip industry, as the mainland’s chip industry is lagging behind Taiwan in many key areas for about 10 years, and it is especially important to catch up with Taiwan before the reunification.¹⁸ Senior US officials have also publicly stated on several occasions that the United States is seeking to deepen its economic partnership with Taiwan in areas such as high technology, semiconductors, and supply chains, all of which increase Taiwan’s strategic value and further exacerbate the conflict between China and the United States. Likewise, Japan is now under the same pressure due to its status as a US ally and a semiconductor equipment manufacturing giant. As the world’s second-largest exporter of semiconductors besides the United States, Japan contributes approximately 37% of the world’s semiconductor equipment. Among the global top 15 semiconductor equipment manufacturers in 2021, seven are from Japan¹⁹, and most of these seven Japanese manufacturers export to semiconductor companies in mainland China, which is currently the world’s largest semiconductor equipment market. Amidst the prologue of the US-China chip competition, the Japanese semiconductor industry is facing a new crisis caused by the “silicon curtain”, a word constantly used by media.

The uncertainty in the Taiwan Strait brought about by the intensifying the US-China rivalry and the high degree of externalization of the Taiwan issue can also be

¹⁷ The “Chip 4” initiative is part of a US strategy to strengthen its access to vital chips and restructuring the global chip chain with Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan.

¹⁸ Taiwan chip industry emerges as battlefield in U.S.-China showdown. (2021, December 27). Reuters. Retrieved January 29, 2023, from <https://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/taiwan-china-chips/>

¹⁹ They are Tokyo Electron, Advantest, Screen, Hitachi Higt-Tech, DISCO, Nikon, Kokusai Electric.

corroborated by the attitude of the Chinese side. The Taiwan issue is a matter of Chinese sovereignty and territorial integrity, which constitute China's core interests, and has been a central issue of close concern to every and each Chinese leader. As the US-China rivalry unfolds on all fronts, China is gradually feeling the growing significance of the Taiwan issue in the US-China relationship and put more concern to the Taiwan Strait than ever before. In a discussion at the 2022 Global Times Annual Conference on "Where is the next point of conflict and de-escalation in US-China relations," Yang Yi, former director of the Institute of Strategic Studies at the National Defense University, identified the Taiwan issue as the "most dangerous point of conflict" between the United States and China.²⁰ Professor Shi from Renmin University of China, analyzed that the current US posture toward China has not changed and even hardened, while China's posture remains unchanged, so it is expected that US-China relations as a whole will fluctuate downward in the future.²¹

Japan is a very typical example of a "victim" in the uncertainty in the Taiwan Strait. On the one hand, as the most important ally of the United States in Asia, Japan needs to cooperate with the U.S. to "contain China with Taiwan" in accordance with the traditional US-led model. However, the rising power and influence of China in Asia have put Japan, which is closely linked to China in economic and geopolitical terms, in a position to intervene more cautiously in the Taiwan Strait to avoid inviting trouble. Japan's sense of insecurity has also been exacerbated by the occasional aggressive US actions in the Taiwan Strait and the tough position taken by the Chinese government to fulfill reunification. The growing gap in the combined power of the U.S. and Japan, coupled with the difference in geographic location from China, has led to a discrepancy in the perception of security threats and risks in the Taiwan Strait between Japan and the United States, with Japan clearly having a higher risk coefficient during an unexpected event in the Taiwan Strait than the latter.

As mentioned earlier, Japan has long referred to Taiwan as its "lifeline", meaning

²⁰ 杨毅少将环球时报年会发言：中美最危险的冲突点在台海。(2021, December 11). Huanqiu. Retrieved January 29, 2022, from <https://world.huanqiu.com/article/45wNLQT1qZL>

²¹ 时殷弘：美在台湾问题上变本加厉，预计中美关系未来整体会向下波动。(2021, December 11). Huanqiu. Retrieved January 29, 2022, from <https://world.huanqiu.com/article/45wN7cbAFt9>

that Taiwan is seen not only as an important barrier to Japan's maritime security but also as a vital source and guarantee of Japan's economic interests. For Japan, the implementation of China's Maritime Police Law on 1 February 2021 clearly endangers Japan's maritime lifelines in the South China Sea and East China Sea and makes Japan feel threatened. This is the reason why the Japanese government, especially senior officials, according to pertinent researchers, have recently made frequent allusions or even direct references to "security in the Taiwan Strait".²²

Nevertheless, while Japan has seen an unprecedented level of danger and instability as a consequence of the increased US-China rivalry in the region, it has opened up new economic prospects as well. The unique characteristics of the Taiwan Strait, the growing US commitment to the Asia-Pacific region, and the rise of China's economic influence in the region will create new opportunities for Japan's economic recovery and encourage it to actively hedge its bets for greater political and economic gains, which makes it necessary to take a closer look at Japan's Taiwan policy and re-analyze its Taiwan Strait Strategy.

²² 平衡外交不搞了? 日本为台湾而战的真意. (2021, July 11). 美国之音. Retrieved February 1, 2023, from <https://www.voachinese.com/a/japan-china-relations-is-suga-administration-ditching-china-for-taiwan-20210711/5961560.html>

Chapter III. Japan's Dynamic Taiwan Policy and Strategies in the Taiwan Strait

For historical, cultural, economic, and geostrategic reasons, Japan has always harbored a deep interest for Taiwan. Japan held Taiwan for 50 years after the Sino-Japanese War in 1895, and it was not until the end of World War II that it relinquished its claim to sovereignty over Taiwan as a defeated nation. Still, for a long time afterward, Japanese authorities and the public were unable to release their deep-rooted “Taiwan attachment”,²³ and even when Japan later became almost completely dependent on the US-Japan alliance, it still tried to make its voices heard on issues related to Taiwan, and this attempt gradually became possible as Japan's national power was restored and strengthened.

With the fall of the Soviet Union came a time of fast adjustment in great power relations. Asia took the place of Europe as the scene of political power struggles and Japan had increased competitive pressures and intense strategic tensions as a result of China's rise, which forced it to initiate additional measures in the Taiwan Strait, an important “lifeline” not only for Japanese economy but also national security. Throughout the post-war era, Japan's Taiwan policy generally went through three stages of development, which were marked by crucial turning points in US-China-Japan relations. Despite the fact that modifications in Japan's policies and initiatives related to Taiwan were directly linked to the US Taiwan policy and East Asian strategy, they also reflected Japanese government's interpretation of the overall security situation in East Asia, as well as Japan's alliance strategy and even international strategy, where both continuity and variability could be observed.

²³ Sang(2019) argued that long period of colonial rule in Taiwan leaves Japan, especially its elite and people, an intense sentiment about Taiwan, which is relatively rare in other colonial cases.

1. 1952-1972: Japan's De facto "Two Chinas" Policy

On 15 August 1945, the Emperor of Japan declared the unconditional surrender of Taiwan, and on 25 October, the Kuomintang officially took over Taiwan and established the government of Republic of China. In the years that followed, Japan was unable to develop independent foreign relations with other countries and regions because it was under American occupation and its domestic economy was in ruins. It was not until 1949, after Chiang Kai-shek's resignation, that Japan resumed its political and economic ties with Taiwan (Jiang, Tang, 2017).

The US initiative in the post war East Asia defense arrangement brought about a qualitative change in the original relationship between Japan and Taiwan as aggressor and victim of invasion. Despite the stern opposition and strong condemnation from the newly established PRC, in 1952 the Japanese government and the Kuomintang authorities signed a peace treaty in Taiwan and established so-called "embassies" in Taipei and Tokyo. With regard to its content, the Treaty of Peace between Japan and the Republic of China(or Taipei Treaty) shared the same essence with the US-Japan Security Treaty and the subsequent US-Taiwan Mutual Defence Treaty, and became an important part of the US defence system to contain communist forces in the Far East. The use of controversial language in the treaty, such as referring to nationals of the Republic of China as those who "have been or may hereafter be enforced by the Republic of China",²⁴ implicitly expressed Japan's support for the policy of counter-attacking the mainland. It also marked the formation of de facto formal diplomatic relations between Japan and Taiwan, which became the origin of Japan's de facto "Two Chinas" policy.

Unlike the United States' all-out support for the Republic of China, Japan did not give up its efforts to pursue meaningful engagement with the other "China", albeit it maintained close political, economic and cultural ties with Taiwan in the 20 years following the Taipei Treaty, which largely reflects the pragmatic diplomacy that characterized Japan's post-war phase. It could be easily generalized as an attempt to "separate politics from economics(zhengjing fenli 政经分离)".

²⁴ Treaty of Peace between Japan and the Republic of China 1952 (Sino-Japanese Peace Treaty or Treaty of Taipei)

According to the principle of realism, power is based on the material capabilities that a state possesses (Mearsheimer, 2007). When a country's capacity does not match its intentions, its strategic judgments and policy choices are necessarily more constrained by its capabilities. Based on its post-war perception of national capabilities and the world political landscape, Japan exhibited a somewhat different approach to the Taiwan issue from that of the United States. On the one hand, it wanted to support Taiwan's legality through the US-Japan security ties, but on the other, it also believed that a direct confrontation with the PRC would be detrimental to its own interests. Therefore, Japan strove to maintain appropriate relations with both Beijing and Taipei and to benefit from economic exchanges with both sides.

In contrast to the relatively easy and smooth development of political and economic relations with Taiwan, the establishment and deepening of those relations with mainland China were characterized by a certain degree of passivity and a bottom-up process, as Japan generally followed the US policy of isolation against communist China during this period. Faced with the basic post-war posture of US-Japanese enmity towards Communist China, Zhou Enlai, incumbent Premier of the new China, proposed a foreign policy of "Non-governmental Contacts Foster Bilateral Relations" towards Japan, breaking the standstill in Sino-Japan relations and the Cold War blockade by utilizing people-to-people contacts, so as to push the Japanese government to change its hostility towards PRC. Japan tacitly agreed to this strategy, if not an absolute denial, as economic ties with mainland China and relatively stable political relations were in the long-term interest of Japan's development.

Politically, benefiting from the general policy tone of the Hatoyama cabinet to improve relations with the Soviet Union and China, Japan's civil economy and culture with mainland China developed considerably, whereas Taiwan-Japan relations fell to a freezing point for a while and triggered a high degree of concern from the Taiwanese authorities and invited some high-level visits to Japan. The trend continued until Nobusuke Kishi came to power, who brought Sino-Japan relations to a halt once again and proposed further Japan-Taiwan communications. Shortly after Kishi was forced to resign, bilateral relation between Japan and

Taiwan hit a bottleneck again. Especially, political relations between Tokyo and Taiwan were at a low ebb from 1961 to 1964 under the Hayato Ikeda cabinet. As for Taiwan's policy of counter-attacking the mainland, Ikeda considered it to be "unfounded and bordering on fantasy." Such attitude provoked a stern statement from the Taiwanese authorities that Japan should clarify its policy towards Taiwan once and for all, otherwise Japan should be held full responsibility for all the serious aftermaths that would arise from Taiwan-Japan relations in the future (Jiang, Tang, 2017). There was even an attack on the Japanese Embassy in Taipei during the same period. Conversely, Japan accelerated its beneficial engagement with China during the period. In November 1962, after careful negotiations, the two countries signed the Memorandum Concerning Sino-Japanese Long-Term Comprehensive Trade (the LT Trade Agreement), marking the first semiofficial institutional framework between Japan and PRC and a new stage of bilateral economic exchanges (Itoh, 2012). Although relations between mainland China and Japan took a sharp turn for the worse after Eisaku Sato came to power, political and economic ties between Japan and mainland China survived the turmoil, given the relatively stable trade and people-to-people contacts that had been established between the two sides.

To sum up, constrained by the strategic requirements of the US-Japanese security system, the active development of Japan-Taiwan relations on all fronts and the anti-communism doctrine continued to be the underpinning of Japan's policy toward China and Taiwan from 1952 to 1972. Due to the relatively inadequate national power and the discontinuity of Taiwan policies between different cabinets, Japan could not play a large role in issues related to the Taiwan Strait but merely followed suit of the United States during this period. Nevertheless, by adopting pragmatic diplomacy and a deliberate attempt to "separate politics from economics", a de facto "Two Chinas" approach was developed to maximize its interests without risking too much bilateral relations with either side.

2. 1972-1992: Origin of Japan's "One China" Policy and Unofficial Ties with Taiwan

Major variations in the international situation took place after the 1970s. Sino-Soviet ties deteriorated and eventually broke down on the one hand, the US-Soviet balance of power dramatically shifted and the United States gradually lost the advantage to carry out its world strategy under the aggressive expansion of the Soviet Union on the other hand. The United States thus altered its original Asia-Pacific strategy from one of hostility and containment of China to one of counterbalancing the Soviet Union with help and support from the PRC, hoping to achieve strategic parity in the Asia-Pacific region again and reverse its global rivalry with the Soviet Union. The crisis of mutual trust in the alliance as symbolized by the "Nixon Shock" and the changes in US-China-Japan relations were important external drivers of Japan's decision to quickly resume diplomatic relations with China in 1972, and were the trigger for Japan to adjust its Taiwan policy. Japan was shadowed with a sense of betrayal and abandonment when the secret US-China contacts was disclosed, and that also became a turning point of Japan's alliance strategy.

Nixon's visit to Beijing, which the Japanese regarded as "米中頭越し外交(Japan Passing)", has left a huge impact on Japan's foreign policy, since it demonstrated the failure of the country's 20-year "Two Chinas" doctrine. At the same time, the Japanese government realized that it would be better for Japan, just like its powerful ally, to improve its relations with the PRC in order to secure its economic interests in mainland China. The resignation of Eisaku Sato in June 1972 witnessed a positive change in Japan's policy toward China. After Kakuei Tanaka was elected president of the Liberal Democratic Party on 5 July, he officially announced in his first press conference after becoming Prime Minister that "the time is ripe for the restoration of diplomatic relations between the PRC and Japan".²⁵ Foreign

²⁵ 中国の覇権主義、大平外相が予言 = 「低姿勢、50年後変わる」 一日中国交正常化. (2022, September 23). 時事通信ニュース. Retrieved March 16, 2023, from <https://sp.m.jiji.com/article/show/2821248>

Minister Masayoshi Ohira later also expressed in his subsequent speech that it was time for Japan to make an independent decision to work on the normalization of diplomatic relations between Japan and the PRC. In September, Tanaka and Ohira were invited to visit China and had several rounds of meetings and talks with the Premier of the PRC, Zhou Enlai, on the issues of war reparations and Taiwan.

29 September saw the formal signing of The Joint Communiqué, which was then announced to the public in a press conference, signaling the resumption of normal diplomatic relations between the two countries. In the Joint Communiqué, Japan recognized the Government of the People's Republic of China as the sole legal Government of China. In return, the PRC pledged to “renounces its demand for war reparations from Japan” for the sake of the goodwill between the Chinese 爱 and Japanese people.²⁶ As a result of the normalization of relations between Tokyo and Beijing, the Japanese government discontinued formal diplomatic relations with Taiwan. Yet, since Beijing did not request stringent commitments and assurances from Japan on cutting off all ties with Taiwan, Japan and Taiwan managed to maintain solid relations, albeit officially a “non-governmental” one. Data show that, in the years following 1972, bilateral trade between Japan and Taiwan was about equivalent to that with mainland China. Personal and commercial ties were also kept, and for the year 1973, there were 40 times as many Japanese visitors to Taiwan as there were to mainland China (Vogel, Ezra, 2019). On 26 December 1972, two private associations, the Interchange Association and the Association of East Asian Relations (AEAR) were established in Taipei and Tokyo respectively for bilateral affairs. Both associations avoided the use of “Japan” and “Taiwan”, which also indicated that the Japan-Taiwan diplomatic&political relations were relegated to the private sectors.

Although the Sino-Japanese normalization could not be detached from the US initiative, we can still observe in some details that Japan had already started to pursue a certain degree of diplomatic autonomy in the 1970s and had already demonstrated strategic thinking in its diplomatic practice and in the discussion and implementation of specific issues. First is the choice of wording in the key terms of

²⁶ Joint Communiqué of the Government of Japan and the Government of the People's Republic of China.

bilateral statements. In the Shanghai Communiqué (1972) signed between the United States and the PRC, the U.S. “acknowledges that there is but one China and that Taiwan is a part of China” but remained ambiguous as to whether the “China” referred to the People’s Republic of China or the Republic of China.²⁷ The use of the word “acknowledge” instead of “accept” is also seen as an example of the United States’ ambiguous attitude about the future status of Taiwan.

Similar practice could be found in the Japan–China Joint Communiqué. Regarding Beijing’s position on the Taiwan issue, Japan used words like “fully understands and respects” instead of “acknowledges” used by the United States, which demonstrates the minor difference in the stance of the two countries on the Taiwan issue. In addition, while the U.S. did not “challenge” Beijing’s determination on the Taiwan issues and promised to withdraw all US forces and military installations from Taiwan in a progressive way, Japan did not make similar commitment. Faced with Beijing’s three Taiwan-centric “principles”,²⁸ Japan refrained to make a clear statement on Taiwan’s legal status and only accepted the first principle, taking no stance on the second or third. On 30 September 1972, at a plenary session of the House of the Liberal Democratic Party of Japan, Masayoshi Ohira, in explaining the content of the Joint Communiqué, declared that Japan “has not taken a position of recognition” on the issue of Taiwan’s “sovereignty”, instead it demonstrated “the consistent attitude of the LDP government, which indicates that the two countries can never agree on their position.”²⁹

Even when Carter took office and the U.S. established official diplomatic relations with the PRC, Japan remained ambiguous in its position on the Taiwan issue and sided vague on admitting Beijing’s claims. The Japanese government insisted that, based on the Cairo Declaration, the Potsdam Proclamation and the San Francisco Peace Treaty, Japan had no objection to the fact that Taiwan should be returned to China. Yet, considering that Japan had already renounced its control over Taiwan,

²⁷ Joint Communiqué of the United States of America and the People’s Republic of China.

²⁸ They are: 1. The PRC government is the sole legal government of China. 2. Taiwan is an inalienable part of the PRC. 3. The Japan–ROC Peace Treaty is illegal, void, and should be denounced. Nevertheless, Beijing normalized relations with Tokyo and made concessions on Taiwan, acquiescing to the Japanese government's insistence on maintaining extensive "unofficial" ties with Taipei.

²⁹ 「日中関係の正常化についての外相演説」、 「自民党両院議員総会発言録」、時事通信社政治部編: 『日中国復交』、時事通信社昭和47年版、第202頁。

it was no longer in a position to judge to which “China” Taiwan belonged. The subtext of Japan’s argument was that because Taiwan was returned to the Republic of China after the war, if Beijing claims that the “Republic of China” no longer exists, it would create a situation where Taiwan’s status is undetermined. If, in another case, Republic of China were to be acknowledged, it would result in a situation where “two Chinas” coexist. By being unclear about the concept of the succession of states and succession of governments on the Taiwan issue,³⁰ Japan tried to imply or elaborate on the prevalent idea of the “unresolved status of Taiwan” that was shared by Pro Taiwan politicians and public and also left room for Japan to enhance Japan-Taiwan relations after the official severance of diplomatic relations between Tokyo and Taipei.

Probably a better manifestation of the divergence between Japan and the U.S. is in the adjustment of the application scope of the “Far East” in the Security Treaty, where Japan voiced, for the first time, a different opinion from that of the United States. At the House of Representatives Budget Committee, Masashi Ishibashi, a member of the Japan Socialist Party who was born in Taiwan during the Japanese colonial period, questioned Prime Minister Tanaka about applicability of the “Far East” in the US-Japan Security Treaty. As a response, Tanaka replied: “The international environment around the US-Japan treaty itself has also changed... I think the atmosphere between the U.S. and the PRC is very good now, and in that sense I don’t think the Taiwan problem will happen at all as it did in the past. The US-Japan security treaty should be re-evaluated on the basis of this understanding.”³¹

On 20 December 1978, following the communiqué on the establishment of diplomatic relations between the U.S and the PRC, Japan Socialist Party member Takako Doi again raised questions in the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives as to whether the “Far East” covered Taiwan. Foreign Minister replied that, as a result of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the U.S

³⁰ Some Taiwanese scholars of international law maintain that the succession of Taiwan should fall within the category of succession of States, i.e. the succession occurs as a result of the mere fact of territorial change; whereas Beijing’s official statement declares that the Taiwan issue and the succession of the People’s Republic of China to the Republic of China is a succession of governments, i.e. the government of the People’s Republic of China should succeed to all the rights and obligations in accordance with international law.

³¹ 第70回国会 衆議院 予算委員会 第2号 昭和47年11月2日, pp.5, translated by the author.

and the PRC, “the reality is that future disputes over the Taiwan region or the exercise of force by the United States are unlikely to arise.” Therefore, the need for the interpretation of Article VI of the security treaty concluded between Japan and the United States (i.e. whether the scope of the Far East includes Taiwan) has disappeared. He also indicated that it is “a matter that should be dealt with after discussion between the U.S. and Japan, listening to what the U.S. wants and stating our own intentions.”³² Notwithstanding, the asymmetry in the US-Japan alliance means that Japan’s voice would not be given much weight. Apparently Taiwan remains a key concern for the U.S. in the Far East, with its importance even more pronounced after the introduction of the 1978 US-Japan Defence Cooperation Guidelines, and it was inevitable that Japan would assume greater and more specific obligations in the Taiwan Strait issue.

Looking back at Japan’s policy toward Mainland China and Taiwan, it is clear that the United States’ efforts to reverse the competitive pattern with the Soviet Union, as well as the background that it modified its Asia-Pacific strategy and policy toward China and Taiwan, served as the foundation for Japan’s policy adjustment in the 1970s. Japan made certain compromises on the Taiwan Strait issue when negotiating with the PRC, such as striving to realize diplomatic normalization, in response to the strategic interests of the United States.

However, the fact that Japan was unable to formulate and carry out its foreign policy with full autonomy and independence does not necessarily mean that Japan was devoid of its own ambition. Starting from that time, probably mostly motivated by the fear of being abandoned or betrayed as the disadvantaged side of an alliance, Japan has been eager to change its unequal image of following the U.S. lead since the 1950s and began to make its voice heard, whilst failed in most time, in coordination with the U.S. by adjusting the timing and magnitude during the discussion and formulation of specific policies with its own strategic considerations, which presents Japan’s attempts to try to reach an equal position with the U.S. at the negotiating table and to engage in independent and autonomous diplomacy. The differences, though subtle, between Tokyo and Washington in either wordings or definition of certain crucial terms signals that Japan was not blindly following the

³² 第86回国会 衆議院 外務委員会 第2号 昭和53年12月20日, pp.2, translated by the author.

U.S. as some people may believe. Instead, it can be inferred that Japan was clear about its interest in the Taiwan issue and sought to maximize its interest and pursue national strategy in the framework set by the United States.

3. 1992-2022: Japan's Post-Cold War "One China" Policy and Evolving Relations with Taiwan

The twenty years that marked the "Golden Age" of US-China-Japan relationship soon broke up with the end of the Cold War (Vogel, 2009). When the bipolar landscape of US-Soviet rivalry no longer existed, China's strategic position as a partner of the U.S. in containing the Soviet Union rapidly declined and it became the number one target of ideological differences with the United States, as well as a potential opponent of US leadership in the world. Consequently, the Taiwan issue naturally became one of the main instruments for the U.S. to effectively contain and prevent China's rise. The adjusted policy towards Taiwan departed from and undermined the "One China" principle promised in the three US-China joint communiqués, and called for a higher level of contact with the Taiwan authorities, as well as the promotion of "substantive" relations with Taiwan.

As a result, the US government approved Lee Teng-hui's visit to the U.S. in May 1995, which led to a serious setback in US-China relations. In addition, the U.S. actively strengthened the US-Japan alliance, regarding Japan as a crucial strategic ally in halting China's emergence. According to Tang and Zhu (2021), the attributes of the US-Japan alliance have transformed from a traditional alliance based on "hard power" to an "assimilation" alliance with "soft power", and the objectives of the US-Japan alliance were gradually shifting towards the maintenance of regional security order during this period.

Indeed, Japan quickly reacted to the US strategy adjustments and followed suit in pursuing more "substantive" relations or "quasi-official relations" with Taiwan based on the strategic coherence of the US-Japan alliance. In 1992, the former Association of East Asian Relations (AEAR) was renamed Taipei Economic and

Cultural Representative Office in Japan (TECO),³³ a name that seemed more “official” than the previous one because of the addition of “Taipei”. And four years later, the number of its staff multiplied sixfold from 25 to 150, and three new departments, Economics, Science&Technology and Political Affairs, were created with expanded functions and to act as a de facto embassy. As its counterpart, the Interchange Association also adopted internal adjustments to make it more like an “official agency”. According to Cai’s (2010) research, the institution played a vital role in promoting communications and information-sharing between Toyko and Taipei. The Interchange Association later adopted its current name Japan–Taiwan Exchange Association in 2017, an expressive alteration that was widely accepted by mainland politicians as an unfriendly gesture but positive signal by the Taiwanese separatists, considering its previous avoidance of direct reference to either Japan or Taiwan.

Consequently, the coming decades following 1992 witnessed significant increase in informal and formal visits between Japan and Taiwan, the continuous and steady improvement of bilateral relationship. For example, the level and frequency of official contacts between Japan and Taiwan increased significantly compared to those in the 1970s and 1980s and both sides began to take a progressively high profile when talking about bilateral relations. It was recorded that from 2003 to 2005, a total of 466 groups of more than 6,000 important Japanese visitors arrived in Taiwan, including senators and representatives, prefectural governors and mayors, to met with Taiwanese dignitaries and participate in exchange activities with Taiwan’s “Ministry of Foreign Affairs”, “Ministry of Economic Affairs” and “Ministry of Transportation and Communications”. And in February 1993, only a year after Japan renamed the AEAR, Taiwan’s so-called “foreign minister” went on a “holiday diplomacy” with Japan under the name of sightseeing, which was perceived by the Taiwanese media as Japan essentially recognizing the title of Taiwan’s “Foreign Minister”, an act showing that Japan was gradually modifying its perceptions and practices in favor of Taiwan.

Japan intensified the pace and extent of changes to its Taiwan policy as Sino-Japanese ties continued to deteriorate into the twenty-first century. Apart from

³³ In 2017, AEAR was renamed Taiwan–Japan Relations Association.

further relaxation of official contacts, another important sign was that Japan began to openly support Taiwan's "international space". While Japan's representative voted against the proposal to let Taiwan join the World Health Organization as an observer in 1997, on the plenary session of the World Health Assembly in 2004, Japan voted in favor, which was regarded by the Taiwan authorities as the biggest breakthrough in the eight years since the case was promoted. Japan has backed Taiwan's attendance at WHO since then and became even more active during the COVID-19 pandemic. On 11 May 2021, Chief Cabinet Secretary Katsunobu Kato commented on that fact that Taiwan had not been invited to the World Health Assembly for five consecutive years that there should not be a "geographical gap" in dealing with international health issues, and reiterated Japan's consistent support for Taiwan's participation in the WHO as an observer.³⁴ A month later, the Japanese Senate unanimously passed a resolution supporting Taiwan's participation in the WHO, prompting a stern warning from Beijing not to send the wrong signal to the "Taiwan independence" forces.³⁵

Similar practices include Japan's support for the Taiwan's presence in other international institutions such as the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and hospitality to Taiwan's application to join the CPTPP.³⁶ Such supportive gestures were not merely a reflection of Japan's intimacy and favor for Taiwan, but more of detour strategy for conducting strategic arrangement in Asia as a "middle power". By sending friendly signals to Taiwan and support Taiwan internationally, Japan has not only consolidated its political relations with the Taiwanese authorities and deepened the degree of mutual penetration and integration in the economic sphere, but has also in the process enhanced its influence in international organizations and further strengthened Japan's political and economic position in East Asia and globally.

³⁴ Japan backs Taiwan's attendance at WHO annual meeting. (2021, May 11). The Japan Times. Retrieved March 14, 2023, from <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2021/05/11/national/taiwan-who-meeting/#>

³⁵ 国台办：敦促有关国家恪守承诺，勿向“台独”势力发出错误信号-新华网. (2021, June 16). Retrieved March 14, 2023, from http://www.xinhuanet.com/tw/2021-06/16/c_1127569069.htm

³⁶

More importantly, Japan has since then been adding to the Taiwanese authorities' courage to seek international recognition of independence, which would facilitate the maintenance of separation in the Taiwan Strait and continue to be a thorn in the flesh of the mainland. On the contrary, Japan has taken on a harder line toward Beijing, especially in issues regarding Taiwan Strait. In March 1996, as a protest against China's military exercises in the Taiwan Strait, Japan expressed its strong opposition and threatened to postpone its fourth yen loan to China.

Furthermore, Japan has been trying to change its status as a total subordinate in the alliance since the 1970s, as can be seen in some of the details of its policies and differences in its actions, and since the 1990s, it has become more committed to pursuing bigger autonomy. When envisioning US-Japan relations, it was frankly admitted in a policy paper that in the past, Japan's diplomacy with the U.S. was a kind of "attendant diplomacy(御用聞き外交)" or "follow-up diplomacy(追従外交)", but that in future relations with the United States, Japan would establish its initiative and develop the US-Japan alliance based on "advisory and collaborative diplomacy(提案・共働型外交)" and "Pro-US but independent diplomacy(親米自主外交)".³⁷ With such ambition in mind, Japan embarked on strengthening alliance management through proactive coordination with the US Asia-Pacific strategy, sharing of the security and defense responsibilities in the Asia and Pacific oceans and intensive involvement in regional hotspot issues to pursue a higher alliance symmetry, mainly by increasing its commitment to US military assistance, with the Taiwan issue as the best entry point for Japan to meet its goal at that time. That is, Japan hoped to increase its involvement and influence in the Taiwan issue by providing logistical support to US forces such as intelligence cooperation, transporting supplies, and searching for missing persons, to ensure that the alliance develops in its favor.

日本経済新聞社. (2021, September 24). 「台湾は重要なパートナー」 西村経財相、TPP申請歓迎. 日本経済新聞. Retrieved March 14, 2023, from

<https://www.nikkei.com/article/DGXZQOUA243280U1A920C2000000/>

³⁷ 「対米中露関係の展望と日本の構想」, <https://www.jfir.or.jp/wp/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/18.pdf>

Consequently, Japan took a more aggressive approach concerning the Taiwan Strait issue than before, stressing the prominence of the situation in the Taiwan Strait to Japan's security. On 14 April 1997, Yukio Okamoto, the Assistant to the Prime Minister declared that "Japan is a quasi-party to the dispute (in the Taiwan Strait)" and that "the security of the Taiwan Strait is one of the bases of Japan's security treaty."³⁸ In 1999 the JIF Policy Committee adopted the policy recommendation "Japan's Initiatives towards the United States, China and Russia(対米中露関係の展望と日本の構想)", where a clear stance of support by force was presented with explicit expression that "when military tensions increase in the Taiwan Strait and war breaks out, Japan cannot just stand by and watch." And it was underscored that Japan and the U.S. should work together, uphold the fundamental stance of "no armed liberation of Taiwan," and avoid sending China the incorrect message in this respect. In addition, Japan has been engaged in active research on the Taiwan Strait since then and has established, through the US-Japan Defence Cooperation Guidelines, specific measures for defense cooperation between the two sides in the event of an untoward incident in the Far East.

Japan's initiative in military defense and security cooperation is partly due to its alliance obligations and is not the least easy to exclude a long-term defense and security plan. Since June 1995, the Japanese government has held several security meetings for adjustments of its defense policy, and in November, the Cabinet meeting passed the new "The National Defence Program Guidelines (NDPG)". The 1995 NDPG highlighted the critical role that the US-Japan security system would continue to play in ensuring peace and stability in the surrounding area and in creating a secure environment, as well as further utilization of the Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) capabilities not only in contingencies in the "surrounding area" that would have a substantial influence on Japan's security, but also in large-scale disasters and various other situations that pose threat to "stable security environment". Besides, Japan has also reiterated the right to exercise collective self-defense and promoted the constitutionality of the right to defense in a number of policy proposals. With Japan's repeated link between the situations in the

³⁸ 中日关系：在风雨中前行。(2007). 凤凰网. Retrieved March 19, 2023, from https://news.ifeng.com/special/huaxu/baodao/200704/0411_945_101098.shtml

Taiwan Strait, the security of Japan, and the necessity to develop the Japan Self-Defense Forces, it is rational to doubt whether Japan has been utilizing the Taiwan issue as a justification for the development of the JSDF and military power.

The strategic posture of joint US-Japan intervention in the Taiwan Strait became stronger in the 21st century, especially after the intensification of the Diaoyu Islands/Senkaku dispute and the several air conflicts in the East China Sea. While on the whole the United States maintained a generally “strategic ambiguity” in the Taiwan Strait issue, Japan has been bolder to replace the “strategic ambiguity” with “strategic clarity”. In the 1997 US-Japan Defence Cooperation Guidelines, the Japanese government avoided making a clear official statement in public as to whether “situations in the surrounding area” included Taiwan, however, at the 2005 “2+2” meeting, the US-Japan joint statement included the Taiwan Strait as a strategic objective for US-Japan security. In a later visit to New York, then Foreign Minister Nobutaka Machimura also revealed that Taiwan “had already been an object of the US-Japan Security Treaty, and it was by no means inconsistent with Japan’s Taiwan policy so far.”³⁹ Although Nobutaka Machimura’s statement may not be fully representative of Japan’s official position, as Foreign Minister, he provided some insights into the shift that is taking place within Japanese officialdom. Compared to the previously relatively conservative “strategic ambiguity”, Japan was beginning to move toward a certain degree of “strategic clarity” by articulating its support for Taiwan on the Taiwan Strait issue.

Noticeable changes also occurred in the status of Taiwan and the Taiwan Strait in Japan’s national defence and national strategy, which experienced a significant upgrade. According to some Japanese media, the Japanese Defence Agency has explicitly listed conflict in the Taiwan Strait as one of the top three factors threatening Japan’s security in an internal document. A more direct and observable evidence is wording changes in the Japanese government’s definition of Taiwan’s importance. In 2012, to Japan, Taiwan was still an “important region”, yet in the next two years, it became an “important partner”, which implicitly assigns to Taiwan the attribute of a political entity rather than just a geographical term. Then in 2015, the wording again upgraded to “crucial partner and an important friend,

³⁹ Foreign Ministry Spokesman Kong Quan’s Comment on Japanese Foreign Minister’s Remarks Related to Taiwan

with which it shares basic values in the form of freedom, democracy, basic human rights, and the rule of law”, and in 2020, “extremely” was added and “universal” took the place of “basic” in front of values. It is even more worth noticing that the number of references to the Taiwan Strait in Japan’s 2022 Diplomatic Blue Book reached a record high of 5 times, provided the term’s absence in previous editions. Such wording adjustments convey a sense of crisis in Japan regarding the situation in the Taiwan Strait and its eagerness to take on a greater function in the region. Meanwhile, it is said that several covert operational plans and US-Japan joint operational plans at times when something goes on in the Taiwan Strait has been under discussion, and the U.S. and Japan have made preliminary preparations for joint armed intervention in whenever the situation in the Taiwan Strait escalates into armed conflicts.

Although it is commonly accepted that direct mutual cooperation between Japan and Taiwan has so far been limited to non-military areas, including extensive bilateral investment, wide-ranging business ties and popular civil society connections, some scholars in mainland China believe that there is already substantial military cooperation between Japan and Taiwan against Beijing. Wu (2006) argued in his article that ready-made defence cooperation between Japan and Taiwan includes regular security dialogues, observation of Taiwanese military exercises by retired JSDF generals, and intelligence cooperation, and with the United States as an intermediary, Tokyo and Taipei have already fulfilled a certain degree of intelligence sharing.

What is still noteworthy is that despite Japan’s gradual development of substantive relations with Taiwan and its more aggressive and proactive stance on the Taiwan issue, the basic official Japanese position remains consistent with the 1972 Joint Communiqué, and Japan ostensibly still “fully understands and respects” the “One China” principle, and tried to avoid over-stimulation of China on the Taiwan issue. Yasuhiro Nakasone, former Prime Minister of Japan proposed in his memoirs that Japan should adhere to the five principles on Taiwan issues when dealing with its relations with Taiwan and China, with the first one being abiding by the treaties and the Joint Communiqué with China, which is somehow an acquiescence of “one China”. But as has been reiterated many times by Japanese officials and politicians,

“fully understand and respect” and “acknowledge” are not synonymous. The purpose of these expressions and seemingly contradictory actions in fact reflects another aspect of Japan’s strategic logic toward Taiwan, that is, to avoid being drawn into a direct confrontation with China. And it was with a such semantic difference and Beijing’s appropriate concessions to those namely “unofficial ties” that Japan pushed for a further deepening of Japan-Taiwan relations.

To summarize the changes in the Japan’s Taiwan policy in the past two decades, deeper and wider cooperation with Taiwan, more active intervention in the Taiwan Strait, and greater and more specific military obligations to the U.S. on Taiwan, were three of the the main characteristics. In general, Japan’s policy adjustments were still within the framework of the US overall Asia-Pacific Strategy and such trend might continue in the foreseeable future. This is partly determined by the power gap between the two allies, and partly because the relevant US strategy is not at odds with Japan’s core interests.

However, as Japan’s national power grows, its initiative in the alliance has been gradually increasing, a concrete manifestation of which is Japan’s growing intention and ability to have an influence on the Taiwan strait issue. The Taiwan-related mechanisms of the US-Japan. alliance have provided Japan with the impetus to continue to develop the US-Japan security relationship so that it would not be abandoned or trapped, and have also become a tool for Japan to seek “normal nationalization” and play a greater role in international affairs because it rationalizes the expansion of the JSDF in terms of both alliance and security&defence. In a word, Japan’s post-Cold War policy towards Taiwan can be seen as placing greater emphasis on developing Japan-Taiwan relations on the basis of of Japan’s strategic interests in a more flexible way, while actively supporting and cooperating with the actions of the United States.

Chapter IV. Strategy of Alliance Management: a New Perspective to Analyze the Reasons for Changes in Japan's Taiwan Policy

A review of Japan-Taiwan relations over the past decades shows that Japan's policy towards Taiwan after World War II has gone through three historical stages of development, consisting of a de facto "Two Chinas" policy + "official diplomatic relations" with Taiwan, "One China" policy + "unofficial relations" with Taiwan, and a flexible "One China" policy + "quasi-official relations" with Taiwan after the Cold War. Such stage change has been influenced by alterations in US Taiwan policy and its Asia-Pacific strategy, because the structural factor of the US-Japan alliance, one of the two pillars of Japan's post-war diplomacy, has been commonly considered as the primary variable in Japan's post-war perceptions and policies toward Taiwan. However, insisting on such ideas makes the same mistake as most studies of asymmetrical alliances, which ignore how the non-powers or minor powers within the alliance respond to changes in the external circumstances. Adopting an alliance management viewpoint can somehow bridge this problem because it recognizes the necessity of reassuring allies during times of peace and underscores the value of cohesion during times of conflict. If we take a deeper look into the development and maintenance of the US-Japan alliance, owing to Japan's increased national power and initiative, the US-Japan alliance is no longer the one that used to be solely dominated by the United States. In fact, despite still being on the relatively inferior side, Japan has begun to explore ways and means of promoting alliance management and resolving alliance dilemmas, and the Taiwan issue, which enjoys higher priority in the US regional strategy over the years, plays such a role. Taiwan has long been the focus of US attention and support in Asia since the Second World War, and this tendency and preference grew deeper and deeper because of Taiwan's special geographical location and unique political attributes, and further intensified with the changes in the international power structure and the shift in the center of power competition after the end of the Cold

War. Warren Christopher, who served as Secretary of State, expressed his concern that although Cold War tensions had diminished, regional security threats remained and that the possibility of war on the Korean peninsula or conflict between China and Taiwan should not be underestimated.⁴⁰

The United States also had new concerns about Japan as an ally in light of the new scenario, and Michael Armacost, a senior American diplomat at the time, acknowledged that the U.S. could no longer count on Japan to be as diplomatically obedient as it was in the past. If the U.S. and Japan pursue different policies toward North Korea, China, or Taiwan, it would have negative effects on the bilateral relationship and it seemed unlikely that the US-Japan alliance will be maintained, and “termination of the alliance would raise new questions about Japan’s future strategic posture, scarcely an advantage for a status quo power like the United States.”⁴¹ Hence, at a time of major changes and a redefining of the US-Japan security system, the Taiwan problem is an essential instrument and one of the focal points for preserving alliance relations for both countries and especially for Japan as it presented a perfect opportunity to use the Taiwan issue as leverage in the alliance. Building on the above understanding, the following section will adopt the perspective of alliance maintenance to analyze Japan’s adjustments to its Taiwan policy at different time periods.

1. Loyalty, Reliability, and Alliance Management

Alliance loyalty may serve as a valid explanation Japan’s general commitment to and backing of the US Asian policy on the Taiwan issue, especially in the early post-war years when the alliance was just formed. According to Ringsmose (2009), while non-big powers lack sufficient power to significantly influence the overall profile of the alliance and have little incentive to increase military spending in the face of rising military threats, complete free-riding is not possible. When faced

⁴⁰ Christopher, W. (1998). In the Stream of History: Shaping Foreign Policy for a New Era. Stanford University Press. pp.286-291.

⁴¹ Armacost, M. H. (2003). Friends Or Rivals? The Insider’s Account of U.S.-Japan Relations. pp.245.

with abandonment, diplomatic pressure, economic sanctions, or political marginalization, weaker states will become subservient, as manifested in Japan's case by its military obligations in the Taiwan Strait through the establishment of the US-Japan security system and the inclusion of the Taiwan issue in the security treaty's scope. Zhang (2018) also proposed after researching on Japan's strategic perception and policy towards Taiwan that Taiwan issue is a strategic indicator for the U.S. to test Japan's loyalty to the alliance.

Historically, the United States has tested Japan on the Taiwan issue four times after the formation of the alliance, resulting in the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and Taiwan, the normalization of diplomatic relations between China and Japan, the US-Japan Defense Cooperation Guidelines, and the inclusion of Taiwan as a joint US-Japan strategic objective. Such testing and reassurance behavior was partially due the external changing dynamics and partially changes in the balance of power in the alliance, since changes in an ally's relative power increase the likelihood that it may fail to uphold its alliance commitments (Leeds, 2003). Each time the United States needed new assurances from Japan about the loyalty of the alliance it urged Japan to cooperate in accordance to the US policy, and in almost every case, Japan responded positively to and supported the US position, making the alliance more consolidated. Even today, when Japan's national power and international prestige have increased significantly, Japan still needs to, if not more than ever, show sufficient loyalty to the U.S. on the Taiwan issue. 27 August 2021 saw the first "2 + 2" dialogue between Japan's Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and Taiwan's Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), focusing specifically on security issues, with both sides claiming that they should cooperate to "deter China" in terms of defense and security. In this regard, Lomanov, deputy director of the Institute of World Economy and International Relations of the Russian Academy of Sciences, explicitly criticized that Japan's "Taiwan card" is a political order from the United States and that Tokyo is attempting to show its loyalty to Washington by doing so.⁴²

⁴² 日台勾结召开“2+2”企图“吓阻中国”，专家：日本想以此表达对美“政治忠诚。”(2021, August 28). 环球时报. Retrieved April 2, 2023, from <https://3w.huanqiu.com/a/de583b/44X7vGfS6Vu>

However, an important but often overlooked fact is that loyalty is mutual, just as the subject of interdependence is always both parties. The Taiwan issue indeed provides the U.S. with a decent opportunity to gauge the Japanese alliance's commitment but also exposed itself to Japanese evaluations of the alliance. In other words, the U.S. also needs to demonstrate its loyalty or credibility to ensure Japan's participation. The Taiwan issue is crucial to the U.S. in maintaining the alliance, and as previously mentioned, the way it is handled could have a huge impact on the future of the US-Japan alliance. According to Tucker and Glaser (2011), if the United States were to abandon Taiwan in a conflict with China, it could trigger "a fatal blow to the US-Japan alliance," and in a more pessimistic scenario, could cause lead South Korea to align with Beijing.⁴³ Henry (2020) also reflected in his paper that the Taiwan issue could be an example of how beliefs about loyalty and alliance interdependence could effectively influence the policy. What the U.S. needs to concern itself with is not only the sustainability of the US-Japan alliance, but also the rest of the vast alliance system. In Henry's (2020) reinterpretation of alliance interdependence, he mentions that "observed reliability—not innate loyalty—is what states want from allies."⁴⁴ That is, whether an ally is reliable should be tested and observed with events or incidents, and an ally can be regarded as unreliable if it poses risks of abandonment or entrapment, which refer to the "alliance dilemma" to be discussed in the next section. It offers a novel perspective from which to evaluate the strategic significance the U.S. has placed on the Taiwan issue.

In addition to determining whether Japan's interests align with its own, the U.S. is interested in demonstrating to its friends that it is devoted to them and preserving their trust. More importantly, because of the past "Japan Passing", Japan already believed that the U.S. had posed a threat of "abandonment". As a result, the U.S. needed to strengthen its reliability through the Taiwan issue, which is crucial to the security cooperation between the U.S. and Japan, to guarantee that Japan continues to view it as reliable. Japan knows it well and has been trying to exploit such

⁴³ Tucker, N. B., & Glaser, B. S. (2011). Should the United States Abandon Taiwan? *Washington Quarterly*, 34(4), pp.23–37.

⁴⁴ Henry, I. (2020). What Allies Want: Reconsidering Loyalty, Reliability, and Alliance Interdependence. *International Security*, 44(4), pp.47.

mentality with the Taiwan issue to justify the continuation of the alliance and to guarantee Japan's growing weight in it. Because for Japan, taking a cheap ride on the US-Japan security system and flexibly utilizing the US alliance commitment not only enable it to concentrate on developing the domestic economy but also help it to deal with the threat of the surrounding socialist countries and ensure the security of the adjacent seas with minimal loss.⁴⁵ At the same time, it provides grounds for the increase of national defense forces as well, a choice that serves three purposes.

2. The Taiwan Issue in the US-Japan Alliance

It is evident from the evolution of attitudes and policies of successive US administrations toward the Taiwan issue that, as a potential point of conflict in US-China relations, the sensitivity of the Taiwan issue has intensified as the strategic competitiveness between China and the United States increased. So far we can see that playing the "Taiwan card" is still an important bargaining tool and a strategic counterweight to China for the Biden administration. It is well observed that Biden has basically inherited the concept and the main framework of the Indo-Pacific Strategy, of course in a more stable and predictable way, and put more emphasis on collective efforts with allied partners and regional multilateral organizations. The biggest change in the Biden administration compared to the Trump administration is that Biden has been striving to promote the "multilateralization" of its Taiwan-related policies and actions around the Taiwan Strait. Japan, as one of the most important ally of the United States, considers the Taiwan issue an important concern to the security of Japan and the maintenance of alliance.⁴⁶

In fact, the U.S. and Japan had already formed an alliance long before the US-China rivalry scenario became clear. Yet, given the parallels between the competitive world power landscape when the two states formed the alliance after World War II and the contemporary Asia-Pacific struggle, it is still valuable to

⁴⁵ Armacost (2003) and many other American scholars believe that Japan has already developed key foundational elements for strategic independence but still remains reluctant to pursue the path.

⁴⁶ Readout of President Biden's Meeting with Prime Minister Kishida of Japan (January 21, 2022)

utilize Stein's understanding of the alliance to explain the deepening of the US-Japan alliance and derive from it Japan's role in the alliance as a mechanism to explain why Japan is so crucial in the Taiwan Strait issue.

With the conclusion of the US-Japan Security Treaty in 1951 and its revision in 1960, Japan and the United States established a security mechanism in East Asia, and the Taiwan Strait was one of the focal points of concern for both countries. But the collective self-defense agreement negotiated by the U.S. in early 1951 had no direct relevance to Taiwan, and as a prototype of the US-Japan Security Treaty, it authorized US forces to be based in Japan within an operational area that included Japan and the Korean Peninsula. The U.S. proposed an adjustment to the original scope of operations to include the "Far East" later, including Taiwan, in view of the Korean War's expansion and future China's containment. According to the report of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of 19 April, the United States' delimitation of the "Far East" was based on three war scenarios, one of which was a unilateral US operation to defend Taiwan, and the Japan-based US deployment to the "Far East" was to include mainland China and Taiwan, the Korean peninsula, and the Indochinese peninsula. In his presentation on 1 October 1949, Charles A. Willoughby, Chief of Intelligence at Allied Headquarters, underlined that if the new China captured Taiwan, it could control the sea route from the Malay Peninsula to Japan and threaten the Philippines and the Ryukyus, which would not only deprive the United States of a strategic air base but also Japan of a food supply.⁴⁷ The summary reflects the significance that the United States attached to the situation in the Taiwan Strait and to Taiwan's strategic position at the time.

By adding the term Far East to the 1951 US-Japan Security Treaty, the U.S. effectively established a preliminary structure for operational cooperation with Japan in case of a contingency in the Taiwan Strait. In other words, Japan was expected to act as a forward base for US forces and play a logistical supply role whenever a war involving the United States occurred in the "Far East", which made Japan a direct participant in the Taiwan Strait contingency and set the stage for its role in events in the Taiwan Strait for decades to come. The new US-Japan Security Treaty was signed in Washington in 1960, with Article VI remaining in

⁴⁷ MacArthur Memorial Archives, Microfilm, MMA—18: Summary of the Situation, Far East, Oct 1, 1949, pp.13.

relation to the “Far East”. The retention of the term “Far East” meant that, for Japan, it was still obliged to the U.S. for military defense cooperation in the Far East. Although the scope of the “Far East” was not clearly defined either in the old or the new US-Japan Security Treaties, which was mainly to enhance the applicability of the term to different situations with ambiguity, the Japanese government’s official view of the scope of the “Far East” can be found in a public statement made by Japanese Prime Minister Nobusuke Kishi on 26 February 1960. From the Japanese standpoint, the “Far East” was the area north of the Philippines, in and around Japan, as well as areas under the control of Korea and the Republic of China.⁴⁸ This is notable because it may imply that Taiwan’s importance in the US-Japan Security Treaty was possibly equal to that of Korea.

Japan’s role in the US intervention in the Taiwan Strait contingency was magnified after the 1969 Nixon-Eisaku Satō Joint Communiqué, in which the U.S. acquired maximum freedom to use military bases in Japan in exchange for the transfer of sovereignty over the Ryukyus, “particularly with respect to Korea, Taiwan, and Vietnam.”⁴⁹ Despite there were some disagreements, Japan made concessions to the U.S. in exchange for the return of the Ryukyus. In 1969 the U.S. and Japan agreed on equal treatment of Taiwan’s security and Korea’s security, and the U.S. even persuaded Japan to acknowledge that the security of the Taiwan region was the most important factor for Japan’s security.⁵⁰

The Nixon Doctrine in the 1970s marked a global shift in US foreign policy, two aspects of which, closely related to Japan’s involvement in the Taiwan Strait, were sharing military spending and defense responsibilities with allies and improving relations with mainland China to contain the Soviet Union. Following the doctrine, the U.S. decreased the number of US troops in Japan in the 1970s and formulated with Japan The Guidelines for US-Japan Defense Cooperation, which presented an opportunity for Japan to play a greater military role in Asia, as well as a dilemma of not overly enrage China in the Taiwan Strait issue.

The Guidelines included measures to be taken to ensure joint US-Japan military

⁴⁸ 防衛年鑑刊行会 『防衛年鑑』、1976 年、117 頁。

⁴⁹ National Security Decision Memorandum 13

⁵⁰ 小泉親司 『日米軍事同盟史研究: 密約と虚構の五〇年』、新日本出版社、2002 年、146 頁。

action in the event of a Far East contingency and guaranteed that Japan and the U.S. would consult with each other at any time when situations in the Far East had a significant impact on Japan's security. Both countries would also conduct mutual studies in advance regarding Japan's facilitation of US forces in any unexpected occasions.⁵¹ While the Taiwan Strait and the Korean Peninsula were not specifically included in the 1978 Guidelines, according to Michel Green, the U.S. was intended to make contingencies on Taiwan and the Korean Peninsula central to the discussion. This indicates that Japan should be more supportive of the U.S. if something happens in the Far East.⁵²

The Taiwan Strait crisis of March 1996 accelerated the US-Japan study of the Taiwan Strait contingency and prompted the revision of the 1978 Guidelines. The study was accompanied by subsequent discussions between the U.S. and Japan on specific measures for defense cooperation in any unforeseen incidents in the Far East, signaling a greater and more tangible role for Japan in support of the U.S. in times of war and Japan's deeper involvement in the Taiwan Strait issue. This trend continued into the 21st century, and became more evident as Sino-Japan relations deteriorated. In the 2005 Joint Statement, it was underscored that "ensur[ing] the security of Japan, strengthen peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region, and maintain the capability to address contingencies affecting the United States and Japan" and "encourag[ing] the peaceful resolution of issues concerning the Taiwan Strait through dialogue" are two of the regional strategic goals of the two countries,⁵³ which was interpreted by some Chinese scholars that the U.S. and Japan and was making advance preparations for a military response to the Taiwan Strait contingency (Liu, 2013). Japan also initiated work in 2012 to revise the 1997 Guidelines, and against the backdrop of an intensified Diaoyu Island/Senkaku dispute, Japan's intention and ability to intervene armed in the Taiwan issue became stronger.

Japan's intention to play a more active part in the Taiwan Strait has increased significantly since the Biden administration's renewed Asia(Indo)-Pacific

⁵¹ The Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation(November 27, 1978)

⁵² Michael Green, "The Challenges of Managing U.S.-Japan Security Relations after the Cold War", in Gerald L. Curtis, ed., *New Perspectives on U.S. -Japan Relations*, Japan Center for International Exchange, 2000, pp.244.

⁵³ Japan-U.S. Security Consultative Committee (2+2 Meeting) (February 2005)

Rebalance strategy. It mainly took the form of frequent high-profile statements on the Taiwan Strait by the Japanese government and politicians, and regular discussions with the United States. on matters related to military security in the Taiwan Strait. According to Wu Huaizhong (2021), a researcher at the Institute of Japanese Studies of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Japanese attitudes to the Taiwan Strait issue indicate that Japan is making adjustments to its Taiwan-related policies, with its strategy noticeably deviating from the previous one, and new perspectives of interest consideration taken into account. Japan is believed to be breaking with its traditional approach, which was based on the principle of not undermining fundamental bilateral relations between China and Japan, to establish itself as a major participant and player in the Taiwan issue and Taiwan Strait affairs.⁵⁴

In addition to policy statements at the diplomatic levels, as well as high-profile signals from Japanese politicians at the personal level to intervene in the Taiwan Strait, there are indications that Japan is further discussing with the U.S. specific strategic deployments in the “Taiwan Strait” to push the Taiwan Strait mechanism between the two countries towards an operational stage. Tetsuo Kotani, Professor at Meikai University and Research Fellow at the Japan Institute for International Studies, suggested in his article that the time has come to develop a deterrence strategy to deal with Taiwan contingency because the risk is immediate. He also mentioned that the consensus made between Yoshihide Suga and Biden on Taiwan will likely lead to the “development of a joint tactical plan” between the two sides in the future, which is considered a prerequisite for a US-Japan military practice in the Taiwan Strait.⁵⁵ And according to Kyodo News, the Suga cabinet had officially begun discussing the deployment of the Self-Defence Forces in a conflict in the Taiwan Strait from the perspective of legal application in April 2021, including the use of the JSDF to a greater extent than before. The Japanese media also envisaged three possible scenarios in the Taiwan Strait based on the “Important Influence Situations”, “Survival-Threatening Situations”, and “Armed Attack Situations”

⁵⁴ 贾元昌. (2021, August 29). 揭秘日本将台湾纳入“周边有事”的战略套路——人民政协网. Retrieved April 7, 2023, from <http://www.rmzxb.com.cn/c/2021-08-29/2943819.shtml>

⁵⁵ 国問研戦略コメント (2021-01) 新台湾条項: 台湾と日本の安全保障. (2021, May 11). Retrieved March 27, 2023, from https://www.jiia.or.jp/strategic_comment/2021-01.html

stipulated in the Legislation for Peace and Security that came into effect in 2016, and Japan would determine the level of support that the Japanese Self-Defense Forces should provide to the US forces based on different situations, ranging from providing logistical support to the US forces, exercising the right of collective self-defence and engaging in direct combat operations under the “right of individual self-defence”.⁵⁶

To sum up, over the years, the prominence of Taiwan and the urgency of the Taiwan Strait issue in the US-Japan security system have taken a great leap, and Japan has shown incremental initiative in the process, which suggests that Japan will have bigger influences in the future developments in the Taiwan Strait. By taking on more alliance obligations, revising its domestic legal system and strengthening its southwestern defence posture, Japan expects to have greater military functions in the US-Japan alliance and also make its Taiwan-related strategies more flexible and operational to deal with unexpected incidents in the Taiwan Strait. The evolution of the situation in the Taiwan Strait and Japan’s domestic political choices, however, will greatly influence Japan’s response and its participation in future confrontations in the Taiwan Strait.

3. The Alliance Dilemma Facing the US-Japan Alliance

The theory of the alliance dilemma provides a theoretical approach to the study of post-war US-Japanese alliance relations, and gives us a new perspective to examine Japan’s choices in the Taiwan issue. The United States, on the one hand, is concerned about Japan’s cheap riding or underperformance in its support for the United States, thus urging Japan to strengthen its security contribution to the alliance. While on the other hand, it is worried that Japan might react too sensationally or aggressively on the Taiwan Strait and exacerbate regional instability. Similarly, Japan is afraid that the U.S. may strategically “pull back” at

⁵⁶ なるほドリ・ワイド：緊張高まる台湾情勢＝回答・畠山嵩 - 毎日新聞. (2021, May 16). 毎日新聞. Retrieved April 2, 2023, from <https://mainichi.jp/articles/20210516/ddm/003/070/037000c>

some crucial moment and reach a certain rapprochement with China, neglecting Japan's involvement in the Taiwan issue and creating a new "Japan passing"; on the other hand, Japan also does not want to get caught up in extreme US moves in the Taiwan Strait, especially some military ones, and thus be dragged into the whirlpool of the Taiwan Strait crisis.

If we take a close look at the different stages of the US-Japan alliance, the alliance dilemma is ubiquitous. Sometimes it takes the form of cooperation games between the United States and Japan, and at other times, it may involve more complicated situations where the adversary dilemma coexists. What is worth noting is that in either case, no matter it is an alliance dilemma or adversary dilemma, the dilemmas facing the alliance is secondary security dilemmas, that is, they are dilemmas remained when the first one has been resolved by mutual defection.

As for Japan, a country that can be easily and highly influenced by the outside world due to its geographical location and development pattern, it has always been in constant fear of being abandoned and being entrapped, with one dominating the other in specific phases. The period from the early post-war period can be generally regarded as years in which the fear of abandonment prevailed, as the preservation of the state system, or "国体の護持", was the major concern of defeated Japan, and dependence on the United States is an indispensable part of the key. It was quite obvious that the fear of being abandoned by the U.S. was greater than the fear of being involved in a war, both in terms of military and economic interests, and therefore there was high consistency in the U.S. and Japan's Taiwan policy.

The next ten years saw Japan's rapid recovery from the war and a shift in both Japan's and the American mentality. For the United States, the increase in Japan's strength increased the resources available to it, but it also created an increased centrifugal tendency, an inclination to break away from the alliance. To make sure that Japan would play a role that benefits U.S. hegemony, the U.S. took measures such as including Japan in a broader framework of cooperation, strengthening bilateral security dialogue, and encouraging Japan to shoulder bigger responsibility through its participation in US global strategies. With the signing of the new security treaty, the scope of Japan's defense was significantly expanded, contributing to broader US-Japanese military cooperation in the region. The

increase in Japan's power also raised US expectations of Japan, thus increasing the possibility that Japan would be involved in a war. Such fear for be dragged into another brutal war was so strong that it resulted in the collapse of the Kishi cabinet with widespread anti-American and anti-security movements around Japan. Although Japan still did not have much autonomy in the alliance at that time, it was fundamentally different from the Japan of the 1950s, and Japan began to revise its one-sided dependence on the United States, as evidenced by voicing on the "Far East" and bargaining over alliance obligations, as well as the rise of the doctrine of autonomous defense, in the hope of reducing over-dependence on the U.S. and avoiding unnecessary crises.

The fear of abandonment soon outweighed the fear of entrapment during the "Japan passing" and the "Nixon shock". With the formal decision to withdraw US troops from Vietnam, Japan's anxiety about being involved in the war was gradually replaced by a fear of being abandoned, which accelerated the development of US-Japanese joint defense guidelines and led to a clearer articulation and more substantive deployment of the US-Japan alliance. Although there are written agreements between the U.S. and Japan that guarantee the alliance and set out its obligations, the fear of being abandoned is ever-present in the real world. Consequently, Japan, on the one hand, continued its consistent policy choice to cooperate with the new US regional strategy on the Taiwan issue, occasionally emphasizing the mutual obligations of the alliance and getting positive signals from the United States, and on the other hand, took the initiative to reach out to Beijing and prepared for independent diplomacy and autonomous defense.

The disappearance of the Soviet threat challenged the very existential validity of the alliance and there were heated debates on the maintenance or dissolution of the alliance in both countries. The "adversary games" came to the fore during this period, as there was no longer a common adversary for the US-Japan alliance. It also brought to Japan a confusing period in which fear of abandonment and entrapment waned and waxed. After careful discussion and negotiation, especially after the Taiwan Strait crisis in the mid-1990s, the two countries reconfirmed their greatest rival and issued the Joint Declaration on Security in 1996 and revised the Guidelines in 1997, where Japan reoriented its alliance role and expanded the range

of its responsibilities beyond homeland defense, showing its loyalty to the alliance deepening the alliance relations with increased costs to guard its ally with new strategic objectives and promises in any contingencies around the Taiwan Strait. At the same time, Japan carried on its efforts to develop its Self-Defense Force, aiming at decreasing its vulnerability to uncertainty from the United States and playing a greater political and military role at the international level.

Walking into the 21st century, in the face of China's rapid rise, both Japan and the United States have been interested in strengthening their alliance to deal with the new strategic rival, and strategic containment of China has become a bilateral alliance consensus. As a result, the past two years have witnessed so many more unusual moves and new cooperation between the U.S. and Japan on the Taiwan issue than ever before that there seems to be a security dilemma in the Taiwan Strait. Jervis made this point that the choice between deterrence and security dilemma (also referred to as the spiral model) depends essentially on states' estimate of the adversary's ultimate aims, and when encountering an expansionist opponent, "a policy of firmness promised the desirable effects of deterring him and enhancing one's reputation for resolve."⁵⁷ Considering that in the eyes of the US-Japan alliance, China's rapid rise and assertive acclaim in the East and South China Seas are signs of expansiveness, it is understandable that the U.S. and Japan have recently been more aggressive and have made more tentative maneuvers on the Taiwan issue than before.

However, with the intensification of US-China rivalry in the Asia-Pacific region, the possibility of Japan being drawn into an overwhelming confrontation has multiplied. Japan, therefore, has gradually sought to fulfill its alliance obligations in a balanced way, avoiding offending the United States, and also trapping itself. It is quite easy to observe that Japan's current strategy involves a kind of "double-betting". Externally, Japan has recently shown a positive response to the US Asia-Pacific rebalancing strategy and has shown extraordinary enthusiasm over the Taiwan issue, which can be interpreted as a pledge of loyalty to the United States. Yet at the same time, Japan is also bolstering its standing among its Asian neighbors and stretching out to Southeast Asia and European countries in an

⁵⁷ Snyder, G. H. (1984). The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics. *World Politics*, 36(4), pp.468.

attempt to establish a Japan-led regional mechanism and buffer potential risks of US abandonment.

Coincidentally, the above stages according to the main perceived risks of Japan's alliance dilemma with the U.S. and the historical stages of Japan's changing policy towards Taiwan are roughly in line, reflecting a very convincing correlation. In other words, every time when Japan perceived itself to be at greater risk of abandonment or at greater risk of entrapment or an alternation between the two, it adjusted its relationship with Beijing and Taipei and the scale of its role in the Taiwan Strait, though within the overall US policy framework.

To sum up, adopting a perspective of alliance management in the study of Japan's post-war policy changes towards Taiwan is conducive to our deep grasp of the strategic essence in Japan's Taiwan policy. By examining the security dilemma in the US-Japan alliance, the differences in aims, intentions, and strategic considerations between the U.S. and Japan are evident: on the one hand, the U.S., the superior ally in the alliance, continues to urge Japan to strengthen its security contribution to the alliance, yet hopes to continue to maintain the asymmetric alliance substance on the other. Although the possibility of being abandoned or entrapped by Japan is relatively low due to the asymmetric dependence on the alliance, the U.S. still needs to ensure Japan keeps pace with it or does not go too far to invite over-antagonism. While for Japan, it has been trying to take the most advantage of the security umbrella provided by the United States but wants to pursue a more symmetrical match in the alliance. Meanwhile, it knows better than anyone that the U.S. is an unshakable pillar of Japanese diplomacy but still suffers from two possible consequences of "being abandoned" or "being entrapped".

Under such a "game", the history and status quo of the Taiwan Strait issue becomes a good way for the two countries to test each other's commitment to the alliance, and both sides use the specialty of the Taiwan Strait issue(it is significant enough to be of crucial interest to the U.S. and Japan while at the same time stable enough to accept a degree of volatility and risk) to jointly advance the alliance's overall regional security strategy. This explains why the Taiwan Strait issue has at times become a signal and thrust for the U.S. and Japan to strengthen alliance cohesion and at other times a sore point between the two countries. The US-Japan

interest compatibility on the Taiwan issue not only overcame a series of difficulties encountered after the formation of the US-Japan alliance, but also contributed to the establishment of an alliance consensus and consistency in strategic choices, and it was such “consistency” underlies the logic of changes in Japan’s Taiwan policy. Furthermore, It also gave Japan an opportunity to ensure the maintenance of the alliance by emphasizing to the U.S. the consistency of the two sides on concrete and significant issues, so that it could flexibly use the US commitment to the alliance to minimize security costs and achieve its national interests.

Chapter V. Alliance Dilemma in the New Era: How Weaker Powers in Alliance Respond to New Threats?

Alliances are frequently employed as a tactic in international politics to enhance the security of states facing external threats. Asymmetry, when one alliance partner is much stronger than the other and has more power in the partnership, is a common feature of many alliances. Asymmetry is also manifested in the facts that allies' interests are not perfectly aligned, and that the level of threats an adversary poses varies among allies, even though they agree on the same alliance - an assumption accepted by most alliance scholars. History shows that alliances change and that alliances formed under certain conditions can be challenging to uphold ties when circumstances evolve. Naturally, as the source and magnitude of the threat vary or the balance of power between allies shifts, so does the perception of threat and alliance value held by alliance members, and so does the alliance. Furthermore, changes in these factors can lead to new problems between allies, such as the degree of tightness of the alliance and the distribution of alliance obligations, which results in new alliance dilemmas amongst allies. For example, when the previous challenger no longer exists, the big power in the alliance, the one who determined the fundamental elements and objectives of the alliance, may feel reluctant to continuously pay for the defense of weaker allies and may wish to rethink the alliance commitments.

The traditional view of security is based on the conventional concept of international relations and can be understood as one of national security, where security issues occur mainly among countries within a nation-state system. It generally refers to conflicts involving military operations among states and is thus somehow state-centric and military-oriented (Keohane, Nye, 1972). International relations prior to the Cold War fit this traditional model of security because major international events were dominated by the great powers and were strongly tinged with great power politics. As a complement, non-traditional security is a new concept of security that has emerged since the end of the Cold War and covers various new security areas including economic security, cultural security, and

social security. There has been a high degree of penetration and interaction between traditional and non-traditional security in the past two decades. Especially, the boundary between economic and military security has been blurred, and the globalization of the world economy has created a new dilemma for allies to choose between alliance security and economy. In this context, the security implications of economic games have also become a fronting area of alliance studies.

A new alliance dilemma becomes possible when economic factors are taken into account in the alliance security dilemma, a situation in which the alliance adversary is also a major economic partner. Such congruence leads to a conundrum in the alliance's foreign policy, whereby if a state joins its allies in taking too drastic a confrontation against an adversary for the purpose of the alliance's security interests, it may threaten the economic links and result in the alliance's economic interests being undermined because the adversary can easily revenge economically; whereas if it takes too moderate or cooperative an approach, the alliance is weakened internally as the strategic positioning of an adversary is blurred, and the interests of the alliance may be divided within the alliance as its members take different economic countermeasures against the alliance's adversary out of their own interests. Simply put, the strength of economic ties within an alliance and between an alliance and its adversaries affects the "value" of the alliance - the magnitude of various benefits, costs, and risks in combination, for the state.

In contrast to the clear dichotomy between the roles of alliance rival and alliance economic partner during the Cold War, the dilemma of congruence between alliance counterpart and alliance economic partner is prevalent in the relationship between the US Asia-Pacific alliance system and mainland China nowadays, and is particularly conspicuous in the US-Japan alliance, as mainland China has been Japan's largest trading partner for years. Japanese strategists have reflected on this new dilemma, arguing that Japan's over-dependence on China in particular for its economic and political benefits will erode its strategic autonomy "by exposing it to the possibility of intersecting military and economic coercion in the region". The United States is also aware of the challenges that China's regional economic advantage could pose to alliance relations. Therefore, as an effort to tackle the dilemma of congruence, the U.S. has put much effort to develop the

Comprehensive Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), which excludes China, to coordinate the interests and policies of the various alliance members economically, where the security implications are self-evident.

Taking into account the above-mentioned new variables, how do allies in asymmetric alliances respond to the new threats? In particular, how do non-powers, who are often overlooked and more vulnerable to danger, take measures to respond to the new alliance dilemma? Castillo and Downes's (2020) theory explaining alliance options for weaker alliance partners brings up three strategic choices for them when encountering new threats to the alliance. At the one end of the spectrum is loyalty, which means staying in the same alliance or can be understood as maintaining the status of a balancer.

The other end is exit, which includes declaring neutrality to distance itself from the former alliance or defection in the presentation of forging an alliance with the previous adversary. The latter is similar to bandwagoning, except that it is under the proviso of an existing alliance. In between the loyalty and exit, like the balancing-bandwagoning dichotomy, is hedging, "a strategy of pursuing opposing or contradictory actions as a means of minimizing or mitigating downside risks associated with one or the other action."⁵⁸

For members of existing alliances, there are two types of hedging strategies to choose from. One is internal balancing, namely to build up their own capability, especially militarily, to lower the danger of potential abandonment. Second is diplomatic hedging, which is to change hostilities or upgrade diplomatic relations with the challenging state. As the first option is usually of limited use to relatively weak small countries, in many cases, these weaker countries have to choose the second hedging strategy, which includes negotiations, economic or trade agreements, arms purchases, or discussing an alliance with the challenging country while still maintaining the original one.

Japan's response in times of new threats falls into the category of hedging because it has been seeking to offset dangers or risks by pursuing various policy options that brings "mutually counteracting effects" under high uncertainties and great perils during the past decades, and particularly so after the Cold War when China

⁵⁸ Jackson, V. (2014). Power, trust, and network complexity: three logics of hedging in Asian security. *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific*, 14(3), pp.331–356.

rapidly rose and became the main opponent of the US-Japan alliance. Such a statement may invite different voices from scholars like Lim and Cooper because they propose a redefinition of hedging to exclude economic and political perspectives and focus solely on the security aspect as economic and political relations are deemed as poor signals of shared security interests and bring no requirements for states to make trade-off between alignment and autonomy (Lim, Cooper, 2015). They also assume that alliance members are engaged in balancing behavior rather than hedging.

Nevertheless, I believe that although their attempts are valid, Japan's economic engagement with China in the context of US-China competition is more risk-reducing than lucrative and interest-oriented, which is the underlying reason why Lim and Cooper ruled out economic and political engagement, and that hedging is still the strategic choice for Japan at the moment.

To explain, firstly, in order to secure a competitive edge over China, the relatively declining U.S. is expected to intensify its exploitation of the Japanese economy, pushing for unreasonable trade demands and requiring Japan to pay more for its protection. Secondly, the further development and growth of the Chinese economy will not only have a direct impact on Japan's related competitive economic industries, but will also make Japan increasingly dependent on the Chinese economy, which is also considered an important economic risk by Japan. In addition, the high level of tension and turmoil in Sino-Japan relations stemming from excessive anger with mainland China and the contingency of the Taiwan Strait are more urgent security threats for Japan. I therefore do not think that the exclusion of economic and political engagement by denying the trade-offs between a strategy's security and nonsecurity components is a comprehensive reflection, because as the critics pointed out, "it comes at the expense of excluding certain behaviors that could impinge on security competition."⁵⁹

What's more, despite that the authors acknowledge that it is more difficult and costly for countries that have alliances with the U.S. (such as Japan) to adopt hedging strategies, the possibility remains.⁶⁰ Therefore I argue Japan's engagement

⁵⁹ A comment received by Lim and Cooper from an anonymous reviewer.

⁶⁰ Lim, D. J., & Cooper, Z. (2015). Reassessing Hedging: The Logic of Alignment in East Asia. *Security Studies*, 24(4), pp.707. "If a secondary state in an alliance with a friendly great power

and sporadic goodwill towards China in the Taiwan Strait issue can be seen as hedging but not simply balancing both externally and internally. The following paragraphs will analyze the changing role of Japan in the Taiwan related issues in the new era and Japan's Taiwan Strait strategy in face of the new pattern of US-China Asia-Pacific rivalry.

1. The US-Japan Crisis Management Mechanism in the Taiwan Strait and Japan's Role

Following the end of the Cold War, the US-Japan alliance entered a new phase. This is not only because the original opponent, the Soviet Union, collapsed, and a rising China became more threatening, but also because the two countries have further deepened their alliance through further written agreements and closer alliance responsibility, and have contracted in their alliance strategy, focusing their main resources on the Asia-Pacific region. As a result of China's rapid growth in power and the accompanying subtle shift in the military balance in the Taiwan Strait, the US placed greater demands on the function of the alliance.

Consequently, the US-Japan alliance gradually shifted its strategy against China in the Taiwan Strait from unilateral US military deterrence to joint US-Japan alliance deterrence. Due to its geographical proximity and the gradually intensifying territorial disputes between China and Japan, Japan also felt a growing need to continue to maintain the alliance and ensure US protection. In line with US strategic needs, Japan has increased its involvement in Taiwan Strait issues, as well as gradually clarified its obligations and role in possible future Taiwan Strait crises, and increased its influence over Taiwan Strait crises through the use of the right to collective self-defense.

As the United States and Japan grew in their willingness and ability to intervene in the Taiwan Strait crisis, China also reacted with hardened responses and increased

wanted to improve its relations with the rival great power, its government could announce its intention to scale back alliance cooperation.”

international pressure on Taiwan. With the third Taiwan Strait crisis as a turning point, the “strategic ambiguity” of the US-Japan alliance on the Taiwan issue gradually began to shift to a focus on stronger deterrence against China and greater protection of Taiwan, which triggered stronger warning signals and military deterrence from Beijing, further increasing the risk of a contingency in the Taiwan Strait. The US-Japan crisis management mechanism in the Taiwan Strait also has undergone new changes under such circumstances.

During the third Taiwan crisis, the United States still had overall superiority in the Taiwan Strait. While the U.S. sent two aircraft carriers to give a deterrent signal to China, it also pressured the Taiwanese authorities not to act too provocatively and to prevent a war from being triggered by the “Taiwan independence force”. Japan, at this time, was still reluctant to become overly involved in the Taiwan Strait crisis due to unstable domestic politics and economy and fears of a complete deterioration in Sino-Japanese relations. Moreover, although the US-Japan Security Treaty covered the so-called “Far East”, relevant initiatives were never actually implemented and its practicality was problematic due to the restrictions of Japanese domestic law. Because the U.S. did not want to be restricted in its actions by Japanese domestic politics and laws, the U.S. and Japan did not reach effective consultation on the Taiwan Strait issue. During this period, the U.S. only unilaterally sent deterrent signals to China through limited military means, and as neither China nor Taiwan took further aggressive steps, the Taiwan Strait crisis was contained and the US-Japan alliance did not encounter a real “head-on-test”.⁶¹

It was not until the release of the 1997 guidelines that the U.S. and Japan formally incorporated the mechanism for managing crises in the Taiwan Strait into the military security of the US-Japan alliance. Against the backdrop of the changing distribution of power in the Asia-Pacific region and the restructuring of the US-Japan alliance, the guidelines emphasized cooperation in areas surrounding Japan that could have a significant impact on its security and shifted the focus of the alliance from the defense of Japan to the preservation of peace and stability in the region, making it possible for US-Japan military cooperation in a Taiwan Strait contingency. The tendency of the United States to bring Japan into a clearer stance

⁶¹ Funabashi, Y. (1999). *Alliance Adrift*. Council on Foreign Relations. pp.398-399.

on the Taiwan issue and to intensify US-Japanese intervention in the Taiwan Strait has become more conspicuous in the 21st century. Along with the aforementioned high-level discussions and joint statements, the U.S. and Japan have conducted a number of military exercises in the Taiwan Strait and have strengthened their missile deterrence capabilities against China by promoting the issue of deploying medium-range missiles in Japan to implement a strike capability against enemy bases.

Likewise, from the Japanese perspectives, such tendency is also somehow inevitable because of a dual motivations. That is to say, the intensification of the security environment in East Asia has boosted Japan's need for the US-Japan alliance and a more reliable commitment from the U.S. to Japan's security, while the relative decline in US power has forced Japan to upgrade its commitment and support to the alliance, one concrete manifestation of which is the intervention in the Taiwan Strait crisis in exchange for the U.S. honoring its security commitment to Japan on the Diaoyu Islands/Senkaku. Given that it cannot stand alone against a rising China, Japan has been seeking to keep the US presence in East Asia and maintain the alliance by sharing more alliance obligations and responsibilities, especially in the wake of Trump's shock to the alliance.

To Japan's luck, since the Biden administration took office, the US foreign strategy has revolved from the Trump's "America First" towards uniting allies in the Indo-Pacific to counter the "China threat". As the United States' largest ally in the Asia-Pacific, Japan, motivated by both external alliance requirements and internal security and interest concerns, has taken a even more harder line on the Taiwan Strait issue, actively integrating into the "Indo-Pacific Strategy" and supporting the US strategy of containing China with Taiwan. The former Japanese ambassador to the U.S. made it clear that "no matter if it is about the Senkaku or the Taiwan situation, the right order of consideration is first, what Japan can and should do, and then what the U.S. can do for Japan."⁶² Gen Nakatani, Japan's former defense minister, stated in an interview that Japan must bear the responsibility of any potential war where Hong Kong's democracy and Taiwan's independence would

⁶² 聚焦：日本对与美国合作应对尖阁问题忧心忡忡。(2021, March 15). 共同网. Retrieved March 29, 2023, from <https://china.kyodonews.net/news/2021/03/848841b08e13.html>

be endangered.⁶³ Japan's positive reaction on the Taiwan Strait issue managed to exchange for a clear statement from the U.S. that it "opposes any unilateral action that seeks to undermine Japan's administration of these islands"⁶⁴ and has led to further development of US-Japan military cooperation.

As Japan's function in the US deterrence deployment and its responsibility and support to the U.S. in a possible Taiwan Strait crisis became more concrete, its involvement in the Taiwan issue further deepened and the crisis management mechanism of the US-Japan alliance in the Taiwan Strait gradually developed. The transformation of Japan's domestic political, legal and public opinion environment also made possible the enhancement of Japan's position and role in the joint deterrence of the US-Japan alliance in the Taiwan Strait. Meanwhile, the power base of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) was gradually strengthened after Abe's return to power in 2012. In 2016, the controversial Legislation for Peace and Security came into force, which lifted Japan's right to collective self-defence and substantially increased Japan's ability to support the US-Japan alliance.

Although Abe's attempts to amend the constitution were not ultimately successful, the stability of the regime at that time was significantly improved compared to the 1990s, and the government's ability to drive major decisions was significantly enhanced. In contrast to the previous image of a logistical supporter in the alliance, Japan has since then emphasized the division of duties between a "spearhead" and a "shield". In other words, Japan wants to change the original ratio where offensive and deterrent capabilities were provided by the U.S. and direct defense was provided by the JSDF. In light of that, Japan has been more active in promoting the implementation of the "strike capability against enemy bases", which has been legally incorporated into the scope of self-defense according to Gen Nakatani, and Japan aims to improve its strike capability by refining practical means and operational plans.⁶⁵ By sharing more reciprocally the responsibility for the

⁶³ ダイヤモンド編集部, & 西井泰之. (2020, July 20). 中谷・元防衛相に聞く、イージス・アショア配備撤廃の「内情」. ダイヤモンド・オンライン. Retrieved April 1, 2023, from <https://diamond.jp/articles/-/243180?page=5>

⁶⁴ The Senkakus (Diaoyu/Diaoyutai) Dispute: U.S. Treaty Obligations (March 1, 2021)

⁶⁵ 日本前首相安倍重申应拥有对敌基地攻击能力. (2021, April 25). 上海日本研究交流中心. Retrieved April 1, 2023, from <http://www.sjsc.org.cn/2021/0425/xinwenzhongxin/10189.html>

construction and maintenance of the alliance's regional order, the internal interaction between the U.S. and Japan has changed and the effective continuation of the alliance in the new environment is made possible.

Moreover, since the ship collision incident in 2010, public opinion in Japan related to the Chinese government began to take a direct turn for the worse. With the Japanese government emphasizing that China has been changing the status quo by force, the Japanese public also began to perceive China as a threat to Japan's security, to the extent that confronting China became the primary goal of Japanese nationalism.⁶⁶

On the contrary, there has been a significant increase in the Japanese public's favorable opinion of the United States and the importance they attach to the US-Japan alliance. According to a Cabinet Office poll, the proportion of respondents who think highly of the US-Japan Security Treaty reached 81.2% in 2012, and 82.9% in 2015. Attitudes towards the situation in the Taiwan Strait have also changed, with 74% of Japanese respondents in favor of Japan's involvement in maintaining stability in the Taiwan Strait, compared to only 13% who oppose such action, according to polling data from the Nikkei.⁶⁷ The combination of the above factors provides a rational basis for Japan's change of role in the Taiwan Strait crisis management mechanism and serves as a backstop for Japan to play a greater role within the alliance.

2. Multidimensional Hedging: Japan's Strategy at the Moment

⁶⁶ Suzuki, S. (2015). The rise of the Chinese 'Other' in Japan's construction of identity: Is China a focal point of Japanese nationalism? *Pacific Review*, 28(1), pp.95–116.

⁶⁷ 日本経済新聞社. (2021, April 25). 台湾海峡の安定に関与「賛成」74% 日経世論調査. 日本経済新聞. Retrieved April 1, 2023, from <https://www.nikkei.com/article/DGXZQOUA231410T20C21A400000/>

As previously discussed, the historical origins and complex relations between states in Asia have resulted in a political environment in the region characterized by a high degree of uncertainty and volatility. With the absence of rule-based institutions and mechanisms, and the increasing intertwining of the “high politics” of security with the “low politics” of economic and cultural-historical issues, the Asian region features a “complex patchwork” (Cha, 2011), a puzzle that is difficult to understand. For example, the Sino-Japanese war and the historical issues between Japan and Korea have made relations between Asian neighbors extremely sensitive. The limited cooperation or unclear commitments to cooperation have led to a lack of mutual trust between countries, not to mention the significant disparity between countries in terms of regime, ethnicity and ideology.

Such uncertainty and complexity are now exacerbated by new regional variables brought by the intensifying US-China competition. The situation in the Taiwan Strait, constructed by the interaction of China, the United States and Japan, is subject to greater contingencies amidst the intensity of regional competition and increased strategic confrontation and the steadily rising strategic position of Taiwan in the countries concerned. Along with the new alliance dilemma facing the US-Japan alliance and geographical proximity, Japan’s perception of risk in the Taiwan Strait has undergone a substantial surge. As argued by Van (2014), the high level of uncertainty and complexity in the political environment in Asia has fostered the formation of hedging strategies because states are uncertain of how rivalry between the United States and China will play out, as well as of other states’ intentions. Likewise, the new variables in the current situation in the Taiwan Strait provide sufficient impetus for Japan to opt for for insist on a hedging strategy as it would not be willing to see itself exposed to bigger risks.

Although risk aversion is the primary motivation for taking measures in the face of risks or threats to the state, risks avoiding behavior is ultimately driven by the overriding aim of securing national interests and is therefore inseparable from the interest objectives. At a time of increased competition between the U.S. and China and heightened uncertainty in the Taiwan Strait, three major interests are at play in Japan’s adjustment of its policy. First, economically, Japan hopes to pursue deeper economic penetration and influence in Taiwan through greater involvement in the

Taiwan Strait, while still maintaining its economic ties with China and taking advantage of the opportunities for regional development brought about by China's rise. Second, politically, Japan expects to rely on the US-Japan alliance's Taiwan Strait management mechanism to strengthen relations with Taiwan and create conditions for expanding its influence in Asia, but it does not want to touch China's "bottom line" and completely antagonize it. Last but not least, militarily, Japan wants to take advantage of the US-Japan military cooperation in the Taiwan Strait to pursue military modernization and "normalization", including participation in multilateral security initiatives, yet on the other hand, it still holds concerns about being entrapped by the U.S. in an unaffordable war. Such opposing objectives of interest also justify Japan's choice of hedging strategy.

Japan's strategic choices in the Taiwan Strait at current stage also reflect the traits of multiple offsetting. Specifically, Japan has adopted a multidimensional hedging strategy that encompasses a set of multiple hedging instruments. Firstly, by fulfilling its alliance obligations through bargaining and engaging appropriately with China, Japan is avoiding over-dependence on the U.S. and seeking bigger autonomy on Taiwan Strait issues. Compared to the high-profile statements made by politicians and former government officials on the Taiwan issue and the situation in the Taiwan Strait, the official stance of the Japanese government seems to be much more moderate. Although the US-Japan Defence Cooperation Guidelines set out the obligations and responsibilities that both the U.S. and Japan should assume in response to contingencies in the Taiwan Strait, military operations have so far been limited to military exercises, and Japan has to date made no substantive moves that would pose a serious threat to China due to domestic legislation and concerns about entrapment as opposed to the increased US arms sales to Taiwan and its increased deployment of armies in Asia, which reveals the fact that Japan has not been as fully in step with the U.S. as it would have expected.

On the other hand, although Japan's "One China" policy has evolved since the Cold War, Japan's diplomatic relations with Beijing and Taipei are generally conducted under the basic "1972 structure". While Pro-Taiwan forces in Japan have been pushing for a Japanese version of the "Taiwan Relations Act", the

Japanese government still somehow shows reservations and no substantive progress has been made on this proposal. With regard to Beijing, Japan has not yet abandoned its strategy of appropriate engagement. In addition to close economic contacts, high-level dialogue between the two countries has continued and there have been several talks between the two governments on the Taiwan issue. Chinese Premier Li Qiang and Japanese Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi recently met in Beijing and discussed key issues such as the Taiwan issue. The military ministries of China and Japan also recently made a direct phone line for a maritime and air liaison mechanism, which shows some positive signs. And according to the Chinese Defense Ministry's announcement, such dialogues would help to safeguard regional peace and stability. Similar behavior of Japan could be interpreted as reserving leeway in relations with China. In other words, Japan has increased its autonomy in terms of security in the Taiwan Strait by taking on limited alliance obligations, while reducing the risk of deeper involvement and military responsibility in the Taiwan Strait through appropriate engagement with China.

Second, Japan adheres to the overall US strategy of balancing China and expresses its firm loyalty to the U.S. on Taiwan-related issues as a gesture of goodwill for the alliance. When it comes to relations with Taiwan, "playing the edge ball" remains a common Japanese tactic. By deepening quasi-official contacts between Japan and Taiwan in the low-political sphere and gradually extending them into the high-political sphere, Japan is actually modulating and breaching the "One-China" principle in a progressive way, thereby checking and balancing China. On Taiwan-related issues in the US-Japanese security cooperation, Japan has closely mirrored the US position, repeatedly expressing security concerns about the Taiwan Strait through joint statements and joining the U.S. in accusing China of changing the status quo. This is partly a reflection of Japan's need to counterbalance a rising China and partly a good way to show alliance loyalty to its ally.

In addition, Japan has actively contributed to Taiwan's integration into the Indo-Pacific strategy in line with the deployment of US allies in Asia. Since 2016, Japan has sought to build a quasi-alliance between Japan and Taiwan through the launch of the quasi-official "Taiwan-Japan maritime cooperation dialogue" and make

Taiwan an important component of the maritime security networks in the Indo-Pacific. Japan is also making efforts to cooperate with the United States in providing opportunities and platforms for the Taiwan authorities to participate in the Indo-Pacific Multilateral Security Dialogue. For example, in March 2018, Japan invited the Taiwan authorities to join the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QSD) in Tokyo as a participant. In 2021, the U.S., Japan, and Taiwan even held a trilateral security dialogue. According to Taiwan's Central News Agency, Abe remarked on this event that Taiwan, the United States, and Japan must spare no effort to develop in all areas such as undersea, airspace, cyber, and space, and that the three parties could consider sharing relevant knowledge and technology if necessary.

Third, as a non-big power participating in the Taiwan Strait issue alongside the other two great powers, China and the United States, Japan has been actively using economic pragmatism strategies to reduce its economic security risks and maximize its economic interests in the Taiwan Strait. One way of doing so is to promote the development of closer economic and trade relations between Japan and Taiwan, increasing its influence on the Taiwanese economy and strengthening its control over the Taiwanese economy through the remaining forces left over from history and the Pro-Japanese faction in Taiwan, in an attempt to turn Taiwan into a stabilizer of the Japanese economy and thus counteract the economic pressure from the United States and its excessive economic dependence on mainland China. Given the deterioration in cross-strait relations, Japan can also effectively fill the gap created by the setback in cross-strait economic and trade relations by exploiting some of the dividends to further reap economic benefits from Taiwan. In addition, maintaining good economic and trade connections with Taiwan has provided Japan with effective support in terms of supply chains, markets and raw materials. Especially at a time of intensifying technological competition between the U.S. and China, Japan is eager to strengthen its supply chain of important materials of the semiconductor industry with the help of Taiwan. To this end, Japan has made great efforts to promote cooperation between Japan and Taiwan in chip production by investing in TSMC, which has the world's leading semiconductor manufacturing technology and capabilities. To some extent,

Taiwan has become a solid “economic ally” for Japan. At the same time, despite the impact of China’s economic development on Japan’s related competitive industries, and that Japan’s increasing dependence on the Chinese economy is considered an important economic risk, Japan has not abandoned its economic ties with mainland China.

Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, Japan’s trade dependence on China has increased compared to the pre-pandemic period. China is now served as an important engine in driving Japan’s foreign trade and economic growth, as well as a large market to support Japan’s economic recovery. Coupled with the complementary industrial structures of the two countries and the investment of Japanese enterprises in China, strengthening economic and trade cooperation with China is a realistic necessity for the economic development of Japan. Confronted with the pandemic and the uncertainty it brings, the willingness of Japan to strengthen financial cooperation with China and promote regional economic integration has also been enhanced. In October 2021, the People’s Bank of China and the Bank of Japan renewed their currency swap agreement, with a size of RMB 200 billion/JPY 3,400 billion, valid for three years, which aims at maintaining financial stability and boosting economic development. Following the official activation of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (RCEP) in 2022, the channels for Sino-Japanese economic cooperation were expanded and it is promising to see a further strengthening of Sino-Japanese economic and trade relations.

Last but not least, Japan is currently exploring the construction of Japanese-led regional multilateral mechanisms to reduce its over-reliance on the US-led regional order and to enhance its strategic and economic autonomy. A distinctive feature of Japan’s diplomatic and security strategy in recent years can be reflected in its efforts to promote “quasi-alliance” relations with countries other than the U.S. and its system-building ambition in the Asia Pacific and around the world, which is an alternative to the US-Japan alliance that Japan can adopt due to constitutional limitations and historical reasons.⁶⁸ This “quasi-alliance” is envisaged mainly in

⁶⁸ 低调勾连欧印澳，日本多边拉群战略能取代日美同盟吗？. (2021, November 16). 网易. Retrieved April 4, 2023, from <https://www.163.com/dy/article/GP00V0DL05149512.html>

terms of cooperation with regional powers and middle powers, and more in terms of a “democratic alliance” for maritime security based on values.

With such a new diplomatic and security strategy, Japan’s practice can be understood as pursuing informal military alliances, where relevant countries have broad agreements and concrete measures in terms of threat definition and strategic consensus, security consultations, exchange of troop visits, and joint exercises. One of the targets of the Japanese quasi-alliance strategies is the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD). Since the first QUAD senior officials’ meeting in 2007, which was called for by Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, Japan has always had high expectations for it. With the relaunch of QUAD in 2017, Japan is playing a clear coordinating and bonding role to promote bilateral and multilateral defense cooperation. In order to build and consolidate the QUAD mechanism, Japan has also continued to promote Japan-Australia and Japan-India security cooperation relations, signing security agreements and Reciprocal Access Agreements (RAAs) for troops, and several trilateral dialogue and cooperation mechanisms (Japan-US-Australia, Japan-US-India, Japan-Australia-India) have been formed under the framework of the four countries.

Europe is another direction for Japan’s endeavor. In 2013, the Abe Cabinet positioned the European Union as an important strategic partner with “shared values and principles” in Japan’s first post-World War II National Security Strategy. For more than a decade, Japan has been working in various ways to enhance its security cooperation and policy communication with the EU, significantly raising the frequency of its contacts and high-level exchanges with the EU, while also using this relationship to promote its global policies. Japan and Europe have also signed a series of strategic or political documents. The Japan-Europe Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA), for example, which took effect in 2019, covers not only policy dialogue but also cooperation in addressing regional and global challenges. In particular, as the maritime security situation in India and Taiwan deteriorates, Japan and Europe are increasingly demonstrating their strategic intent to maintain a “rules-based” international order and to promote maritime security as a priority for military cooperation. Japan also has taken this opportunity to direct European countries to intervene in the South and East China

Seas, relying on extra-territorial forces to carry out all-around cooperation to contain China.

A similar attempt was made with the Indo-Pacific Vision. Being aware that the U.S. is gradually shifting its attention to the Indian and Pacific oceans, Japan take advantage of the “Asia-Pacific rebalancing” strategy implemented by the Obama administration to actively shape and enrich the framework of the Indo-Pacific Strategy, hoping that Japan will play a more important role in the region. After Abe returned to power in 2012, he proposed the idea of a “Democratic Security Diamond”,⁶⁹ calling on Japan, the United States, Australia, and India to jointly defend security and peace in the Pacific and Indian Oceans, and to work on maritime security and counterbalance China, which is the prototype of the Japanese version of the “Indo-Pacific strategy”. It not only plays the role of supplementing and strengthening the US-Japan alliance but also contains an intention of building a Japan-led security cooperation network in the future, one less dependent on the United States. In 2016, Abe formally launched the vision of the “Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)” and actively promoted it on various diplomatic occasions in an attempt to receive wider recognition and get other countries to participate in the strategy. While Japan is certainly under no illusion that these “informal alliances” and regional cooperation mechanisms under Japanese lead can replace the U.S. as the pillar to Japan’s security, it undoubtedly sees it as an important reassurance option for its national security strategy and an effective complementary tool to counterbalance China.

To summarize, Japan’s practices in handling states’ relations relating to the Taiwan issue in recent years contains three necessary elements of hedging, namely risk aversion, interest objectives, and multiple instruments with certain offsetting effects. And taking into account that it is implementing such strategy with multiple combination of hedging instruments which covers all aspects of political and economic security, Japan’s strategy on the Taiwan Strait issue at current stage can be understood as one of Multidimensional Hedging.

⁶⁹ Asia’s Democratic Security Diamond. (2012, December 27). Project Syndicate. Retrieved April 2, 2023, from <https://www.project-syndicate.org/magazine/a-strategic-alliance-for-japan-and-india-by-shinzo-abe?language=english&barrier=accesspaylog>

Chapter VI. Conclusion

Although Taiwan and the Taiwan Strait are topics of keen discussion among scholars of international relations, the two great powers, the United States and China, the relations between the two countries, and the island's fluctuating political

parties and identity concerns are dynamics that are frequently considered. Especially in light of the intensifying US-China rivalry, Japan has received insufficient attention or enough credit for its role as a significant actor in the Taiwan Strait. While some of the literature examines Japan's Taiwan policy and its involvement in the Taiwan Strait issue, typically, Japan is considered to be a follower of US strategy and policy in the Taiwan Strait. Such studies focus on exploring the parallels and uniformity between Japan's Taiwan policy and that of the US, viewing changes in the US Asian and global strategy as the independent variable of Japan's Taiwan policy and its practices in the Taiwan Strait. This research argues that Japan is not simply following the strategy set by the United States, but that its Taiwan policy and Taiwan Strait strategy encompasses important considerations related to national strategy. In other words, Japan's Taiwan policy and Taiwan Strait practices are an integral part of Japan's national strategy, and Japan is attempting to utilize the Taiwan issue as an opportunity to achieve its national strategic goals.

This research aims to identify the strategic implications of Japan's apparent policy alignment with the United States on Taiwan policy and to explore how Japan may utilize the Taiwan issue to achieve a more ambitious and longer-term national strategy. The core proposition of this research is that one cannot judge Japan's lack of strategic considerations simply by its follow-through behavior when the core interests of the U.S. and Japan are aligned; rather, it is the US-Japan disagreement that is the main place to observe whether Japan has its own strategy. That is the reason why this research pays more attention to the differences in policy development and implementation between the U.S. and Japan, as well as Japan's policy changes in different periods. By looking into the historical changes in Japan's Taiwan policy, how Japan's strategic perception of the Taiwan Strait has changed over time, and how those two things are related, this research is intended to contribute to a more thorough intellectual support for the analysis of Japan's policy toward Taiwan and its national strategy.

The findings of this research support my arguments that Japan's Taiwan policy is not a choice by default, but rather a result of strategic consideration and that Japan's policy towards Taiwan and its moves on issues related to the Taiwan Strait

since World War II is not a simple copy&paste of the US policy. Due to the asymmetrical nature of the US-Japan alliance, Japan's foreign policy framework was tied to the US East Asia strategy and its Taiwan policy had a clear US imprint. Yet, with Japan's increased power, its intention and ability to construct and intervene in the Taiwan issue from strategic and security perspectives have been growing. Even though the US-Japan policy commonalities are greater, there are several differences between Japanese and the US policies related to the Taiwan Issue and their stances and actions in the Taiwan Strait as a result of divergences in the priority motivations concerning Taiwan, as well as gaps in the perception of the Chinese threat caused by factors such as geography and economics.

Unlike the United States, which aims to use the Taiwan issue to contain or slow down China's rise, Japan's primary motivation for interfering in the Taiwan issue is to safeguard its security interests and national interests. Because of its limited strength and closer economic and geographical ties with China, Japan lacks the same resolve and capacity to contain China as the United States. In terms of policy goals and strategic objectives, Japan is more inclined to take advantage of the Taiwan Strait issue as a showcase of Japan's international status and influence both at home and abroad, and secondly, to escalate military cooperation with the United States, encourage the transformation of Japan's security strategy, and achieve the ultimate goal of normalization. Such compounded goals and objectives lead Japan to employ means and tactics not identical to those of the U.S. when interfering in the Taiwan issue and the situation in the Taiwan Strait, and also leave more room for maneuver when dealing with relations with China and Taiwan.

Moreover, This research finds that alliance management is a viable explanation for the phenomenon that Japan and the U.S. are generally on the same page yet remain somehow divergent on the Taiwan issue. The US-Japan military cooperation in the Taiwan Strait has long played a role in maintaining and deepening the alliance. Both countries see the Taiwan issue as an important opportunity to demonstrate loyalty as well as mutual reassurance should alliance dilemmas emerge. Faced with a new alliance dilemma arising from the intensifying US-China rivalry, Japan, as the less powerful member of the alliance, still explores ways to use the Taiwan issue to maintain and manage the alliance as much as possible and to maximize the

benefits from the alliance, which explains why Japan seems to be more submissive to the will of the U.S. on the Taiwan issue recently.

However, there are evident limits to the dynamics of Japan's alliance-based strategy regarding Taiwan, which are influenced by variables including Sino-Japanese relations, US-China relations, and the disparities between the U.S. and Japan in regard to Taiwan. In other words, Japan is not putting all of its bets on the US-Japan alliance. Because of its history and fundamental features of national development, Japan is a country vulnerable to changes from outside and subject to great influence from the international situation, which necessitates the pursuit of additional chances for international cooperation in order to lower external threats. This mindset informs Japan's strategic decisions about how to handle risks and threats in the Taiwan Strait. At the moment, Japan is attempting to strike a balance between the US-Japan alliance, Sino-Japanese relations, and Japan's broader vision of regional cooperation by using multidimensional hedging.

To conclude, it is fair to say that Japan is not a fully independent actor in the Taiwan Strait issue, yet, despite that in most cases the U.S. and Japan are consistent in their policies toward Taiwan, we cannot say that Japan is completely devoid of its own strategic considerations on the Taiwan Strait issue. As is evidenced in this research, Japan's Taiwan policy differs from that of the United States. from several perspectives and has been strategizing it as a tactic for managing the US-Japan alliance. The Taiwan-related mechanisms of the US-Japan alliance have provided Japan with the impetus to continue to develop the US-Japan security relationship so that it would not be abandoned or trapped, which also has become Japan's leverage to wield larger influence in Asia and the world. It is expected that Japan will continue to try to play a bigger role in the Taiwan Strait issue as it secures its status in the alliance and rationalizes the expansion of The Japan Self-Defense Forces for the purposes of both alliance obligations and national defence.

Future research on Taiwan could focus more attention on Japan and how it has specifically used the Taiwan issue to achieve national strategic goals.

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Abstract

중요한 참여자임에도 불구하고, 일본은 미국과 중국을 중심으로 한 대만 해협 연구에서 오랫동안 과소평가되어 왔습니다. 일본의 대만 정책은 일반적으로 미국의 대만 정책에 종속되고 있는 것으로 간주됩니다. 본 연구는 일본이 단순히 미국을 추종하는 것이 아니라, 대만 정책과 대만해협 전략에 국가 전략과 관련된 중요한 고려사항을 포함하고 있다고 주장합니다. 일본의 대만 정책의 진화를 설명하기 위해 본 연구는 동맹 관리라는 새로운 관점을 도입시켰습니다. 일본은 대만해협 문제를 이용해 동맹을 유지하고 정상 국가화를 실현하고 아시아와 세계에서 더 큰 영향력을 행사하고 있는 것으로 나타났습니다.