



The transformation of Japan's grand strategy under the Democratic Party of Japan and the second Abe administration: change and continuity

By:

Dmitry Filippov

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

The University of Sheffield
Faculty of Social Sciences
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Abstract

This thesis analyses the shifts in Japan's grand strategy in the last decade, examining the role that the Democratic Party of Japan and the second Abe administration played in Japan's strategic trajectory relative to the postwar Yoshida doctrine. To determine the extent to which these governments' reforms were transformative to the direction of the Japanese foreign policy, it uses the concept of grand strategy as an analytical framework and examines the recent changes in Japan's foreign policy on three levels, including the prime ministers's views, the foreign-policy making process, and the security environment surrounding Japan. It also engages in a number of contemporary debates regarding the evolution of Japan's grand strategy and the emergence of a so-called Abe doctrine, as well as its transformative power and ideological foundations.

The thesis concludes that the Kan, Noda, and Abe administrations all developed the same trend aimed at adapting Japan's grand strategy to the post-Cold War security environment and gradually relaxing postwar military constraints by increasing its influence in international affairs, moderately modernising its national defence capabilities, and expanding the geographical and substantive scope of the US-Japan alliance. This strategic direction towards goes against the principles of the Yoshida doctrine but reflects the domestic debates about the future of Japanese foreign and security policies. The first DPJ prime minister Hatoyama Yukio attempted to deviate from that trend by proposing an alternative strategy based on Japan conducting a more independent foreign policy, distancing itself from the US, and strengthening ties with East Asia. However, after he failed to implement it, his successors not only returned to the previous direction of foreign policy, but accelerated it by passing a number of epochal reforms, which were continued in a more strategic manner by Abe and led to the transformation of Japan's security posture. However, despite these reforms signifying a clear departure from the Yoshida doctrine, they ultimately represent evolution rather than revolution within the context of Japan's post-Cold War adjustment and realignment of its security stance. Furthermore, the DPJ's reforms were instrumental in the implementation of Abe's agenda and it can be argued that it is in the DPJ's policies that the origins of Abe's grand strategy lie.

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Introduction

The Asia-Pacific is one of the most important regions in the world. A driver of modern global economy, it possesses a great economic potential. Japan, China, and the United States are the three key players in the region, representing the top three economic powers and having the most technologically advanced military capabilities. The Japan-China-US strategic triangle constitutes the most important trilateral relationship in the world, with East Asia becoming the area of contentions of these powers' interests. Amidst the dynamically changing security environment, Japan faces the questions of its regional and global role, increasing its international prestige, as well as solving the problems directly affecting the stability and prosperity of both Japan itself and the region at large. To that end, Japan had to revitalise its foreign policy and adapt its grand strategy to the contemporary threats and challenges.

For almost a half century after World War II, Japanese diplomacy was based on the grand strategy introduced by Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru, known as the Yoshida doctrine and implemented by the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). It consisted of three elements (Cooney, 2007, 36; Sebata, 2010; 199): developing Japan's economy by maximising economic diplomacy; maintaining a low international posture and avoiding involvement in international affairs; and completely relying on the US for national security. Pacifism was a key element of the Yoshida doctrine, institutionalised by the US occupational administration after the war and enshrined in the Article 9 of the Japanese constitution. According to Article 9, "aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes" (Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet). Thus, Japan became a unique example of a state the national interests of which were being achieved through economic rather than military means. This strategy led Japan to impressive economic growth and guided its foreign policy until the end of the 1990s.

The end of the Cold War drastically changed the structure of international relations. The disappearance of old threats and the emergence of new ones, as well as the acceleration of globalisation and regionalisation required Japan to modify its diplomatic strategy. The new security environment convinced many among Japan's political elite that the Yoshida doctrine was not sufficient anymore in protecting Japan's national and economic interests and is not compatible with the shifting international system. The rise of China, North Korea's missile and nuclear programme, as well as growing doubts regarding the resilience of the US-Japan alliance all eroded the national consensus around the Yoshida doctrine. The end of the Cold War gave Japan not only the incentive, but also the capacity to formulate and implement a new grand strategy, which would be better suited to the contemporary security environment and more conducive to Japan's interests.

By most standards, Japan possesses all the qualities of a great power. It is the third largest economy in the world, the second largest United Nations (UN) and International Monetary Fund (IMF) donor, as well as one of the leaders in providing Official Development Assistance (ODA). Its Self-Defence Forces (SDF) are equipped with modern technology and are theoretically capable of producing nuclear weapons. Despite Japan being able to become a dominant military power in East Asia, until recently it preferred a passive, low-profile diplomacy and only significantly modified its security posture in the last ten years.

The recent shifts in Japan's grand strategy warrant close examination for several reasons. Firstly, the political and security environment in East Asia is becoming more severe and unpredictable, with the balance of power between the key three actors – China, Japan, and the US – going through change. In particular, Japan is faced with security issues near its borders becoming more relevant, as well as increased competition for economic and political leadership in the region. Firstly, it has to acknowledge the growing role of China, which overtook Japan as the number one East Asian economic power in 2010. China's political and military influence in

the region is rising as well, with its maritime policies becoming more assertive. Secondly, this period is marked by the US shifting its political, economic, and military priorities to the Asia-Pacific region and enhancing ties with regional allies and partners, including Japan. While the US-Japan alliance continues to be the cornerstone of Japan's foreign and security policies for Japan's political leadership, there also exist persistent doubts as to the extent of America's commitment to defend Japan in the event of a conflict with China, which incentivises a search for new security partners. Asian regionalism has also become a significant factor in the development of Japan's diplomatic strategy: as the main driver of global economy which was the first to recover from the 2008 financial crisis, East Asia represents an increasingly enticing direction for Japan's engagement.

Secondly, the shifts in Japan's grand strategy reflect the recent changes in Japan's domestic politics as well. In 2009, the DPJ became the first party to end the LDP's virtual monopoly on power that had lasted for nearly a half-century. The party campaigned on curbing bureaucratic authority to generate strong political leadership and went against the foundations of the Yoshida doctrine by intending to put a stop to Japan's unilateral orientation on the US, while reorienting Japan towards China and the broader East Asia. Despite the failure to achieve its foreign policy goals, the case of the DPJ provides the only example of a non-LDP ruling party not simply envisioning but attempting to implement a strategy radically different from all previous postwar doctrines, which considered the US-Japan alliance the cornerstone of Japan's diplomacy.

In 2012, the LDP returned to power led by Abe Shinzō, whose political agenda in both diplomacy and national security was so clearly articulated and comprehensive in scope that it came to be known as the Abe doctrine. Standing in contrast to the Yoshida doctrine, Abe's reforms were aimed at invigorating Japan's foreign and security policies and adapting the country's strategic posture to the shifting regional security architecture. The Abe doctrine has

attracted a lot of attention from journalists, academic, and Japan's neighbouring states alike due to the scope and nature of his reforms, overturning some of the basics of Japan's security strategy which were upheld for many decades. Coupled with Abe's right-wing credentials and nationalistic, revisionist personal views, his doctrine has been criticised for radicalism and a departure from Japan's postwar pacifism, while fears of a resurgent Japanese militarism have been expressed by China and South Korea, who view Abe's intentions of achieving greater regional influence with suspicion (Sakaki, 2015, 5).

It was during the DPJ's governance and the second Abe administration that arguably the biggest shifts in Japan's grand strategy took place, with both competing visions implemented by Hatoyama on the one hand and Kan, Noda, and Abe on the other representing a clear departure from the foundations of the Yoshida doctrine, one reorienting Japan away from the US and towards East Asia and specifically China, and the other increasing Japan's involvement in international affairs and significantly altering its defence posture.

Thus, it is of import to not just analyse the characteristics and significance of the Abe doctrine in a vacuum, but examine the role of the preceding DPJ administrations in developing Japan's grand strategy, establish the connection of their reforms to Abe's, and assess the recent shifts in Japan's posture in a strategic and historical context.

The primary question of this research is to what extent the DPJ and Abe governance was transformative of Japan's grand strategy in relation to the Yoshida doctrine.

The subject of the dissertation concerns Japan's contemporary grand strategy, as well as its evolution and practical implementation in the areas of foreign and security policies. These policies are analysed in the broader context of the regional security environment.

To answer this question, several secondary objectives are put forward. Firstly, this work tries to determine the nature of the shifts in Japan's grand strategy under the DPJ and Abe by

juxtaposing them with the principles of the Yoshida doctrine: unilateral orientation of the US; severely limited military capabilities; and a low profile in global political and security issues.

Secondly, it interrogates the political background, personal views, and leadership styles of the four prime ministers presiding over this period to help determine the direction in which they took Japan's foreign policy, with particular attention given to Hatoyama Yukio and Abe Shinzō.

Thirdly, it examines the domestic political environment in which the DPJ and Abe were enmeshed, as well as their foreign-policy making process to clarify the formulation of their policies.

Finally, it elucidates the strategic environment in East Asia throughout this period, focusing on US engagement and China's rising influence, in order to better understand the impact of this environment on changes in Japan's grand strategy.

The chronological scope of the research includes the period between 2009 and 2016, thus comprising the three consecutive DPJ administrations, as well as the first several years of the second Abe administration. However, the analysis of these shifts would be incomplete without addressing Japan's previous foreign policy doctrines and initiatives. Therefore, the dissertation's two case studies are preceded by a background chapter containing a brief examination of Japanese diplomacy between the end of the Cold war and the DPJ's rise to power.

From a theoretical and methodological standpoint, this research is located in the field of Japanese studies rather than International Relations (IR) and thus does not adhere to or develop the theories of IR. Instead, it leans on existing studies of Japan's foreign policy within the area of Japanese studies and used grand strategy as the analytical framework, which allows to scrutinise the subject in a comprehensive manner, viewing it as not just a set of changing foreign policies, but an evolution or recalibration of the overarching vision of Japan's political leadership of what goals Japan should pursue, what its place in the world should be, and through what means to

achieve it. Methodologically, this work analyses the recent shifts in Japan's grand strategy using the case study approach, supplemented by interviews with scholars of Japanese foreign policy and former policy-makers. The examination is conducted through a three-level analysis broadly based on foreign policy analysis (FPA), though not deploying FPA theoretical models.

Structurally, this research consists of an introduction, five chapters, a conclusion, and a list of references. The introduction sets the parameters of the research and touches on its relevance, contribution, and objectives. The first chapter includes a literature review examining the major narratives and debates around the issues pertinent to the research question. The second chapter is dedicated to the theoretical and methodological approaches of the research. The third chapter takes as its area of concern the historical aspect of Japan's grand strategy, presenting an overview of the post-Cold war security environment, and the domestic debates regarding Japan's place in the world. The fourth and fifth chapters comprise the case studies which analyse, respectively, the DPJ's and the second Abe administration's role in the evolution of Japan's grand strategy. The conclusion presents a summary of the main findings of the research and homes in on its contributions to the current understanding of the subject.

The main arguments of the research can be summarised as follows.

Firstly, the national security reforms undertaken by the Kan, Noda, and Abe administrations had a profound effect on the development of Japan's grand strategy, adapting it to the new security environment, and constituting a major departure from the Yoshida doctrine guiding Japan's international behaviour since the 1950s. While the general trend towards Japan's greater involvement in international security, enhancement of the US-Japan alliance, and moderate remilitarisation had been incrementally developing since the 1990s, it was the Kan, Noda, and Abe governments that played the most transformative role in the evolution of the Japanese grand strategy.

Secondly, Hatoyama's premiership stands as an exception to the aforementioned trend, with his views on the parameters of Japan's foreign policy proving incompatible with contemporary security environment. However, while idealistic and lacking in coherence, Hatoyama's vision of a diplomatically autonomous Japan, which distances itself from the US, maintains friendship with China, and emphasises its East Asian identity represented an alternative grand strategy for Japan, different from both the Yoshida doctrine and the new emerging approach, accelerated after Hatoyama's resignation by his successors.

Thirdly, Abe's sweeping reforms, while being of great significance for Japan, fundamentally develop the already existing trajectory and continue the reforms initiated by his predecessors. Moreover, despite the differences between the DPJ's and Abe's political programmes, it is exactly between Kan and Noda's policies and Abe's reforms that unexpected, direct continuity can be found, from the broader vision of Japan's strategic posture to specific initiatives. While Japan's latest foreign and security policies are associated with an emerging Abe doctrine standing in contrast to the Yoshida doctrine, these policies are in fact rooted in the reforms undertaken by the two of Abe's predecessors. It was specifically the DPJ that laid the groundwork for Abe's comprehensive reforms, which points towards an emerging supra-partisan consensus in Japan with regards to the basic priorities of foreign policy.

Fourthly, while the Kan and Noda's reforms were severely hampered by domestic factors, generally lacked a strategic approach, and were rather conducted on an ad hoc basis, the Abe government's foreign and security agenda can be characterised as coherent and all-encompassing, transforming Japan's security profile and lifting restrictions that had previously been in place for several decades.

Fifthly, while Abe's foreign and security agenda is often described as nationalistic and revisionist, his policies have shown to be more pragmatic than ideological throughout his second term. Since his reforms failed during his first premiership due to being too ideologically-charged,

Abe shifted towards a more moderate, practical agenda, as evidenced by some of his appointments and the faction-defying, broad support he enjoys from the LDP.

Finally, despite the conventional notion of the Japanese bureaucracy playing the dominant role in foreign-policy making, its influence was severely curtailed under the Hatoyama and Abe administrations, though the respective prime ministers approached the issue differently. Under Abe in particular, foreign-policy making was characterised by growing centrality and effectively controlled by the prime minister and his advisors.

The research, situated in the area of Japanese studies, strives to add to a number of existing discussions around Japan's contemporary grand strategy. Firstly, it challenges the widespread notion of Abe's reforms as being a radical departure from the past foreign policy (Dobson, 2016, Manurung, 2017), arguing for more continuity when both taken in the broader context of Japanese security policy and compared to Abe's immediate predecessors, while at the same time also acknowledging their comprehensive, strategic nature.

Secondly, it posits the distinction between Abe's private views and his actual policies, characterising his foreign policy as being based first and foremost on pragmatism despite Abe himself holding nationalistic views.

Thirdly, it modifies the understanding of the DPJ's foreign and security policy record, emphasising the landmark reforms in the national security area by Kan and Noda, and draws direct parallels between the DPJ's and Abe's reforms.

Fourthly, it corrects the image of Hatoyama's diplomacy as uniquely naïve and incompetent (Helms, 2012; Inoguchi and Ikenberry, 2013; Yahuda, 2013), by acknowledging its incompatibility with the changing security environment and lack of coherence, but at the same time emphasising that Hatoyama acted within the same political framework as other prime

ministers and that his alternative vision for Japan's grand strategy was as distinct from the Yoshida doctrine as it was from the Abe doctrine.

Finally, it elucidates foreign-policy making, particularly under Abe, to highlight a marked decrease in the bureaucracy's influence on formulating Japan's grand strategy.

Chapter 1. Literature review

1.1. Explaining Japan's international behaviour

Academic assessments of Japan's post-war foreign policy significantly vary. For instance, Blaker (1993) argues that Japan's diplomatic strategy has been unsuccessful, with Japanese foreign-policy makers failing to implement even the self-imposed objectives, let alone being able to live up to the international community's expectations. Conversely, Samuels (2007, 7, 8) has said this of Japan's international behaviour: "there has been no more pragmatic or more rational state than Japan; few have been more agile, and none has been more normal". To substantiate such an assessment, he argues that Japan traditionally has been doing what states usually do in order to minimise risks and maximise gains, which is hedge between the West (primarily the US) and East Asia in both economic and security dimensions of foreign policy. Mochizuki (2007b, 1) goes further, acknowledging the "reactive" nature of Japan's behaviour but maintaining that Japan's post-war foreign policy has been a "stunning success" that has brought prosperity and security to its people with little costs.

Another point of contention among researchers of Japan's foreign policy has to do with the factors that act as the primary drivers of Japan's international behaviour. For instance, Katzenstein and Okawara (1991, 59) argued straight after the end of the Cold War that the structure of the international system was becoming a less important driver of Japan's security policy, and that Japan's interests were mainly determined by its domestic structure and norms. Katzenstein later (1996b, 204) stated that Japan's security policy will be chiefly driven by domestic political considerations. Conversely, Pyle (2007) points out that every time the structure of the international system changed, Japan would adapt to it by restructuring its domestic politics. Similarly, Reischauer (1977, xv) has argued that the "chief determinants [of foreign policy] are inevitably the actual international realities". Samuels (2007, 4) takes the

middle ground, arguing that there is no reason to put one factor above the other as both play off each other and there is no telling which would end up shaping Japan's foreign policy.

Regardless of these general discussions about the success of Japan's diplomacy or its drivers, two contending explanations have emerged to understand the Japanese phenomenon of conducting passive foreign policy despite wielding great economic power: Japan as a reactive state and Japan adhering to a grand strategy.

1.1.1. Japan as a reactive state

Japan's role in the postwar international system has usually been described as passive, low-profile or reactive (Mochizuki, 2007b; Calder, 1988; Hook *et al.*, 2012). Some scholars attribute this passiveness to Japan being a reactive state with a foreign policy that is not a result of a grand strategy but that is instead formulated in response to the shifts in the international system. Kent Calder, who has coined introduced the very term "reactive state" to the academic discourse has referred (1988, 519) to the manner in which Japan's foreign policy reacts to external demand as "erratic, unsystematic and often incomplete". He has argued that the foreign policy inertia endemic to Japan is a result of its political culture, characterised by a slow decision-making process and factional nature of the ruling party, and deep-rooted pacifism. The constraining role of Japan's political system has also been highlighted by Stockwin, 1988, attributing Japan's immobile and reactive foreign policy in part to the disparate interests of various political actors. Echoing Calder, Yuzawa (2007, 5) has asserted that Japan's passive international behaviour is a reflection of the country's unwillingness to use military force undergirded by Article 9 of the Constitution. Michael Blaker (1993) and Gerald Curtis (Curtis, 1993; Kato, 2015) characterise Japan's low-risk, reactive foreign policy as "coping" in the sense that the main approach for Japan's political actors has involved coping with challenges, opportunities and constraints created by other states. Meanwhile, the proactive steps undertaken by Japan on the international stage are often attributed within the reactive state paradigm to the notion of *gaiatsu*, or external

pressure which can both propel or hobble Japanese policies (Calder, 1988; Yasutomo, 1995). As Cooney (2007, 134, 137-139) asserts, US pressure is an issue that runs throughout the formulation of Japanese security policy. He offers two key reasons for the persistent strength of American *gaiatsu*: the belief that what is good for the US is also good for Japan, and the fact that Japan's foreign policy and national security is largely based on American goodwill. The sheer influence of the US on Japan's postwar foreign policy is perhaps best summarised by Mochizuki *et al.*'s (2007, 12) argument that Japan "pursues a foreign policy from the set menu of choices offered by the United States", while Rosenbluth and Thies (2010) characterise the Japanese leadership as a "reluctant buyer of American foreign policy at prices largely dictated in Washington".

Japan's traditional reliance on the United States in foreign policy making is often put forth to make sense of Japan's reactive international behaviour (Miyashita, 1999; Blaker, 1993; Hellmann, 1972). Lincoln (1993) identifies the following factors which have contributed to Japan's unilateral orientation of the US: historical legacy and Japan's occupation by the US; a sense of international hierarchy where the US occupies the top position; and a concern for sustaining close economic and security ties. Dobson (2003, 20) attributes Japan following in the footsteps of American diplomacy to the Cold War bipolar structure of international relations. As he explains, having adapted to the system of bipolarity, Japan failed to adopt policies in line with the transformation of the international system and instead continued following the US, while the bilateral relationship became a normative force regulating and constituting Japan's policy.

1.1.2. Japan and grand strategy

The other, arguably more sophisticated viewpoint of Japanese diplomacy acknowledges its low-profile nature, but posits that Japan's passiveness does not stem from its inability to formulate proactive foreign policy, but rather is a result of strategic calculations based on national and economic interests. By letting others take initiative in international relations, Japan is allowed to

increase its economic power and slowly enhance diplomatic clout. From this standpoint, foreign policy is not produced through competition of disparate actors, but is carefully developed based on the consensus of politicians, officials, and big business regarding Japan's national strategy and interests.

Proponents of the Japanese grand strategy theory argue that Japan's understanding of national power differs from that of the US, focusing on economic and technological progress rather than military might. Samuels has referred (2007) to Japan's strategy as "mercantile realism", Drifte, Chapman, and Gow have evoked (1983) the concept of "comprehensive security", Green considers (2001) Japan's strategy an example of or "reluctant realism", while Midford (2011) calls it "defensive realism". Such approach makes sense for Japan as a middle power, which does not face existential security threats and entrusts its national security to the global great power (Dobrinskaya, 2018, 79-80).

A somewhat different interpretation of Japan's strategy was expressed by Berger (2007), who referred to Japan as an "adaptive state", which is capable of quickly reshaping and adapting its foreign policy to the changing international system, and subsequently incorporating these changes into its grand strategy. Similarly to Samuels, Berger posits that Japan's foreign policy is guided not by a pursuit of military power, but a desire to enhance multilateral cooperation and participate in solving global issues.

Many scholars propose the so-called Yoshida doctrine as a variant of the Japanese grand strategy underpinning Japan's postwar diplomacy (Mochizuki, 2007b, 2; Hellmann, 1988, 346; Funabashi, 1991, 61). Formulated by Yoshida Shigeru, who served as prime minister in 1946-1947 and later between 1948 and 1954, was based on relying on the US-Japan alliance for protection, maintaining a low diplomatic profile, as well as prioritising economic development over military power. It was specifically Japan's economic lagging compared to the US which caused its defeat in World War II, thus a quick economic rise became a priority after the war.

With Japan's defence spending extremely limited due to being entrusted to the US armed forces, it had the benefit of focusing on economic matters. As Panov states (2014, 266), the prewar slogan "rich nation, strong army" (*fukoku kyōhei*) was exchanged for "rich nation, weak army" (*fukoku jakuhei*).

While this approach made Japan dependent on the US policy, especially in the foreign and security areas, Japanese political elites agreed that it was the only way for Japan to be accepted back into the fold of the international community. As Pyle notes (1996, 41), the Yoshida doctrine reflected a postwar political compromise between the pacifist opposition and the conservative leadership, which included both pragmatists and revisionists, the latter of whom strived to revise the pacifist constitution and achieve independence from the US. As Yoshida stated in his memoirs, while Japan's approach towards the US should change as soon as the economy was improved and Japan's international prestige and self-respect increased, supporting friendly ties with the US based on deep common interests should remain one of the pillars of Japanese policy (Yoshida, 1955, 8). However, Yoshida's desire to recalibrate the US-Japan relations once its economic power had increased was never realised, and the US continued to occupy the central place in Japanese diplomacy.

Rosenbluth and Thies (2010) argue that under the Yoshida doctrine, Japan's relations with the United States could be encapsulated in the approach of "concede as much as necessary, but as little as possible", i.e. relying on America as much as necessary to sustain stable alliance ties, but providing as little financial contribution as possible so as to minimise military spending and focus on economic development instead. Despite not being officialised under any document and rather based a number of tacit principles, the Yoshida doctrine underwrote Japan's development for nearly half a century, allowing it to achieve the status of a great economic power, all the while precluding it from seeking international prestige or security independence.

Interestingly, while the Yoshida doctrine entailed Japan only possessing minimal defensive capabilities, with the US acting as the guarantor of its national security, Sebata (2010, 199-200) notes that Yoshida himself came to support Japan's rearmament, believing that its military potential should be built up in proportion to its national power, which was the same rationale behind Japan's gradual military expansion in the 1980s and 1990s.

In his seminal work on Japan's grand strategy (2007b, 1-3), Richard Samuels observes that many scholars disagree that Japan has or have ever had a single grand strategy in the first place, due to the various strands of its foreign policy being too diverse or even incompatible and, more importantly, Japan relying on its alliance with the United States for national security, building relations with other countries exclusively within the framework of US bilateralism.

He goes on (2007b, 15) to argue that, however, that a Japanese grand strategy not only exists, but has generally been preoccupied with the same key dilemmas. He suggests four moments of consensus among various political actors that have marked Japan's grand strategy since those times. The first formed in the wake of the Meiji Restoration and was epitomised by the concept of "rich nation, strong army". The resurgent empire was intent on applying Western technology and ideas in order to place Japan on the tracks of modernity and eventually catch up to the West. The second consensus embodied by the notion of a "Greater East Asia co-prosperity sphere" appeared in the lead-up to World War II when Japan reinvented itself as the liberator of Asia from the malign influence of Western empires, and ended with Japan's defeat in the war. During most of the post-war years, Japan's strategy was driven by the Yoshida Doctrine whereby the country "outsourced" its national security to the US, restricted the use of force and focused on economic development instead. Now, as Samuels points out, as Japan is confronted with the rising China, a fourth consensus is in the making but has not yet been forged. He argues that the current debate with regard to Japan's grand strategy is focused on developing a strategy which he describes as the

"Goldilocks consensus": an approach which would be not too hard or too soft, not too dependent on the US and not too susceptible to China, not too Asian and not too Western.

Of particular interest to the understanding of Japan's strategy during the Cold War is Hosoya Yūichi's essay (2011b) on Japan's search for a new national identity. In it, he argues that Japan's postwar diplomacy was in fact based on broader principles than put forth in the Yoshida doctrine. He points out that the Foreign Ministry Diplomatic Bluebook of 1957 established three key elements of Japanese foreign policy: UN-oriented diplomacy, maintaining Japan's position as a member of Asia, and cooperation with the free world. These principles both continued the major strands of Japan's prewar diplomacy (internationalism, pan-Asianism, and cooperation with the UK and the US) and represented the interests of the three key organisational units within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs: the International Legal Affairs Bureau, the Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau, and the North American Affairs Bureau. Hosoya posits that these three pillars determined Japan's postwar diplomatic strategy and were introduced by Yoshida's successors who broadened the scope of Japan's foreign policy to include more than just a unilateral orientation towards the US. However, with the end of the Cold War, Japan was faced with the need to update its grand strategy on a comprehensive basis, with respect to balancing the dichotomies of pacifism/international cooperation, US-Japan alliance/East Asian regionalism, and values-based diplomacy/economic interests.

As just mentioned, while the bipolar system of international relations throughout the Cold War dictated Japan unilaterally follow the US in formulating its diplomatic priorities, China was considered too attractive a long-term partner by Japanese postwar leadership to isolate from the region, even though the Cold War environment severely hampered full-fledged economic and political interaction between China and Japan. In addition, Hook *et al.* (2012) emphasise the Japanese state and its people's cultural affinity towards China epitomised by the concept *dōbun dōshu* (literally "same writing, same race") which drove Japan to explore all diplomatic avenues

in order to enhance economic cooperation with China while at the same time abiding by the Cold War-dictated US policy in the region. In practice, Japan built its relationship with China based on the principle called *seikei bunri*, or the separation of politics and economy. Japan's rationale was that in the long term, such principle can lead to an alignment of the two countries' political and economic interests while economic cooperation would moderate China's undesirable conduct in the security sphere. Hughes (2009, 839) points out that during the Cold War, Japan's security concerns with regards to China were "highly limited" due to China's modest military capabilities and Japan being protected by the alliance with the US. Later, Nixon's 1972 rapprochement with China effectively removed structural constraints placed on Japan in dealing with its Asian neighbour and gave a powerful boost to the policy of engagement. China and Japan normalised relations the same year and concluded the Treaty of Peace and Friendship in 1978, which led to burgeoning economic ties, with China becoming Japan's key trade partner and the main recipient of Japan's official development assistance (ODA) and foreign direct investment (FDI) (International Monetary Fund, 2010). Kawakatsu Ueki (2014, 19) encapsulates Japan's strategy towards China since the normalisation as "[making] China economically affluent, politically stable and friendly to Japan". However, she goes to conclude that, while Japan seemingly managed to help lead China towards greater prosperity and political stability the third element – shaping a Japan-friendly China – was not realised.

Domestically, the engagement policy was buttressed during the Cold War by the "1955 political system" whereby the (LDP) governed Japan singlehandedly for almost forty years. The LDP factions had different views on the direction of Japan's postwar strategy, including its ties with China, with the anti-mainstream revisionists led by Hatoyama Ichirō (the grandfather of the first DPJ prime minister) and Kishi Nobusuke (Abe's grandfather) opposing Japan's postwar US-imposed regime, as well as improving relations with China. Kishi in particular considered Japan's participation in World War II just and even sacred, arguing in favour of a new Japan free from the shackles of Article 9. However, the dominant position within the LDP leadership was mostly

retained by its pragmatist wing most notably represented by Yoshida who once said: "Red or white, China remains our next-door neighbour. Geography and economic laws will, I believe, prevail in the long run over any ideological differences and artificial trade barriers" (Yoshida, 1951, 179). As Drifte (2003, 14) tersely sums up Yoshida's stance, "[He] was no friend of the Chinese Communists, but he knew that Japan's larger economic interest had traditionally always been on the mainland". With the assistance of other pro-Chinese actors, such as the Kōmeitō party and Japan Socialist Party, as well as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and corporations, the "Pragmatists" set Japan on the enduring course of engagement *vis-à-vis* China. In a piece entitled "Rethinking Japan's China Policy", Jerdén and Hagström (2012, 218) invoke the notion of Japan as China's "accommodator" meaning that Japan respected China's national interests and facilitated the implementation of its foreign strategy of restoring its great power status that was lost in the wake of the Opium wars (1839-1842, 1856-1860).

Discussions around the future trajectory of Japan's foreign policy were invigorated in the late 1990s and early 2000s, in the wake of increasing security tensions in East Asia, the 1997 financial crisis, and the 11 September terrorist attacks. The latter in particular were viewed by some Japanese scholars as proof of the fragility of the post-Cold War US-led international order. Nakanishi (2001, 48) argued soon after the attacks that given the changing security environment, Japan pursue a more pragmatic diplomacy rather than continue overrelying on the US. Conversely, Nishikawa (2004, 219) insisted that Japan's national interests of promoting free trade and creating a more stable international system align with those of the US and therefore and will therefore be best served by enhancing the alliance. Similarly, Tahara (2004, 232) argued that due to Japan's national objectives focusing on maximising global peace and prosperity, it should more proactively involve itself in tackling international problems.

Samuel Huntington penned an essay in 2001, in which he offered four strategic choices for Japan: the British model underpinned by a strong US-Japan alliance; the French model, whereby

Japan strengthens ties with China instead; the Swiss model meaning neutrality in international affairs; and the German model involving proactive multilateral diplomacy. Alternatively, Kenneth Pyle and Eric Heginbotham (2001) propose five possible strategies for Japan in the 2000s: orientation on the US, based on the primacy of military security; East Asian regionalism based on economic security; global institutionalism aimed at enhancing Japan's contribution to the UN and creating a more stable and secure global environment; a comprehensive strategy combining concern for military security, economic interests, and international presence; and rejecting the US-Japan alliance followed by remilitarisation and nuclear rearmament. The final scenario was considered unlikely but not impossible if continued economic malaise in Japan led to a resurgence of nationalism and radicalism in society.

Gannon and Sahashi (2015, 154-155) point out the fundamental continuity in Japanese diplomacy, with Japan keeping the general parameters of its grand strategy largely the same. They emphasise that it was only strong leaders like Nakasone or Koizumi that were responsible for major foreign policy changes, which the rest of the time were of incremental nature. They explain this continuity through Japan's domestic political peculiarities. Firstly, the "revolving door" of prime ministers that Japan started suffering from in the late 1980s spelt an essential monopolisation of foreign-policy making by the bureaucracy, with prime ministers having too little power and time to make major changes in Japan's diplomacy. Continuity is also guaranteed by the coalition-based nature of Japanese governments, a trend which first manifested in the 1990s. The need for any major party to ally with a junior partner in order to control the legislative process dictates the necessity of consensual views on foreign policy, be it between the DPJ and the Social Democratic Party (elaborated on in 4.2), or the LDP and Kōmeitō (5.4). Finally, the high degree of continuity in foreign policy regardless of the ruling party or intra-party differences is derived from a non-partisan consensus on the basics of Japanese diplomacy that has existed, with some adjustments, since after the Cold War. As such, most political figures agree that maintaining a strong US-Japan alliance is of paramount importance, that the rising

China should be balanced without resorting to outright containment, and that Japan should reach out to other East Asian and Southeast Asian states, especially those that either have territorial disputes with China or generally view its ascent with wariness.

In a 2007 piece called "Securing Japan: The Current Discourse" (2007a), Richard Samuels offered a categorisation of Japan's political elites based on their views on Japan's grand strategy, breaking them down into four groups based on two axes, the value attached to the US-Japan alliance and the willingness to use force in international affairs (effectively in breach of Article 9): normal nation-alists, middle-power internationalists, neo-autonomists, and pacifists.

Normal nation-alists argue in favour of Japan becoming a "normal" state by strengthening its military power and deploying it abroad, either under UN auspices or within the US-Japan alliance framework. Middle-power internationalists also support a more proactive foreign policy for Japan, but question whether remilitarisation is in Japan's national security's best interest. Instead, they seek Japan's prestige and prosperity through a more robust East Asian diplomacy and less strict adherence to the US-Japan alliance. Neo-autonomists criticise Japan's subordinate position to America and doubt that the US would defend Japan in a military conflict. Thus, they support Japan decoupling itself from the US-Japan alliance and shifting to an independent strategy. While some, like Ishihara Shintarō or Nishibe Susumu, occupy the far-right segment in Japanese politics, promoting the revision of both constitution and history, others approach neo-autonomist views from a left-wing perspective, like Hatoyama Yukio, who envisioned a more proactive role global role for Japan based on an "outward-looking pacifism". Neither group, however, is considered part of mainstream politics or academia. Finally, the pacifists who supported Japan's "unarmed neutrality" and moderated the more revisionist elements within the LDP during the Cold War, have become marginalised in the 1990s as the international security environment changed, the Japanese public came to support limited SDF participation in UN peacekeeping operations

(PKOs), and the Japan Socialist Party, which harboured most supporters of pacifism, lost most of its voters.

A somewhat similar account of the different strands of strategic thought in the 2000s Japan is given by Streltsov (2015, 55), who breaks down the ruling LDP into three groups, each with its own diplomatic and security priorities: nationalists, mercantilists, and pacifists. While nationalists considered the loss of sovereignty and subservience to the US as the primary threat to Japan's security, the pacifists were wary of being entrapped in a US-led conflict, and the mercantilists saw Japan's potential isolation in the global trade system as the main security issue.

With regards to the Sino-Japanese relations, China's rise overall had an adverse impact on their status and eventually diminished the influence of the pro-China elements in the government (as examined more closely in 3.2). On the one hand, the two economies were further intertwining, and in 2009, China replaced the US as Japan's top trading partner, making a healthy relationship with China one of Japan's key national interests. However, with China's international behaviour being increasingly viewed as inflammatory, and Japan requiring regional markets to be accessible for the sake of its continuing prosperity, it was also of paramount importance for Japan to disincentivise China's assertive policies and promote conflict resolution and freedom of navigation in the Asia-Pacific, which arguably could not be achieved within the parameters of the Yoshida doctrine.

Hughes and Krauss (2007) argue that under the premiership of Koizumi, Japan "showed a declining willingness to engage China, and instead sought to balance against its rise" through enhancing the capabilities of the SDF and solidifying security ties with the US. Currently, the vast majority of Japanese and Chinese citizens hold negative views of the other country, with Chinese citizens expressing a rising belief that a military clash might occur. And while pro-China elements still hold some sway in Japan's domestic politics, the Chinese foreign policy actors became dominated by an animus towards Japan (Kawakatsu Ueki, 2014, 22).

Chinese academics tend to agree that in 2000s, Japan adopted a tougher stance towards China, manifested in Japan's "strengthened containment in the fields of security and strategy" (Yan, 2006, 15; Men, 2008, 21). Wu Xinbo noted in 2000, however, that most political and scholarly elites in China were not afraid of the resurgence of Japanese militarism but rather were wary that Japan increasing military capabilities would shift the balance of power in its favour (2000, 301).

More recently, attention has been given to Japan's foreign policy under the DPJ governments. The DPJ was the first opposition party to single-handedly crush the LDP in a general election and, while foreign policy was never at the forefront of its platform, questions were arising as to how the relatively inexperienced party with Hatoyama at the helm was going to implement its vision of an East Asian Community and a more "equal" US-Japan alliance. Throughout Hatoyama's short premiership, some of the most prominent researchers of Japanese foreign policy argued that the DPJ's Japan could no longer be as reliable an ally to the US as it was under the LDP (Madsen and Samuels, 2010; Calder, 2009), while Green (2011, 91) called Hatoyama's tenure "the greatest period of political turmoil and confusion in the US-Japan alliance". Brooks summarised (2012, 121) the DPJ's foreign policy as "the idealism of Prime Minister Hatoyama [colliding] with the reality of Japan's security environment", with Konishi (2012, 18) echoing this assessment, calling the DPJ's vision "idealistic". Hosoya (2013, 152) argued that Hatoyama's foreign policy vision attempted to "radically transform the orthodox Japanese diplomatic doctrines" by placing Sino-Japanese friendship at the centre of Japanese diplomacy. Conversely, the other two DPJ leaders, Kan Naoto and Noda Yoshihiko, "openly expressed Japan's security worries, and the Chinese boat collision incident of 2010 "reinforced Japan's strategic convergence with the US on the common China threat" (Atanassova-Cornelis, 2013, 62-63).

Among such arguably pessimistic assessments of the DPJ's foreign policy, portraying its vision as naïve or idealistic, Christopher Hughes' essay on the party's new grand strategy stands out (2012). Having analysed Japan's diplomacy under the DPJ, he concludes that, while the

Hatoyama administration's foreign policy signaled a departure from the LDP approach to international affairs, the DPJ's policies in fact could be classified as a coherent grand strategy, which was founded on Japan's more equal role in the US-Japan alliance, a closer relationship with Beijing, and a tighter cooperation with Japan's East Asian neighbours. However both internal and external factors pressured the Democrats to revert to the previous LDP-style trajectory of strengthening security ties with Washington. Though Hughes has acknowledged that the DPJ might have only possessed a *vision* of a grand strategy rather than actually implemented it, he has characterized that vision as being "explicit in its framing, with no hidden agendas, and indeed [being] openly articulated by the DPJ's top leadership", calling it "sophisticated and realistic, shorn of much ideological sentiment and instead attempting to carefully rethink and calibrate Japan's international ambitions and capabilities against its external challenges" (2012, 109-112).

A nascent body of academic work (Walker and Azuma, 2016; Green, 2013, etc.) has been dedicated to examining Japan's foreign policy direction under the second premiership of Abe, as well as the extent and implications of his security reforms. Two schools of thought have emerged on this issue, one stressing evolution and continuity, the other arguing for radicalism and change.

Lind has argued (2015, 2016), for example, that Japan's more muscular foreign security strategy under the second premiership of Abe does not constitute a drastic break from its postwar trajectory, and instead represents the continuity of Japan's policy of doing "less when it can but more when it must", that is primarily relying on the US for defence. The incremental, evolutionary nature of Abe's reforms is also highlighted by Liff (2015), who asserts that Abe is merely continuing the trends that were set in motion long before him. Similarly, Koga (2016, 13-14) argues for more continuity than change in Abe's foreign policy, particularly *vis-à-vis* China, pointing out that most of Abe's policies were originally suggested before his second tenure, particularly by the DPJ. Green (2013), as well as Hornung and Mochizuki (2016) can, too, be

considered part of the group asserting that Japan's foreign and security developments under Abe are in essence evolutionary.

Among the researchers who, conversely, stress the radical change embedded in Abe's reforms, Christopher Hughes is arguably the most prominent example. He was perhaps the first Western scholar to introduce the notion of the "Abe Doctrine" to the academic lexicon as a strategy succeeding the Yoshida doctrine. Hughes interprets Abe's strategy as a desire for Japan to achieve global security leadership through more proactive, high-profile and high-risk policies in contrast to the reactive foreign policy that was the hallmark of the Yoshida doctrine. While the Yoshida doctrine was based on pragmatism and largely devoid of ideological foundations, Abe's strategy is characterised by revisionism and the readiness to change the existing international system rather than drift with its stream. He sees the 2014 constitutional reinterpretation allowing Japan to exercise collective self-defence as a "watershed" moment in putting Japan onto a more radical security trajectory. Similarly, Auslin (2016) has argued that Abe's grand strategy reflects a notable departure from Japan's postwar pacifism and moves the country even further into a more realist foreign policy posture first embraced in the late 1990s and based on the idea that the best way of securing Japan is through forging closer alliances and taking on a more proactive role in the region.

Dobrinskaya (2015, 247) strikes a balance between these two viewpoints, arguing that Abe's security reforms can indeed be seen as a historic breakthrough made possible by a fortuitous balance of power inside Japan, changing geopolitical realities outside of it, and Abe's personal qualities. She claims, however, that these policies are also the logical result of the steps undertaken by his predecessors from both the LDP and the DPJ, aimed towards gradually removing the postwar military constraints.

Another discussion, closely connected to the discussion concerning Abe's political reforms, revolves around the ideological contents of his policies or lack thereof. While most scholars are of the view that Abe's personal views on history and politics can be described as right-wing

nationalistic, the exact degree of their influence on Abe's policies as prime minister is a matter of debate.

Hemmings and Kuroki (2013, 13-14) have described Abe's proactive diplomacy as a blend of pragmatic policies aimed at a rapprochement with China, and values-based ties with traditional allies like the US and Australia, as well as new strategic partners such as India or the Philippines. Green (2013) argues that Abe's territorial diplomacy has strong ideological underpinnings as he believes Japan should forge closer partnerships with maritime democracies on China's periphery as opposed to China proper. He also references Abe's revisionist leanings motivating his desire to make Japan a "tier one" state in international relations. Hughes (2015) argues that the revisionist ideological component is inextricable from the Abe doctrine and drives its foreign policy dimension. Stockwin and Ampiah (2017, 159) claim that Abe's return to power in 2012 represented a major shift towards "determined nationalism" that went beyond the occasional nationalistic rhetoric used by some prime ministers in the past.

At the same time, Japanese historian Iokibe Makoto has written (2015) about the Abe diplomacy arguing that, while there are doubts about the prime minister's right-wing leanings, his foreign policy has proven to be rooted in pragmatism. Fellow historian Kenneth Pyle is of the similar view, contending (2018, 85-85) that, despite being regarded both in Japan and abroad as a right-wing ideologue, Abe has shown himself to be "notably pragmatic", continuing the tradition of modern Japanese conservatism which is "pragmatic, non-ideological, and realist".

1.2. Placing the research question in current debates around Japan's grand strategy

After reviewing the main points of view and discussions around Japan's grand strategy and its alterations in the last decade, it is possible to place this research into the broader context of the existing academic debates. As a work primarily directed towards Japanese politics and foreign policy, it firmly positions itself within the field of Japanese studies, continuing the research of such

scholars as Richard Samuels, Kenneth Pyle, and Michael Green. While it examines the broader East Asian regional dynamics, it only does so insofar as their effect on Japanese political elite's strategic thinking is concerned. Thus, this research is not situated within the discipline of IR and does not seek to contribute to it or develop any of its theories. Nor does it attempt to add to the debates on broader topics such as East Asia security or Asia-Pacific regional order. Rather, this work homes in on the more specific discussion of the ways in which Japan's recent leadership responded to the international challenges and transformed Japan's strategic posture. As such, it joins the current debates about the recent trajectory of Japan's foreign policy, the DPJ's role in shaping this trajectory, as well as the emergence of what some have started calling "the Abe doctrine", the extent of its transformative influence, and its ideological underpinnings. Specifically, this research engages with and adds to a number academic debates.

Overall, compared to many analyses of Japan's recent foreign policy, it gives a greater degree of attention to the prime ministers' personal views, political backgrounds, and decision-making styles, especially in the cases of Hatoyama and Abe.

While not a case study *per se*, Chapter 3 puts the domestic debates about and international challenges to Japan's grand strategy into a historical perspective, examining the period between the end of the Cold War and the 2009 change of power. By providing an overview of the wide range of alternative strategies for Japan proposed by the political elite in both theory and practice, it argues that the relevance of the Yoshida doctrine and its domestic support started to diminish long before the DPJ and Abe, while the security-related trends that they accelerated were, too, the result of a two decade-old incremental shift.

The DPJ case study can be thematically and chronologically divided into the Hatoyama period and the post-Hatoyama period. The first section, while acknowledging the widespread descriptions of Hatoyama's foreign-policy making as incoherent and his philosophy as idealistic and unsuitable for its times, nevertheless deviates from much research into his tenure. It does so by highlighting

the origins of his views and connecting them to the existing sentiments towards the US and East Asia in the 1990s Japan. The case study also argues that, while Hatoyama's vision, while not very clearly defined and ultimately unsuccessful, represented a new, independent grand strategy for Japan, one which was distinctly different from the Yoshida doctrine. Meanwhile, the second part of the case study, focusing on the Kan and Noda administrations, mostly agrees with the dominant argument that the two prime ministers had to quickly re-integrate Japan into bilateral alliance framework after the tensions with China soared in 2010. That section, however, emphasises the fundamental nature of the changes made under Kan, and less so Noda, to Japan's defence posture: the basic defence strategy, which served as the bedrock of the Yoshida doctrine, was recalibrated towards a dynamic defence strategy suited for the new global security realities.

This research also engages with the recent robust debates regarding the Abe doctrine. Overall, the thesis takes a balanced position between the two viewpoints, arguing for either the radical change of Abe's reforms or their incrementalism. It asserts that the Abe administration's foreign and security policies were more comprehensive and strategic in both formulation and implementation than those of any other contemporary prime minister, representing a landmark in Japan's shift towards a more high-risk, proactive diplomacy, which is less dependent on the US and has virtually nothing in common with the basics of the Yoshida doctrine. At the same time, it also stresses the general continuity of the trends towards the Japan's security "normalisation" and the broadening of the US-Japan alliance's geographical and functional scope. Compared to much of the work dedicated to Abe's policies, this research also emphasises the clear and direct succession in the national security area between Abe and the post-Hatoyama DPJ, arguing that it was specifically the Kan and Noda governments laid the groundwork for the Abe administration and were thus instrumental in the swift implementation of the Abe doctrine.

With regards to the ideological underpinnings of the Abe doctrine, this work challenges the conventional view, according to which Abe's grand strategy for Japan reflects and is informed by

the prime minister's own right-wing nationalistic leanings. Instead, it argues for a need to separate Abe's personal views that could be described as revisionist from his actual foreign policy which has been fundamentally pragmatic and based on Japan's economic interests.

Lastly, while this research does not focus on the specificities of the decision-making process behind Japan's grand strategy, it examines Abe's leadership style and foreign-policy making under his administration, a subject previously almost non-existent in English language studies. In doing so, it asserts a greater centrality of political leadership in formulating Japan's foreign policy under Abe's, which stands as a corrective to traditional views emphasising the role of the bureaucracy.

1.3. Foreign policy actors in postwar Japan

This section will provide a brief overview of Japan's foreign policy process before examining the literature on Japan's political actors responsible for the formulation and actualisation of foreign and security policy in order to provide context for the case study sections focusing on foreign-policy making. Based on the extant research, these actors can be identified as follows: the Prime Minister, the relevant sections of the bureaucracy (as examined in more detail below) and the big business. While other state and non-state actors can potentially exert a level of influence on foreign-policy making, they do not wield nearly as significant of an extent of power as the aforementioned actors, hence they will not be analysed in this review.

To explain the close, interdependent, mutually beneficial ties between the business, political elite and senior bureaucracy, who make up the main decision makers in Japan, a concept of an "iron triangle" has often been employed. Within this triangle, politicians appeal to large companies for funding their party, and in exchange they apply pressure to the bureaucrats so as to provide the big business with various benefits such as tenders on public work projects. While this system has ensured the stability on the 1955 system and implementation of crucial policies, it has also led to democratic deficit, corruption and decrease in governance efficiency (Drifte, 1996, 16).

An important feature of the iron triangle is that all three of its "sides" overlapped with each other. After retiring at a comparatively young age, top bureaucrats are employed by public or private companies in a practice called *amakudari*. Some officials also leave their ministries for a place in a party, most often the LDP. These former bureaucrats are known as *kanryōha*, while the grass-root politicians are referred to as *tōjinha*. The "division of labour" between these two groups is summarised by Van Wolferen (1990, 142) who says that "the grass-root politicians' role [was] restricted to getting re-elected and keeping the LDP presence in the Diet to strength, and the former bureaucrats using their knowledge and connections with former colleagues to promote policies that helped create Japan's economic success".

The channels between big business and bureaucracy are sustained by *zoku*, or "tribes" within the Diet which appeal to the officials to give preferences to the companies in return for their financial support. *Zoku* consist of members of the Diet with special expertise and experience in specific areas.

The iron triangle structure has been one of the factors severely hindering the Prime Minister's capacity for decisive leadership. As Kenji Hayao (1993, 150-151) explains, most of the issues arising within the iron triangle are broader than the jurisdiction of any one ministry or agency, and thus it falls to the Prime Minister to resolve them. However, since members of *zoku* dominate certain spheres of policy and resist any meaningful intervention on the Prime Minister's part, these issues often remain unresolved, and the status quo is upheld.

1.3.1. The prime minister

Despite being head of the executive branch and de facto leader of the country, Japanese prime ministers have usually been described as "passive" or "weak" (van Wolferen, 1990, 32; Hayao, 1993, 26). Drifte (1996, 28) has stated that Japan has not produced leaders like Churchill or dictators like Hitler. As Inoguchi (1993, 133) puts it, prime ministers usually opt for a consensual mode of policy-making rather than show personal leadership. As Shinoda (2013) has stated, the

position of prime minister under the "1955 system" was characterised by a lack of real executive power, and both his direct and indirect authority limited. Three main reasons are usually identified for such lack of power, which are especially pertinent to the prime ministers preceding Koizumi.

Firstly, the ruling LDP consisted of factions - groups of politicians who shared similar views and vied for dominance within the party. The faction wielding most political clout would usually designate its leader for the position of LDP President and, by definition, prime minister. The prime minister's identity therefore merely reflected the balance of power within the ruling party, and since such balance of power was based on consensus and compromise between faction leaders, prime ministers would usually represent a neutral figure keeping faction within the party together, rather than be chosen based on his merit or charisma. As Drifte (1996, 28) points out, the resulting rotation system whereby prime ministers usually changed every two years hampered the nurture of leadership abilities. In essence, as van Wolferen (1990, 147) puts it, faction politics left the prime minister unable to "establish new national priorities or enforce important measures he believed are vital to Japan". Recent years however saw a decline in the significance of factional politics which for all intents and purposes have been ignored by Abe.

Secondly, with the LDP consumed by faction rivalry, the policy-making initiative was effectively seized by the bureaucracy. According to Shinoda (2013), bureaucrats created a bottom-up, decentralised decision-making process whereby they were the ones making crucial policy adjustments and drafting important bills, and by the time the results of their work reached the prime minister, he could do little in ways of altering or modifying them, serving as a rubberstamp for government officials.

Thirdly, the prime minister's individual power was constrained by an institutional factor. The Cabinet Law, revised only in 2000, delegated administrative authority to relevant ministers, while the prime minister could make most decision only with the approval of the cabinet. Thus,

Envall (2008, 227) summarises, "Japanese Prime Ministers [could] do little... while dealing with unruly factions... and a powerful bureaucracy".

The executive branch in general and specifically the position of prime minister was imbued with more authority as a result of a series of administrative and electoral reforms throughout the 1990s and early 2000s. In particular, the 1994 electoral reform shifted the focus of the prime ministerial post from consensus building to the appointee's personal qualities and talents (Rosenbluth and Thies, 2010). The late 1990s reforms initiated by Hashimoto Ryūtarō enabled the Prime Minister to draft bill proposals and transferred more power to the prime minister's Office, or *Kantei* (Bush, 2010, 167). The aforementioned Cabinet Law was revised in 2000, granting the prime minister the power to draft policies in a top-down manner instead of waiting the bills to reach him from ministries. The role of *Kantei* in ensuring strong political leadership and allowing the prime minister to implement their agenda is emphasised by Hosoya (2005, 35, 43), who notes that the only two effective prime ministers in recent decades – namely Nakasone and Koizumi – both increased the number of staff in the *Kantei*, from the efficiency of which they largely derived their leadership.

In his seminal work on the role of Japan's prime ministers in policy-making, Hayao (1993, 14-18) breaks down leadership into three categories: technocratic, political and reactive. Technocratic prime ministers solve problems without being hampered by other domestic actors, through efficient top-down decision-making. Conversely, reactive prime ministers simply tried to resolve issues without well-defined objectives or direct involvement in formulating policies. Hayao concludes (1993, 26-27) that prime ministers in Japan tended to be weak, reactive, and reactive. Echoing this thought, van Wolferen argues in his book "The Enigma of Japanese Power" that the Japanese prime minister possessed less power than any Western or Asian counterpart, and goes as far as to state that "his immediate power was for all practical purposes limited to dissolving the Lower House of the Diet" (van Wolferen, 1990, 32).

Some scholars have shed light on the constraints placed on the prime minister by Japan's domestic actors and cultural norms. For instance, while Richardson argues that there was a cultural preference in Japan for leaders who chose to build consensus instead of authoritarian ones (Richardson, 1997, 104-105). Similarly, Rosenbluth and Thies (2010) highlight Japanese social and cultural specifics to explain why there was a lack of remarkable prime ministers, citing the Japanese proverb "the nail that sticks up gets hammered down". Drifte (1996, 29) has also stressed the cultural factors impeding prime ministers' leadership, such as harmony, consensus, conflict avoidance and conformity. Fukai (1999, 179) suggested that Japanese politics produced uninspiring leaders because of its factional nature briefly explained above.

The discourse around the role of the prime minister moved forward after the administrative changes in Japan throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, with much attention being paid specifically to Koizumi, his role of an iconoclast, and his ability to push effective top-down decision-making.

Takenaka (2015, 46-47) posits that scholars of political leadership in Japan generally fall into two camps: those who place the role of institutions above all other factors, and those who primarily draw attention to the prime minister's personal qualities. The arguments around Koizumi's governance embody the differences between the aforementioned camps of political leadership researchers, with "institutionalists" asserting that Koizumi's success was due to him managing to fully avail himself of the new powers of his position, while those who ascribe the prime minister's efficiency to their personal attributes argue that it was Koizumi's unique leadership style that made his tenure so successful.

Takahara Akio, professor of law at Tokyo University, has argued in an interview (2018) that while the prime minister's words weigh heavy, ultimately they cannot guarantee that their vision will be implemented by the Foreign Ministry officials. Moreover, even the extent of their individuality when it comes to their rhetoric on foreign policy is limited due to the fact that their

speeches are usually written by other people, usually MOFA bureaucrats and secretaries. And while prime ministers' speech writers generally possess expertise in their subject, it is not always the case as exemplified by Hatoyama whose speeches, including the very first one he delivered at the Diet, were penned by playwright Hirata Oriza (Funabashi and Nakano, 2016, 3).

1.3.1. Bureaucracy

Bureaucratic system has been identified by Brands (2014, 12) as a notable factor hampering the implementation of policies stemming from grand strategy. He explains that, while grand strategy can be put together by a small group of policy makers or even a single political actor, its execution is a top-down process which involves various ministries and agencies. Bureaucracies, he argues, can resist change and hinder policies which they deem damaging to their own interests, as well as conflict with each other and distort the initial desired contents of grand strategy.

When it comes to Japan, most scholars agree that Japanese bureaucracy has wielded immense influence on policy-making under the 1955 system and beyond (Drifte, 1996; van Wolferen, 1990; Shinoda, 2013; Cooney, 2007), with Drifte (1990, 16, 18) stressing that its role is especially great in foreign-policy making, while the politicians' input in that area is impeded by a lack of experience and expertise. Johnson (1993, 216) has described Japan's political system as one in which "the LDP reigns but the elite state bureaucracy actually rules". Many Japanese academics have traditionally argued that the role of bureaucracy is dominant in Japan's political system (Ikeda, 1967; Misawa, 1967).

As Shinoda (2013) and Drifte (1996, 16) have explained, this level of power stemmed from the postwar Occupation period when most experienced politicians became targets of the administrative purge, but the majority of bureaucrats remained unaffected by it, and thus the newly-elected legislators had to rely on the government officials in drafting policies. Thus the Japanese Diet became a rubber-stamp for policy proposals formulated by bureaucracy. While the

US-initiated purge targeted the bureaucrats as well, most civil servants retained their positions which further increased the bureaucracy's influence over politicians and the military, especially in the area of economic development.

The relatively weak role of the prime minister in policy-making and the fact that most of them only remained in their position for two or three years (Koizumi and Abe being the only exception since Nakasone Yasuhiro resigned in 1987) emboldened the bureaucracy to defy them, believing that a new leader would come around soon enough and bring about a change of policies.

In his monograph on the Japanese economic miracle, Johnson (1982) stresses the pivotal role of the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) in achieving unprecedented economic growth. Drifte (1990, 16) also points out that one of the reasons for bureaucracy wielding so much power in Japan has been the fact the rapid change of Prime Ministers, with most postwar leaders resigning after two years in office. That argument is reinforced by Gannon and Sahashi (2015, 188-189), who posit a correlation between the Japanese bureaucracy's influence over foreign policy and political leadership: the weaker the prime minister and the cabinet are, the more control foreign policy officials exert. Foreign Ministry bureaucrats with decades of experience understand the minutiae of policy-making, while weak prime ministers are too distracted to push back against them.

As Shinoda (2013) notes, over the course of postwar history Japanese bureaucrats perpetuated and enhanced their respective ministries' power through creating their own jurisdictions and pushing legislation. This viewpoint has been contested, however, with Pempel (1984, 1-18) arguing that the Japanese bureaucrats almost never put their ministries' interest above national interests. He also notes that, while the bureaucrats played a key role in policy-making, they never tried to assert themselves as leaders and their experience and professionalism shielded them from public criticism usually aimed at the politicians.

The role of the bureaucracy in formulating policies (including foreign-policy making) is tersely summarised by Shinoda (2013) who identifies it as a key factor in successfully implementing policy-making, arguing that "without effective bureaucratic support, the Prime Minister cannot achieve major policy changes".

1.3.1.1. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) coordinates other ministries and agencies involved in foreign-policy making. MOFA is currently divided into nine bureaux the most influential of which is the North American Affairs Bureau. As Hook *et al.* (2012) explain, the Bureau's power is explained by the fact that it oversees the crucial relationship with the US, in particular the US-Japan alliance. As a result, the Bureau is US-oriented that it has been described by Japanese media as a "branch consulate of the US embassy in Japan". Another bureau with a lot of political clout is the Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau, a fact that reflects Japan's diverse and sometimes even incompatible interests in balancing its relations with the US and East Asian states. Finally, a lot of power is wielded by the International Legal Affairs Bureau, which is tasked with concluding international treaties and agreements, as well as manages legal matters concerning Japan's foreign relations. The interest of these three bureaux dictated the three key elements of Japanese postwar diplomacy: UN-centrism, US-Japan alliance, and East Asian policy. Japan's difficulties in reconciling and balancing these three elements could be perhaps explained by what Shiroyama and Tsubouchi (1999, 253-259) have called MOFA's "redundancy", implying greater independence of various bureaux and their more individual approach to decision-making, which sometimes leads to only minimal coordination between the different departments.

Cooney (2007, 95) characterises MOFA as a home to some of the brightest people in Japan and refers to it as the "intellectual and institutional base for foreign-policy making". Katzenstein and Okawara (1991, 60, 61) explain that MOFA's influence on security issues has increased because the prevailing view among Japan's political elite holds that Japan's security depends on its

stable relationship with the US, while the Ministry of Defence (MOD) is regarded as having a subordinate role. Conversely, Cooney (2002, 160) stresses the role of MOD saying that with it being raised to a ministry status, MOFA lost the monopoly on foreign and security policy.

Streltsov (2015, 35) states that the work of MOFA often depended on the politicians, especially under the premiership of Koizumi, whose appointment of Tanaka Makiko as Foreign Minister led to a partial paralysis of the ministry. He observes that political intervention on occasion caused entire strands of diplomacy to lose direction, with MOFA eschewing leadership and limiting its work to implementing the already agreed upon decisions.

According to Fukui (1977, 4), MOFA used to be one of the weakest ministries in terms of political clout, with politicians often acting against the bureaucrats' recommendations, and the ministry's influence on the Diet or the LDP was far less significant than that of officials from METI or MOF. Drifte (1990, 22; 1996, 21) has also highlighted MOFA's structural weakness due to its lack of a domestic constituency or *zoku*, as well as a relatively small budget and size of personnel. However, the ministry makes up for it due to its expertise in foreign policy, support of the government and its role of a coordinator or unifier of foreign policy-related actors.

1.3.2.2. The Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry

As Katzenstein and Okawara (1991, 59, 60) point out, the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI), known until 2001 as the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI), is formally in charge of certain areas of security policy due to the fact that its jurisdiction extends to defense industries. Drifte (1990, 22) identifies the source of METI's power in the ministry's role in foreign trade, specifically with the US. However it is not directly involved in national security since it lacks a military security perspective. METI's influence of policy-making is underpinned by its domestic power base, with many big businesses taking supporting the ministry on international trade issues, and a significant number of ex-METI bureaucrats having seats in the Diet (Hook *et al.*, 2012).

1.3.2.3. The Ministry of Finance

Despite not being directly involved in foreign-policy making, the Ministry of Finance (MOF), too, can exert certain influence of Japan's diplomacy and defence policy as it provides a brake on unbridled military spending as foreign security issues are still by and large handled by MOFA. The ministry's top priority is reducing Japan's gigantic national debt, which in 2013 exceeded one quadrillion yen, or twice its annual GDP. As such, it is likely to oppose Japan's more proactive international role, both in the form of increasing (ODA) and ramping up defence budget.

MOF's was enhanced by its close cooperation with MOFA on talks with the US Department of State and Department of Defence (Hughes, 2004, 60). It is however excluded from other important security issues such as matters pertaining to the US-Japan alliance and military cooperation. While both METI and MOF remain aware of the importance of the US market and try to keep economic relations with America stable, they have also shown willingness to pursue competing policies, such as advocating for the East Asian model of economic development which clashes with the traditional neo-liberal prescriptions espoused by the US or the International Monetary Fund.

1.3.2.4. The Ministry of Defence

The Ministry of Defence (preceded until 2007 by the Defence Agency) is directly responsible for the key aspects of security policy and, according to Article 66 of the Constitution, is run by civilians who control all the ministry's branches. While it enjoys one of the biggest military budgets in the world, it does not wield the level of influence on policy-making it might imply.

1.3.3. Big business

The business community has also been a significant part of the foreign-policy making process, representing one of the sides of the "iron triangle". The influence that the big business exerts on foreign policy is explained by the sheer importance the government attributes to international economic activities due to Japan's limited resources and its exports-oriented industries.

Throughout the 1990s, as Japan reached post-industrial status, trade issues overtook foreign investments as the government's focus in that area.

As Drifte (1990, 19, 20) points out, a degree of influence on foreign-policy making is also exercised by leaders of big business, primarily four organisations - Keidanren (Japan Business Federation), Nissho (Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry), Keizai Doyukai (Japan Association of Corporate Executives), and Nikkeiren (Japan Federation of Employers' Association). He has also stated that, while Japanese industry projects a monolithic image of "Japan Inc.", the structure of the business world is not homogenous. It is characterised by a high level of competition and diversity of interests which may be construed as a disadvantage as evidenced by Japan's inability to develop a common economic initiative towards China before the normalisation in 1972.

The business community's input in foreign-policy making is well institutionalised, with members of the big business often sitting on various consultative councils (*shingikai*) and research agencies (*chōsakai*), which function under ministries and agencies, such as the Diplomatic Personnel Council or the International Exchange Council under MOFA.

There are also unofficial channels through which the big business influences Japan's foreign policy. Many businesses have ties with members of the Diet from the foreign policy *zoku*, who in turn apply pressure to foreign policy officials, often coercing them into changing the government's position on a certain issue. Such influence can be illustrated by Japan's stance on trade liberalisation: while Japan's economic interests would be served best by engaging in free trade, the interests of specific industries lead to the government excluding "sensitive goods" from regulations (Streltsov, 2015, 42).

Chapter 2. Methodology and theory

2.1. Overview

The following chapter looks at academic debate around the definition of grand strategy, as well as points out potential issues arising from applying the concept to Japanese foreign policy and their resolution. It also introduces the methodological parameters of this research, including interview and primary and secondary sources.

2.2. Examining the concept of grand strategy

While the words “strategy” or “grand strategy” have been used retroactively when analysing the first Greco-Persian war in the 5th century BC or referring to the policies of the French King Louis XIV (17th-18th centuries), the contemporary use of the term “strategy” was popularised by the Prussian general and military theorist Carl von Clausewitz, who penned a seminal book on military strategy called *Vom Kriege*, or “On War” published in 1832, lauded by Gaddis (2018, 1) for “[setting] the standard for all subsequent writing” on grand strategy. Von Clausewitz saw strategy (he never referred to it as “grand strategy” and indeed the word “strategy” itself had only recently become widespread in Europe at the time of writing) as both intrinsically tied to war and an innately political notion, his view tersely summarised in the phrase “war is a mere continuation of policy with [the addition of] other means” (often misquoted using “by” instead of “with”). As Martel puts it (2014, 78), von Clausewitz believed that “the state’s fundamental strategy is to disarm and overthrow the enemy as the step toward achieving its political objectives”, challenging the previously widely accepted view dating back the ancient Rome that there was no direct relationship between military and political goals. However, he also cautioned against construing strategy in as broad and general terms as completely defeating an adversary, instead arguing for adopting a set of very specific, coherent, and limited objectives.

The notion of grand strategy as utilised in contemporary academia seems to be somewhat nebulous and blurry, with some even calling it "open-ended" (Kane, 2002, 2). As Goldstein (2005, 17-19) points out, it stems from the fact that, while a considerable volume of literature has been produced on grand strategies, very little of it analyses it on a conceptual or theoretical level, instead dealing with historical instances of states adopting a grand strategy, or examining possible alternatives to the strategies that states follow today.

Brands (2014, 3), too, posits that the concept of grand strategy is too ambiguous and subjective to be explicated by a single definition, and calls it (2014, vii) "one of the most slippery and widely abused terms in the foreign policy lexicon". The very definitions of grand strategy can be diametrically opposed: from the opinion that it encompasses more than simply foreign policy, to the argument that it is, in fact, a lot narrower than foreign policy and predominantly deals with the military instrument (Art, 2004, 1-2). However, despite these criticisms, some common elements of grand strategy, as well as the key characteristics inherent in the notion, can be identified.

The concept of grand strategy is intrinsically tied to that of simply strategy. Goldstein has argued that a grand strategy should conceptually be construed as a subset of strategy in general, with the term "strategy" implying that political actors make decisions while cognisant of their implications and responses to them. A grand strategy, then, is different from simply a strategy not due to its nature but rather to its scale as it encompasses all the tools at a state's disposal. Hence, a grand strategy is not merely an umbrella term for various foreign policies but a reflection of the inner logic behind them or the overarching vision held by the decision-makers of what goals should a state achieve, what capabilities to do so it possesses and what obstacles it may face. Brands (2014, 2) also connects the term to the concept of "strategy", pointing out that the word "grand" was added to overcome the shortcomings of simply "strategy" which was understood in a too narrow, strictly military way. Similarly, Kane (2002, 2) views grand strategy

as a variation of strategy, with the latter covering only the military aspect, and the former implying the use of all tools at a regime's disposal to achieve its goals.

Rosecrance and Stein (1993, 5, 21) have emphasised the necessity of including domestic politics in any analysis of grand strategies. They have also argued that purely realist notions such as material power or the structure of the international system are insufficient in explaining a nation's grand strategy, and highlighted the pivotal role of a multitude of other factors - economic considerations, domestic groups, social ideas, historical legacy and domestic political constraints. A grand strategy's success is determined by both the country's international power and its domestic conditions. Echoing Rosecrance and Stein, Mochizuki (2007a, 69) argues that a state's grand strategy is not shaped solely by external factors or geographic position; rather, its fluctuations are primarily driven by domestic political factors.

In a recent study of America's grand strategy, Martell (2014, 4) also makes a distinction between foreign policy and grand strategy: while foreign policy simply encompasses all political, economic and military actions taken by a state in relation to other states, a grand strategy involves all measures undertaken by a nation to harness the political, social and economic resources necessary to achieve a goal, and embraces all strands of state power, most notably domestic and economic policies. A grand strategy, he concludes, is a framework that establishes and balances a nation's priorities and within which a nation pursues its foreign policy objectives.

Mochizuki (2007a, 69) interprets grand strategy as a nation's employment of military and non-military resources in order to achieve security which he identifies broadly to include both military and economic security. Jerden and Hagström (2012, 220) provide a similar definition of grand strategy as follows: "a set of collectively held ideas about how a state should pursue its long-term strategic interests by employing, combining, and enhancing its capabilities - military and civilian ones alike". They also point out that the term "grand strategy" goes beyond the

framework of a foreign policy agenda because it involves both foreign and domestic policies, as well as represents a state's pivotal interests.

Samuels (2007b, 3) has identified two key factors for implementing a viable grand strategy. Firstly, a state's objectives should not be mutually exclusive, and while diplomacy offers a set of different tools to achieve them, all these tools should be strictly within a state's capabilities. The second factor is stable domestic politics without which a nation cannot effectively project its power beyond its borders.

Analysing the American grand strategy, Martell (2015, 9) emphasises the importance of the temporal factor which can be reasonably extrapolated to the concept in general - a grand strategy does not stem from a single administration or can even be implemented over such a short period of time. Rather, it spans multiple governments and is rooted in a state's diplomatic traditions. This, however, is repudiated by the argument put forward by Brands (2014, 4-5), who has emphasised the mutable, changing nature of a grand strategy, arguing that it is as much a process as a single idea. In other words, rather than a single, decades-long grand strategy, there can exist multiple distinct grand strategies which present different approaches to the same overarching threat or challenge, and which evolve and transform as new developments related to that threat unfold. While the ultimate goal of a grand strategy may remain the same, its elements and methods can be and are periodically reviewed and adapted to the shifting realities. Such viewpoint is indirectly corroborated by, for instance, Hughes (2012) and Auslin (2016), who refer to separate, individual grand strategies of, respectively, the DPJ administration and Abe, implying that an existing grand strategy can be significantly recalibrated or a new strategy can be put forth by an individual political actor and/or only span a short amount of time.

As Rosecrance and Stein (1993, 6-11) point out in their overview of the field of grand strategy studies, such approach means that the analysis of a state's grand strategy is focused on the international system in which it is enmeshed, while domestic considerations are seen as detrimental

to the state's international standing because they may take up too much of the government's attention and lead to it neglecting outside threats.

In fact, as Tellis (2007, 4-7) has argued in her overview of the theoretical underpinnings of grand strategy studies, the acknowledgement of the role of domestic politics in a state's grand strategy can be traced back to ancient authors such as Thucydides and Aristotle. The assumption that domestic forces have a significant effect on a state's international behaviour was considered par for the course until Kenneth Waltz posited in his work *Theory of International Politics* that the explanation of international politics does not require including variables existing at the national level, insisting that grand strategy essentially depends only on a state's geography and level of power. Tellis has also (8-11) levelled criticism against the structural realist repudiation of domestic factors in explaining international behaviour, arguing that, firstly, the realist prediction regarding the constant and inevitable balancing of states is empirically incorrect and, secondly, that domestic factors are crucial in elucidating international outcomes. She also rejects the idea that state leaders can easily transform their nations' resources into power whenever the international system undergoes change. In reality, she argues, that requires specific policies and plans of action, or a grand strategy.

2.3. Methodological issues operationalising grand strategy

In light of the scarcity of theoretical research of grand strategy and the consequent nebulous nature of its definition which is more often implied than spelled out, it would seem appropriate to classify grand strategy as an essentially contested concept. The term was introduced by the Scottish philosopher Walter Bryce Gallie to refer to abstract or hard-to-define concepts such as justice, security or legitimacy. As per Gallie's argument (1956, 169), contested concepts are concepts "the proper use of which inevitably involves endless disputes about their proper uses on the part of their users". He put forward seven conditions under which a concept may be regarded as being essentially contested: it should 1) be evaluative; 2) be internally complex; 3) its elements should

be initially variously describable; 4) be vague and open-ended to allow future modifications; 5) be aggressive and defensive given that any contested concept is the application of one use against other uses; 6) derived from a single exemplar that 7) should be sustained and understood over time. As Simon (1995, 148) explains, "the common reference point of an exemplar assures that, with essentially contested concepts, the proponents, at least, have the same general usage in mind when they debate the issue". Hampshire (1965, 230) has defined contested concepts as those which are "essentially questionable and corrigible" and "permanently ... subject to revision and question". Essentially contested concepts, then, cannot ever be precisely defined and, as Connolly (1993) argues, should be treated as cluster concepts "to which a broad range of criteria apply".

Another question that arises when approaching the analysis of grand strategy is the issue of where it resides and which political actors or documents one should turn to in order to confirm or deny its very existence. Brands (2014, 5-6) sheds some light on the topic, arguing that a grand strategy need not be officially proclaimed or defined as such in order to exist. Goldstein (2005, 17) echoes this argument, emphasising that his own account of China's grand strategy is not based on any detailed policy document by the Chinese Communist Party, but instead examines the consensus among the party leaders regarding the state's foreign policy.

A grand strategy, then, is discerned not necessarily by whether it is formally acknowledged in speeches or policy documents, but rather by whether there exists a vision of the state's essential interests, threats and objectives, and the actions stemming from that vision. As Brands goes on to point out, even leaders who refuse to define their state's foreign policy in terms of a concrete grand strategy still by definition engage in strategic policy-making. By identifying the state's key goals and challenges they make strategic choices which may or may not end up constituting a coherent grand strategy. Equally, however, devising a formal grand strategy does not automatically lead to its existence, and the path to successfully enacting it is fraught with dangers.

The fact that grand strategy need not be formally articulated or expressed in an official document naturally confounds its analysis. As Thomas Kane (2002, 5-6) argues in his monograph on China's grand strategy, examining it always involves speculation since, as he puts it, "one must allow for the fact that no one can ever fully know another's mind". However political actors in any state function in a material environment, hence, even though one cannot know how strategists in a particular country will approach policy-making, their strategic options are always constrained by the harsh realities of the political process, geography or available resources. To analyse a state's grand strategy, Kane posits, it is necessary to look at the political actors' statements reflecting the state's principles; the agencies which are responsible for actualising these principles; the realities forming the state's capabilities; and the events which could hint at how the aforementioned factors will turn out to be in practice.

It should also be noted that the dynamic, ever-changing essence of international relations poses a clear challenge to the long-lasting relevance, durability and validity of any research of contemporary politics or specifically grand strategy, this thesis included. Significant events with great implications could happen at any time throughout current research or once it has been concluded. These events have the potential to lead to a dramatically different landscape of Japanese foreign and security policy than that upon which the research is presently based. The possibility of this is unavoidable and is fully acknowledged. Consequently, the goal of this work is not to offer a prediction or prognosis of Japan's grand strategy but rather to capture, scrutinise, and present its current state.

As it has been mentioned, the theoretical framework of grand strategy is very nebulous - Brands (2014, vii) notes that the debates on grand strategy more often than not muddy the waters rather than cast light on the issue. Based on the wide, disparate range of its extant definitions, it can be concluded that a grand strategy is not just a highly elastic notion which is difficult to operationalise, but is not an empirical concept in general. In spite of that, it seems possible to

synthesise a loose definition of grand strategy based on the commonalities found in the literature on the subject. This can be visually explicated through the following table:

Table 1: Cross-referencing the attributes of grand strategy based on the extant research

Attribute	H. Brands	A. Goldstein	T. Kane	W. Martell	M. Mochizuki	B. Posen	B. Jerdén & L. Hagström	R. Samuels	R. Rosencrance & A. Stein
Nebulous, open-ended nature									
Overarching vision, framework behind foreign policy									
Achieving national security									
Combination of military and non-military means									
Influence of domestic politics									
Spanning multiple administrations									
Changing nature									
Lack of official proclamation									

Given the above difficulties with conceptualising, defining, and operationalising grand strategy, a question arises as to whether the concept of grand strategy can even be applied to Japan. After all, when it comes to work on contemporary grand strategies, the majority of literature is dedicated to the United States (Posen, 2014; Martell, 2015), while the central place in the studies of East Asian states' grand strategies is occupied by China (Ye, 2011; Swaine, Tellis, 2000; Goldstein, 2005; Zhang, 2015). At the same time, remarkably little work has been produced on the grand strategy of Japan, not least because relatively few scholars have come to identify the set of Japanese foreign policies as a grand strategy. As Samuels (2007b, 1-3) observes, many researchers disagree that Japan has or have ever had a single grand strategy in the first place, with Japan's foreign policy criticised over the years for a lack of strategic vision or being naive and idealistic. Such state of affairs might stem from the historically prevailing association of grand strategies with great powers like the US or, more recently, rising powers like China which are in the process of transforming from regional to superpowers (Jerdén and Hagström, 2012, 220). As Yan (2006,

12) points out, the example of China's rise is peculiar because its accumulation of power has been inexorably tied with the decline of other states' power. The oft-repeated portrayal of Japan as a reactive state functioning within the parameters of its relationship with the US might go towards explaining why Japan's foreign policies have rarely been ascribed to a single grand strategy.

However, while this work recognises the potential theoretical complications from viewing Japan's foreign and security policies through the lens of grand strategy, it nevertheless uses grand strategy as the analytical framework of the research. Taking grand strategy as the main area of concern allows to examine the changes and continuities in Japan's policies in a comprehensive manner, assess the strategic vision behind them held by Japan's political leadership, and establish the origins of the current direction of Japan's foreign policy. In doing so, it draws on the work of such scholars as Richard Samuels, Michael Green, or Mike Mochizuki, who have written on the subject of Japan's grand strategy without engaging in debates around the applicability of the term to Japan. While the concept of grand strategy does not seem to have caught on in Japanese academia (indeed, even the word strategy (*senryaku*) is not generally used in studies of Japanese foreign policy), with common words like *gaikō* (diplomacy) or *gaikō seisaku* (foreign policy) utilised instead, terms "grand strategy" and "strategy" have in fact been often used by Japanese scholars when writing in English. Perhaps most notable examples include Hosoya Yūichi (2011s, 2013), a Keio University professor, and Sahashi Ryo (2015), research fellow at the Japan Center for International Exchange.

Additionally, while it may be true that Japan's foreign and security policies do not fit neatly into the framework of grand strategy, this research takes the view that both the Yoshida doctrine and the nascent Abe doctrine can be construed as a Japanese variant of grand strategy. Thus, viewing the recent transformation in Japan's diplomacy and defence posture through the theory of grand strategy can be useful in assessing both changes and continuities in Japanese strategic

behaviour in relation to the Yoshida doctrine, taken as a baseline against the parameters of which the recent shifts in Japan's posture are assessed.

Finally, it can be argued that, while some scholars or even policy-makers in Japan itself might not necessarily define Japan's foreign and security policy as based on a grand strategy in the academic understanding of the term, what matters is how the Japanese political elites interpret Japan's international goals, as well as the available means and choices. In other words, this work takes the view, reminiscent of Wendt's (1992) argument about international anarchy, that Japan's grand strategy is what political actors make of it.

2.4. Methodological approaches of this research

Based on the objectives and research question, the research will utilise the intensive unit of analysis reflected in the methodological approach of multiple-case studies. The limitation of the case studies analysed to two, rather than three or more, is explained by the role of the administrations they cover in developing Japan's grand strategy, with the DPJ and Abe presiding over arguably the most significant shifts in Japan's strategic posture. Homing in on the last decade of Japanese strategic thinking also allows to best elucidate its changes and continuities, given both the differences in the prime ministers' ideologies and views, as well as the drastic changes in the regional security environment. Despite the four prime ministers in question each possessing a separate vision of Japanese, they all, with the notable exception of Hatoyama, presided over a consistent, continuous strategy which moved Japan away further from the Yoshida doctrine and towards international proactivity and domestic militarisation.

The DPJ example warrants attention in particular as the party broke the LDP's half-century monopoly on power and seemed intent on conducting a different policy line towards the US, China, and East Asia than the LDP. As such, the DPJ provide the only available empirical example of a grand strategy not just formulated but implemented by a party other than the LDP. Furthermore,

Hatoyama's strategic vision not only stands in contrast with the direction taken by Kan, Noda, and Abe, but also represents the only grand strategy for Japan since World War II which distances the country from the alliance with the US, places at its core friendship with China, and reorients Japanese diplomacy towards East Asia. Meanwhile, the so-called Abe doctrine not only constitutes a series of arguably the most sweeping national security reforms in postwar Japanese history, but also represents the current direction of Japan's foreign and security policies, making its analysis all the more relevant.

Additionally, while Chapter 3 is not considered a full-fledged case study, rather being an overview of the shifts in the security environment surrounding Japan and the alternatives to the Yoshida doctrine proposed and implemented between 1991 and 2009, it is nevertheless a key part of the research, providing the historical context to better understand the changes described in the case studies and allowing to assess them in a mid-term perspective.

The analysis within the case studies is carried out on three levels: the individual level of the prime minister, scrutinising his views and those of his advisors; the state level, focusing on the domestic political environment and foreign-policy making approach; and the regional level, examining the shifting security environment around Japan, which affects Japan's strategic choices. This approach is broadly based on the frameworks of analysis proposed by Kenneth Waltz in *Man, the State, and War: A Theoretical Analysis* and developed by James Rosenau in "Pre-Theories and Theories of Foreign Policy". Such approach allows to systematically examine the shifts in Japan's grand strategy without limiting the research to just one analytical level.

Structurally, both case studies comprise several sections, based on the above three-level approach. The first section analyses the prime ministers' background, views, and ideology. The following section looks at the administrations' relations with the bureaucracy, opposition parties or coalition members, as well as the foreign-policy making approach they followed. The third section examines the strategic regional environment surrounding Japan, focusing on the US and

China as the major strands of Japanese foreign policy. The final section looks at how the respective governments responded to the changes in the regional security environment, both in the foreign policy area and domestically. This section particularly homes in on the national security reforms of the respective administrations and assesses their significance for Japan's security posture by gauging the degree of change and continuity embedded in these reforms. Overall, the case studies examine the transformations in Japan's grand strategy in juxtaposition with the major characteristic of Japan's Cold War era strategy, namely the Yoshida doctrine, which can be broken down into two elements of comparison: low-profile diplomacy and outsourcing national security to the US while keeping national defensive capabilities to a minimum.

The case study strategy comprises the empirical core of the thesis, implemented primarily through document analysis and interviews, the latter having been conducted in Tokyo as part of field work. The interviews were carried out within the confines of the ethical requirements set by the University of Sheffield and were approved by the ethics committee ahead of the field work.

Seven participants were interviewed, including Western Japan specialists, members of Japanese academia with foreign policy as their area of expertise, as well as foreign policy officials, who either advised Japanese prime ministers or participated in drafting foreign policy-related documents. The relatively small pool of interviewees stems from two sets of reasons. The first has to do with practicalities such as time constraints or logistical issues related to the field work during this research. The choice of the potential interviewees was based on three criteria besides their professional expertise. Firstly, their presence in Tokyo and availability within the limited timeframe of the field work. Secondly, their ability to conduct the interview in English language, given the difficulties of employing an interpreter. Finally, the possibility of actually contacting them and setting up the interview; as such, several envisioned interviews had to be abandoned due to a lack of contact information.

The second set of reasons is more directly connected to the subject of the research. Each interviewee was chosen beforehand based on their field of research or area of professional experience, as well as how those were salient to the thesis's case studies. Thus, the information gathered from each participant corresponds to and directly informs a respective area of this research: evolution of Japan's grand strategy; Sino-Japanese relations; foreign-policy making under the DPJ and Abe; the national security reforms of Kan, Noda, and Abe; and Russo-Japanese ties under Abe. Given the wide range of the participants' backgrounds and field of expertise, each of them provided the data that the others could not, and each interview largely homed in on a specific aspect of the research.

With regards to gleaning the official positions of the respective administrations, preference was given to scrutinising official government documentation, policy speeches, or publicly available interviews. Therefore, the interviewees were mostly chosen for their scholarly perspective or historical analysis, and as such, do not represent official Japanese strategic thinking. There is one exception, however, in Hosoya Yūichi, who participated in drafting landmark policy documents under both the DPJ in 2010 and the LDP in 2013. Academics were also prioritised over current foreign policy officials due to the former's greater openness to an interview and readiness to discuss potentially controversial topics. Several interviews were initially set up with members of the Foreign Ministry but ultimately fell through due to scheduling conflicts and time limitations.

Additionally, while most questions in the interviews depended on the precise area of a participant's specialisation, several issues discussed were common. As a result, by the time the interviews were concluded, information saturation had risen to such a level whereby the common questions received effectively the same responses, often phrased in similar ways. Given the emergence of such consensus in spite of the disparate backgrounds and fields of expertise of the participants, concluding the interviewing process was not just motivated by pragmatic reasons

irrelevant to the contents of the research, but also represented a deliberate choice based on the commonalities of the answers.

The interviews were conducted in English without use of an interpreter or a recording device. They took place in February 2018 and were semi-structured and open-ended, adapted to the interviewees' area of knowledge and flow of thoughts. The choice of anonymity was granted in order to gauge more honest, candid opinions, and taken by several participants. At the same time, the author recognises the challenges inherent in the interview method (Berry, 2002, 679-682), primarily the inevitable possibility of the interviewees choosing to conceal their true thoughts on the subject or misrepresent events. To mitigate this risk, the information gathered from the interviewees has undergone data triangulation and cross-referencing with additional sources, both primary, such as other interviews or government documents, and secondary, such as academic literature and policy commentary.

A wide range of primary and secondary sources in English, Japanese, and Russian languages was used when conducting the research. The primary sources used in the course of the research could be broken down into two groups. Firstly, legislative and normative documents and declarations which regulate Japan's security policy, such as the first National Security Strategy of 2013 or the various iterations of the National Defence Program Guidelines, as well as bilateral agreements, such as the Guidelines for US-Japan Cooperation. Secondly, documents such as the prime ministers' policy speeches, addresses at various international conferences and summits, and Diplomatic Blue books issue by the Foreign Ministry, *Kantei*, or Ministry of Defence. Also analysed are the DPJ's manifestos, as well as publicly available interviews and opinion pieces by Japanese prime ministers and their advisors. Collectively, these official sources provide a clear understanding of the evolving strategic thinking of successive administrations and leaders.

Academic research of Japan's foreign policy and grand strategy in English, Japanese, and Russian languages comprise the majority of secondary sources. They also include policy analysis

and commentary ranging from academic journals such as *Asia-Pacific Review* and *The Journal of Japanese Studies*, to online outlets such as *East Asia Forum* or *The Diplomat*, to reports by international academic and research institutions such as *The Tokyo Foundation* and *Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative*. Also of note are newspapers, both Japanese like *Mainichi Shimbun* and *The Japan Times*, and Western such as *The New York Times* and *The Guardian*.

2.5. Summary

The second chapter dealt with the issues of theory and methodology of this research. After reviewing the main theories of international relations, it tackled the question of defining grand strategy and the challenges arising from using the concept. While the concept is viewed as highly nebulous and can arguably be considered a universally contested concept, it was possible to synthesise a loose definition of it based on the different arguments in the extant literature which could assist operationalising the research question. The chapter then justified the use of grand strategy as an analytical framework and covered the practical methodology of case studies based on textual analysis and interviews, as well as the range of primary and secondary sources that were utilised during the research. The next chapter will provide an overview of the development of Japan's strategic thinking in the years after the Cold War by examining the changing structure of international relations and the domestic debates about the direction of Japanese diplomacy. It will also examine global and regional doctrines proposed by Japan's prime ministers from mid-1990s to late 2000s, with a focus on the Koizumi administration.

Chapter 3. Evolution of Japan's grand strategy after the Cold War: internal debates and external challenges

3.1. Overview

The 1990s were a time of turmoil and change in all major elements Japan's foreign policy: UN-centrism, East Asian diplomacy, and the US-Japan alliance. The end of the Cold War signified radical shifts in the international security environment and became a wake-up call for Japanese leadership to adapt the country's diplomacy to the new challenges and expectations. The First Gulf War in particular was a stress-test for Japan, making it acutely aware of the new realities of international relations. Japan was asked by the international coalition to contribute in a way that was commensurate with its status as an economic great power, but both the government and the MOFA were not prepared for such a scenario and mishandled the issue by earmarking US\$13 billion but not providing any personnel assistance. The humiliation (Soeya, 2005b, 103) felt by many in Japan created an impetus to transform its foreign policy and bring it on a more proactive level.

The post-Cold War years also saw relations between Japan and China gradually deteriorating. Even though Japan was initially enthusiastic about the opportunities that the new strategic environment potentially provided for Sino-Japanese ties, it came to be wary of China's rapid and opaque military development, as well as its readiness to use its military capabilities to achieve foreign policy goals. Drifte (1996, 37) explains that between 1991 and 1996 China's defence budget doubled, with Beijing accelerating the purchases of military technology from countries such as Russia and Israel, as well as developing its own military-industrial complex. China's rapid progress in the security area was raising questions for multiple reasons, including unresolved leadership succession within the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), several territorial disputes with neighbouring states, strained relations with Taiwan, and Beijing's zero-sum views on foreign policy. A growing long-term concern arose as well, with China's development portending both a strong economic competition for regional markets and a security challenge.

Meanwhile, the US-Japan alliance, the bedrock of the Yoshida doctrine, also went through changes in the 1990s, with the two countries initially going through a phase of uncertainty regarding the future of the alliance. While Japan and the US updated the parameters of their security ties to better reflect the new international environment, Japan also experienced concerns of US abandonment throughout the presidency of Bill Clinton, whose administration crafted without Japan's input and treated China as a strategic partner. US-Japan ties were also soured in the wake of the financial crisis of 1997, when Japan initially failed to provide strong leadership in resolving the crisis and was subsequently criticised by the US for not doing enough. At the same time, the financial crisis gave rise to East Asian regionalism, which was supported by many in Japan and created a new avenue for it to engage with the region.

Throughout the 1990s, debates were going on among the Japanese political elites about a new strategy that fill the place of the Yoshida doctrine, the foundations of which were being eroded by the new geopolitical realities. Almost every prime minister starting from Hashimoto attempted to implement a doctrine of his own, on both regional and global levels, trying to achieve a balance between the three postwar pillars of Japanese diplomacy.

The following chapter will examine the security environment that Japan found itself part of after the Cold War, as well as the strategic alternatives to the Yoshida doctrine throughout the 1990s and most of 2000s, with a particular focus on the administration of Koizumi Junichirō.

3.2. Security environment in East Asia in the 1990s

While the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the demise of communism created opportunities for a transformation of the entire post-war global security system, which had been based on the ideologically-driven conflict between the US and the USSR, the disappearance of the Soviet threat also delivered a blow to the *raison d'être* of the US-Japan alliance. Throughout the Cold War, Japan's political elite did not attempt to revise its US-oriented diplomacy as

America was the guarantor of Japan's national security while giving Tokyo the freedom to focus on its economic development. Meanwhile, China, being a stalwart opponent of the Soviet Union, did not represent a significant security threat for the US-protected Japan.

Overall, the post-Cold War regional cooperation in the security area in East Asia was not sufficiently institutionalised, with international relations there based on the 1951 San Francisco peace treaty. While the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) was created as early as 1967 in order to, among other concerns, address common security threats, the organisation was not an equivalent of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) or the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) due to disparate political systems and strategies of East Asian states during the Cold War. Additionally, the US opposed a creation of an Asia-Pacific equivalent of NATO on account of the Soviet Union supporting the idea. Sharing America's concerns, Japan, too, traditionally eschewed closer cooperation on regional security. As Hosoya argues (2013, 146-147), Japan Cold War policy *vis-à-vis* East Asia was characterised by a lack of strategy or coherence and only expanded within the framework of the Yoshida doctrine underpinned by the US-Japan alliance. This priority that Japan gave to its relationship with the US became evident in 1990 when it did not support the East Asia Economic Group initiative put forward by Malaysia on the basis of the US opposing it.

With a new geopolitical balance of power emerging together with new global and regional challenges and threats, Japanese post-war diplomacy could not have been unaffected and Japan had to demonstrate a willingness play a proactive and constructive on the international stage. At the same time, Japan was quick to notice China's rapid military modernisation and economic development in the early 1990s, which in July 1991 led then Foreign Minister Nakayama Tarō to put forward the idea of a regional forum for multilateral political and security dialogue. Panov (2014, 272) notes that the Nakayama initiative was a rare moment of Japan unveiling a big foreign policy proposal without prior approval from the US. America's reaction

to Nakayama's idea was perhaps encapsulated by then Secretary of State James Baker who called it "a threat to the existing bilateral relations in the region". While the initiative was ultimately not implemented, it gave an impetus to the creation of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) in 1994, including both North East and South East Asian states.

The 1990s saw China becoming an increasingly significant factor in Japan's diplomacy (Molodiakov *et al.*, 2009, 453). Initially, the end of the Cold War brought portended a positive dynamic for Sino-Japanese ties. As Drifte argues (1996, 57), Japan's approach towards the rising China just before the end of the Cold War and in its wake still involved a high degree of engagement. Specifically, Tokyo's readiness to engage Beijing could be found in its unwillingness to impose sanctions over the Tiananmen square incident (which Drifte (2005, 29) referred to as "a test of engagement" for Japan), Kaifu becoming the first major world leader to visit China after Tiananmen in 1991, and the government not protesting Chinese ships firing on Japanese trawlers in the East China Sea. The brief tenure of Prime Minister Hosokawa Morihiro (1993-1994) saw a thawing of bilateral ties, with Hosokawa issuing a formal apology for Japan's wartime aggression, which at the time was described as the strongest statement on the subject by a Japanese leader (Stockwin, 1993) and earned the prime minister praise from the Chinese Foreign Ministry (Richardson, 1993).

The rise of China led in the 1990s to a formation of a triangular structure of international relations in East Asia, with China, Japan, and the US representing its sides, asymmetric as they were due to unequal economic and military power of the respective states (Pyle, 2009, 311). While this "triangle" used to be the cornerstone of the East Asian order throughout the entire 20th century, the post-Cold War environment changed new dynamics to it. The dissolution of the Soviet Union left the three states bereft of a common strategic adversary, and, as the triangular relations became more interdependent, all three started searching for the optimal set of policies to pursue. While the US enjoyed a strengthened international position with the Soviet threat gone

and China was ascendant, Japan found itself gripped by economic malaise and political turbulence. This development posed a challenge for Japanese policy-makers to build diplomacy towards China with even more care as its growing influence and alternating periods of Sino-US friendship and antagonism fed Japanese worries of the US either abandoning Japan in favour of strengthening ties with China, or the relationship between Washington and Beijing devolving into an armed conflict, with Japan being caught in the crossfire.

As the 1990s progressed, Tokyo became disillusioned with China's approach towards a variety of issues and started doubting whether further engagement was the wisest policy towards the rising power (Hook *et al.*, 2010). Negative reaction from Japan was elicited by China's 1994 underground nuclear testing and a series of missile tests and military exercises in the Taiwan Strait in 1995-1996 which only raised Japan's suspicions of China's detrimental influence on regional security after the 1993-1994 North Korean crisis. These doubts were strengthened by the fact that, as China's economy grew, Japan's traditional levers of pressure such as ODA became progressively less relevant. Thus, the goal of guiding China towards a path that is more cooperative and beneficial for both Japan and the wider region has also become more challenging for Japan as its sway over China started diminishing. As a result, Tokyo suspended its China-bound ODA. Apart from China's rapid economic growth, a decrease in Japan's influence on China had to do with geostrategic reasons: while China was contending with the Soviet Union throughout the Cold War and was thus forced to maintain a friendly relationship *vis-à-vis* Japan in light of its alliance with the US, the USSR's dissolution removed that incentive and fostered conditions for China to adopt a more high-profile, robust foreign policy.

Overall, Sino-Japanese relations after the Cold War were characterised by cycles of tension and reconciliation (Clausen, 2014) and guided by the logic of what Samuels refers to as the "Goldilocks consensus", with Japan trying to carefully balance the triangular relationship with the US and China. The positive dynamic of the bilateral ties generated under Kaifu and

Hosokawa came to an end after the Taiwan Strait crisis, and Japan strengthening its alliance with the US under the premiership of Hashimoto. The latter, however, eventually managed to balance his success *vis-à-vis* the US and improve ties with China, which remained stable under the two following prime ministers, Obuchi Keizō and Mori Yoshirō.

As previously mentioned, the end of the Cold war and the shifts in the international system forced both Japan and the US to reevaluate the parameters of their security relationship. With the Soviet threat gone, the alliance's function as a deterrent of Communism was rendered obsolete, and the importance of the bilateral strategic partnership declined (Purrington, 1992, 161). As such, the US announced an overall drawdown of its armed forces, with its military presence in the Asia-Pacific decreasing between 1990 and 1994 from 134 thousand to 100 thousand troops (Department of Defense, 1995). In 1992, Prime Minister Hosokawa formed a consultative group tasked with examining the ways of developing the US-Japan alliance, which produced a report predicting a decline of US leadership in East Asia, as well as recommending greater multilateral engagement under US auspices.

Intrinsic to Japan's grand strategy under the Yoshida doctrine, entailing total dependence of the US for providing national security, were two kinds of fears based on what Snyder (1984) called the alliance dilemma: entrapment and abandonment (Drifte, 2003, 9-10; Hughes, 2009, 845; Green, 1995, 4; Pyle, 2007, 336; Mochizuki, 2007a, 110). On the one hand, Japan risked becoming embroiled in a potential Sino-American conflict, for instance over Taiwan, for which it would be unprepared. On the other hand, the US could find it more lucrative to improve relations with China at the cost of diminished ties with Japan. With the US-Japan alliance serving as a lynchpin of Japan's national security, Tokyo might be left politically and militarily isolated. America's swift and sudden thawing of relations with China in 1972 could be considered a minor example of abandonment.

Despite some doubts in both countries with regards to the status of the alliance, however, the East Asian regional environment in the 1990s characterised by North Korea's nuclear programme, tensions in the South China sea, and the rise of new, non-conventional security threats provided the necessary rationale to uphold a strong US-Japan security relationship. In particular, this sentiment was expressed in a 1995 report "United States Security Strategy for the East Asia Pacific Region" by Joseph Nye, then Assistant Secretary of Defence for International Security Affairs. In the report, he praised the US-Japan alliance as a lynchpin of regional security, as well as a key element of implementing America's grand strategy. The Nye report became a landmark in the US-Japan security relations as it effectively confirmed America's determination to maintain military presence in East Asia and its steadfast support of the alliance with Japan (Yamaguchi, 2012).

In 1995, the Murayama Tomiichi administration moved to develop a new national defence program, and after nine months of work, the cabinet and the Security Council adopted the National Defence Program Outline in and after 1996 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 1995). The 1995 iteration confirmed the importance of the US-Japan alliance in upholding regional security and continued the basic defence strategy underpinning the national security aspect of the Yoshida doctrine. At the same time, the new Guidelines sought to streamline and upgrade the SDF in response to the more severe post-Cold War security climate. At the same time, not everyone among the Japanese political elites was supportive of maintaining the US-Japan alliance, exemplified by a report by the discussion council on security issues under the Murayama cabinet, which argued for closer ties with ASEAN and other East Asian organisations and states, while distancing from a unilateral orientation of the US.

Nevertheless the US and Japan signed in 1996, a joint declaration on security alliance for the 21st century, followed next year by the updated Guidelines for US-Japan defence cooperation (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1996; Ministry of Defense, 1997). Both documents clarified the

parameters of the alliance in the new security environment. A notable development was the shift of the alliance from the narrow purpose of defending Japan from aggression towards the broader goal of upholding stability in the Asia-Pacific, as well as being able to respond to China's apparent readiness to resort to coercion in order to achieve its foreign policy objectives. The section entitled "Situations in areas surrounding Japan" posited that in the event of a "situation" in an area around Japan that affects Japan's peace and security, the two governments will "intensify information and intelligence sharing and policy consultations", while making "every effort, uncluding diplomatic efforts, to prevent further deterioration of the situation". The areas surrounding Japan were defined not be geographic criteria, but situationally. It has been speculated that the US-Japan alliance came to cover parts of East Asia north of the Phillipines, as well as Taiwan and the Korean peninsula, which meant that Japan could potentially be entangled in a conflict over Taiwan (Bunin, 2000, 225).

Moreover, the documents reflected Japan's more substantial input in the alliance, taking on financial and technical rear-area support of US forces in crisis conditions.

Thus, in spite of the shifts in the structure of international relations in early 1990s and the following ambiguity surrounding the future of the US-Japan alliance, the two countries reaffirmed the importance of the bilateral security relations and mapped the ways of developing the alliance into the 21st century.

It is worth noting, however, that despite the gradual development of the US-Japan bilateral relations in the 1990s, Tokyo and Washington's approaches with regards to China started to diverge under the Bill Clinton administration (1993-2001). While the new administration initially emphasised that China's treatment as a most-favoured-nation (MFN) was dependent on its human rights policy, it dropped that condition within a year and instead advocated engagement with China. During Clinton's second term, "engagement" transformed into a "strategic partnership". Such term made Japan wary, bringing back the fear of being

abandoned by the US and making it seem as if Clinton was downplaying the importance of the US-Japan relationship in favour of boosting ties with China. When the East Asian financial crisis (described in more detail in the following below) hit the region in 1997, Clinton applauded China's decision to maintain its currency value for the sake of regional stability, while implying that Japan's failure to address the crisis posed an issue to both the US and China. In Japan, these remarks were seen as evidence of the US bypassing Japan in its relations with China. As Curtis states (2000), Clinton became the first US president who made Japan doubt the objectives of US policy towards China.

Thus, Japan's confidence in East Asian security, undergirded by US military might, started to erode. Tokyo's concerns were exacerbated by nuclear and missile technology proliferation in the region throughout the 1990s. In 1996, North Korea conducted a series of missile launches in Taiwan's territorial waters, followed in 1990 by a long-distance missile launch which flew over Japan. Finally, in 1998 India and Pakistan both conducted nuclear weapons tests. In Japan, these events were dubbed a "triple shock" and underscored the growing unpredictability of regional environment, forcing Japan to take steps towards bolstering its national defence capabilities.

Apart from the relative drawdown of US forces in the region and the rapid economic and military development of China, East Asian environment in the 1990s was shaped by the 1997-1998 financial crisis. The region turned to the US for assistance but it never came, which undermined the trust in America's leadership among East Asian states, while the combination of the financial crisis and the failure of the 1999 WTO summit in Seattle damaged the region's trust in Western financial liberalism in general. The US was very slow in addressing the crisis, with Bill Clinton underplaying the severity of the crisis at the 1997 APEC summit. The US later joined European countries and the IMF in opposing Japan's plan of creating an Asian Monetary Fund (AMF) to combat the fallout of the crisis. As a result, the APEC approved the

plan proposed by the US and the IMF instead, with the AMF idea being placed on hold. Despite remaining the world's second economy and playing an important role in providing financial help to the region under the so-called Miyazawa initiative of 1999, Japan was ultimately precluded from exercising strategic thinking or undertaking measures to avoid future crises due to its own economic malaise. Combined with the APEC rejecting the AMF proposal under US pressure, Japan's international prestige took a hit as a result, with the crisis illuminating its insufficient leadership in the region. Meanwhile, China managed to use the crisis to its avail and establish itself as a new major player in East Asia.

As a result, the financial crisis gave a strong impetus for new East Asian regionalism. The weak response on part of the US, as well as Japan's inability to lead the region through the crisis provided a rationale for a different vision of regional cooperation in the Asia-Pacific. In December 1997, ASEAN members states, as well as Japan, China, and the Republic of Korea organised an informal conference in Kuala Lumpur to address the financial crisis, and two years later, they announced in Manila the formation of the ASEAN+3 initiative, which lay the foundation of an East Asian Community and regional economic integration. At the same time, the ASEAN+3 format deliberately eschewed discussing security issues, which led to Japan hosting a forum on security issues in North-East Asia in 1998. This event remained a one-off occurrence, however, as it became impossible to balance the disparate interests of the US, Japan, China, Russia, and South Korea. All in all, however, the 1997-1999 financial crisis accelerated regionalist trends in the region, with the Asia-Pacific states striving for greater institutionalisation and strengthening economic cooperation.

Thus, the end of the Cold War and the subsequent shifts in the East Asian regional environment throughout the 1990s started to erode the foundations of the Yoshida doctrine and necessitated its adaptation to better reflect the new international realities. As Pyle (2018) writes,

the Yoshida strategy was created during the Cold War and succeeded while it lasted, but was immediately outmoded when the conflict ended.

Japan's unilateral orientation of the US was challenged by the disappearance of the Soviet threat and the following draw-down of the American military presence in the region. Despite the eventual affirmation of the alliance in mid-1990s, the Clinton administration's perception of China as a new strategic partner combined with growing tensions between Japan and China, doubts still lingered as to whether the US could be trusted to uphold its alliance responsibilities to Japan.

Meanwhile, the other cornerstone of the Yoshida doctrine, Japan's low-profile, risk-averse foreign policy, also had to be recalibrated in the face of the massive geostrategic changes in the Asia-Pacific. The biggest impetus to developing a new grand strategy for a new environment came in the form of the first Gulf War, which highlighted the inadequacies of Japan's "cheque-book diplomacy" in the post-Cold War period, and which will be examined in the following sub-section.

3.3. The First Gulf War and its impact on Japan's foreign policy

The First Gulf War became a watershed for Japan's foreign and security policy in that it highlighted the disparate approaches towards tackling international issues within Japan (Molodiakov *et al.*, 2009, 443-444). The anti-militarist norm was very strong among the Japanese people, many of whom protested any direct personnel dispatch, fearing it will create a future precedent. Internationally, Japan's cautious approach throughout the war was branded as irresponsible and hurt its global prestige. The discontent on Washington's part was expressed when the US cancelled George Bush's visit to Tokyo slated for April 1991. Additionally, Japan's foreign minister was not invited to the Madrid peace conference in the wake of a cessation of hostilities. Finally, Kuwait made its attitude towards Tokyo clear by purchasing a full-page

advertisement in *The New York Times* where it thanked all members of the international coalition but not Japan (Hook, Hughes, Dobson, and Gilson, 2012).

Throughout the Cold War, a potential dispatch of the SDF overseas was feared to return Japan to its militarist era or embroil in another country's war. Rather than construed as fulfilling Japan's obligations as a member of the international community, using the SDF to provide personnel assistance to conflict areas was viewed by the majority of the general public and the opposition as a threat to Article 9. However, the First Gulf War launched a series of policies throughout the 1990s demonstrating that sending Japanese troops overseas can help restore and uphold international peace rather than thwart it. Despite what Soeya (2005, 103) describes as an "absolute humiliation" for being unable to contribute to the multinational coalition with anything other than "cheque-book diplomacy", Japan used the mismanagement of its response to the war to reconsider contribution to PKOs and eventually allay the concerns both within Japan and without regarding the role of the SDF in tackling international crises. Opposition was mitigated when the Japanese government made clear what exactly the SDF mandate would be and that it would operate within the limits of UN resolutions.

Viewed in the short term, as an isolated event, Japan's response to the First Gulf War can be considered as a failure due to Tokyo being unable to enact policies commensurate to its economic status and not living up to its obligations as perceived by the international community, especially the US. However Japan managed to turn the situation around and eventually achieved success in increasing the SDF's prestige and recognition. Thus in the long run, Japan's reaction to the First Gulf War exerted significant influence on its diplomacy, awakening Japan to the new geopolitical realities and acting as a catalyst for its future proactive foreign policy, particularly its response to the War on terror, that will be examined in 3.5.2. Additionally, despite dispatching the SDF overseas, Japan succeeded in keeping the history-marred relations with China from deteriorating, with Beijing even endorsing some of Tokyo's PKOs. That, however,

did not stop the bilateral ties from cooling and tension between the two countries slowly rising in the 1990s, which will be discussed in the next subsection.

To better understand why Japan's initial response to the war failed, it is possible to separate the factors which affected the response into four categories – *gaiatsu*, or external political pressure; public opinion; domestic political realities; and political leadership. Each factor undermined Japan's ability to efficiently respond to the crisis and together, united in a “perfect storm”, they shook Japan's foreign policy during the war. Each, however, was eventually overcome within the next several years.

Japan's initial response to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait was in fact very quick. As Japan's 1991 Diplomatic Blue Book reports (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 1991), Japan moved to impose economic sanction of Saddam Hussein's regime on 5 August, a day prior to the analogous UN resolution. Later that month, then Foreign Minister Nakayama Tarō embarked on a diplomatic trip to Saudi Arabia, Oman, Egypt, Jordan, and Turkey during which he emphasised that Japan's position was congruent with those held by Iraq's neighbours. Finally, the government decided to make lofty financial and humanitarian contributions to assist in solving the crisis, allocating a grand total of around US\$13 billion in funds, as well as various materials, transportation, and medicine. However, as Nakanishi (2011) argues, such reaction illuminated the weaknesses in Japan's approach towards crisis management at the time: while Tokyo showed swiftness and resolution in tackling issues which had prior historic precedent, it was incapable of providing a competent response when faced with events and challenges it was unfamiliar with. Japan's approach to the Gulf crisis was based on its response to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, with the government being unprepared to the reality of Western countries eventually taking direct military action against Iraq. As said action was spearheaded by the US and sanctioned by the UN, Japan, which was the sole member of the anti-Hussein coalition that

did not send any troops, was fully expected to assist militarily as a US ally with an avowedly UN-centric foreign policy.

As mentioned before, Japan was expected to contribute personnel to the coalition that was formed against Hussein's regime. Nakanishi (2011) explains the mounting pressure for Japan to provide military assistance by the international suspicion, particularly in the US, that was growing towards Tokyo since the 1980s. Following Japan's ascension to the ranks of an economic superpower, voices were heard accusing it of only caring about itself and seeking to economically influence other countries. The revelation in 1987 that a Toshiba branch was selling machinery to the Soviet Union in circumvention of existing agreements (*Nikkei Shimbun*, 2017), resulted in a flurry of criticism in Washington, and the opinion that Japan's foreign policy was not commensurate to its economic status was gaining traction internationally. The First Gulf War became, therefore, a test of sorts for Japan's "chequebook diplomacy" to prove that the government was ready to pay more attention to international security and use the military avenue to solve crises. The extent of political pressure exerted on Japan by Washington throughout the crisis is embodied by the fact that then US ambassador Michael Armacost garnered the nickname "Mister *gaiatsu*" in Japanese media, used even after he left the position (*Nikkei Shimbun*, 1998).

An *NHK* (2017) report on the evolution of public opinion in Japan on the matter of amending the constitution underscores that the very question of sending the SDF personnel overseas was not even regarded as a political issue until the First Gulf War.

Pacifist sentiments were still very strong in Japan when the Gulf war broke out. Purrington explains (1992, 168) that the war reignited memories of World War II in Japan, with Iraqi invasion compared to Japanese imperialism, and Iraqi cities bombed by the US reminding of air raids on Japan. Further wariness was caused when then US Secretary of Defence Dick Cheney refused to rule out the nuclear option to end the war, resulting in the Socialists' even stronger opposition to personnel assistance.

According to a *Mainichi Shimbun* poll conducted in June 1991, 48 percent of respondents supported a SDF overseas dispatch, with 47 percent disapproving (*Mainichi Shimbun*, 1991). When asked to explain their approval, 44 percent of the supporters said that Japan should also contribute to the international community as best as it could, while 38 percent brought up the need to assist in humanitarian evacuation. The government's decision to send in the minesweepers received even greater support, with 61 percent in favour and 33 percent against it. The most stark difference, however, could be observed in the issue of PKO participation: while 70 percent of people disapproved of Japan potentially taking part in it, the number dropped sharply to 13 percent in June 1991. The Japanese people were affected by the realities of the war, the *Mainichi* piece argued at the time, and the opinion poll's results clearly reflected a paradigm shift in public attitudes towards Japan's role in the world.

Another factor that adversely affected Japan's response was weak political leadership by Prime Minister Kaifu Toshiki, whose actions throughout the crisis were described by Rosenbluth and Thies (2010) as "prolonged hand-wringing". Shinoda (2007, 62) posits that Kaifu failed to recognise the weight of the Gulf crisis, and his delayed reaction contributed to the mayhem within Japan's political system with regard to a proper response. By 1990, the LDP lost a majority in the Upper House of the Diet after the so-called Recruit scandal had broken out a year before. Prime Minister Kaifu had little support of his own within the LDP and had to rely on the big Takeshita faction of the party, particularly Ozawa Ichirō. While Kaifu, known as a "dove" in terms of his foreign policy views, was apprehensive about sending the forces to Kuwait, especially under the SDF auspices, Ozawa was adamant that troops should be dispatched.

When America's frustration at Japan became apparent, Kaifu attempted to pass a legislation, named "United Nations Peace Cooperation Bill" which would have established basic legal framework allow personnel assistance. However, there was no single-mindedness regarding the bill among either the LDP or the MOFA, and with the opposition led by the Socialists

controlling the Upper House, the legislation as it was presented by Kaifu was highly likely to be rejected.

Kaifu resigned as prime minister in November 1991 and was succeeded by Miyazawa Kiichi. Miyazawa was also wary of dispatching the SDF to the Middle East or even making further financial contribution, but like Kaifu, he relied on support from the Takeshita faction which insisted on Japan's greater international involvement. Thus, it was imperative for his political future that the UN peace cooperation bill, which was rejected during Kaifu's tenure, be enacted by the time the next Upper House election were to be held in June 1992.

By then, the Socialists had lost some of the approval of the Japanese electorate, while public opinion had swung in favour of limited SDF participation abroad. The Japan Socialist Party's (JSP) power and support, dwindled as they were unable to not only offer a coherent alternative to the government's Gulf War response, but generally envision a new role for Japan on the international stage after the end of the Cold War (Purrington, 1992, 178). The local elections of 1991 resulted in big losses for the party, but despite calls for internal reform, the differences between the left and right wings of the JSP precluded any major changes. An extraordinary conference was convened in summer 1991 to address the mounting pressure from the labour unions and growing dissatisfaction among the voters, but no significant reforms were enacted. Thus, the LDP had a relatively stronger hand in passing SDF-related legislation and, after several months of talks with the Kōmeitō and the Democratic Socialist Party with regards to the precise nature of the law, the International Peace Cooperation act was enacted in June 1992, allowing Japan to exercise more robust policies to uphold global peace.

3.4. Domestic debates concerning Japan's role in the world and the search for a new grand strategy in the 1990s

As Hosoya explains (2011b), the three key principles of Japanese post-war diplomacy (US-bilateralism, Asianism, and UN-centrism) remained relevant after the collapse of the bipolar

international system, with Japan facing the need to adapt each of these principles to the new geopolitical realities. Most post-Cold War Japanese administrations tried to reinvent Japan's diplomatic strategy by blending the three principles in different ways and emphasising different strands of the country's foreign policy.

Since the first Gulf war, which had a profound effect on the conceptions of foreign policy within the Japanese political elites, Japan made efforts to reinvent its grand strategy to align it more closely to the changing international environment. Throughout the 1990s, there were two major points of view regarding Japan's new international role: that Japan should pursue a more proactive, high-risk foreign policy to achieve bigger prestige on the international stage, and that Japan should maintain a lower profile within the traditional US-Japan alliance framework and instead embrace the role of a pacifist state, providing financial assistance in the name of global peace and prosperity.

Proponents of the first approach often talked of Japan becoming a "normal nation", a concept coined by Ozawa, a former LDP politician with a reputation of a king-maker, or "shadow shogun" (*yami shōgun*) as they are known in Japan. Ozawa first proposed that Japan pursue a more robust, proactive foreign policy in the 1992 report by the Special Investigative Committee on Japan's Role in the International Community, of which Ozawa was the chairman. The document, usually referred to simply as the Ozawa report and published in the April 1992 issue of the *Bungei Shunju* magazine, argued that as a world-class economic power, Japan's international role should be commensurate with its standing, to which end Japan's foreign policy should be "fundamentally reassessed". The report criticised Japan's post-war "passive" pacifism, as well as the Yoshida doctrine specifically, for focusing on domestic politics and eschewing sufficient contribution to international security. Instead, the authors proposed a shift to "proactive pacifism" that embraced legitimate use of force and allowed military participation in a hypothetical UN army or international coalitions like the one that took part in the Gulf war.

Ozawa continued this line of argument in his 1993 bestseller *Japan Reform Plan* (Nippon Keizō Keikaku), in which he advocated constitutional change to enable Japan's to take part in international peacekeeping activities. A "normal" nation to him meant Japan shouldering the same international responsibilities that were expected of other states instead of "receiving and not giving". The Japan that Ozawa envisioned would be allowed to participate in the collective security system and take more risks in foreign policy so as to increase its international prestige and power. Ozawa not only started the discourse of Japan as a "normal" nation but became its face: as Katsumata and Li (2008) have found, 30 out of 39 editorials on the topic of Japan's "normalisation" by three of Japan's biggest newspapers from 1993-2006 mention Ozawa by name.

The second school of thought, bringing attention to Japan's unique status as a pacifist state, was popularised by the journalist Funabashi Yoichi, who introduced the notion of Japan as "global civilian power". In Funabashi's view, emphasising pacifism as Japan's international role would eventually create a global environment beneficial for Japan's national interests. As Yasutomo (2014, 19) argues, the soft power-based concept of a "civilian power" was closer to the more traditional pacifist merchant state of the Yoshida doctrine. Japan's objective on the global stage should be creating a "liberal international order" through economic means such as free trade and ODA. Interestingly, Funabashi also advocated a "values-based" diplomacy based on promoting democracy and rule of law, which would transcend the purely mercantilist notions.

While both Ozawa and Funabashi were in favour of expanding Japan's contribution towards international peace and prosperity, there were two key differences between their competing visions. One was their attitudes towards military force. While Ozawa advocated a constitutional change so that Japan could take part in UN-sanctioned, multilateral military operations, Funabashi supported reducing military spending and only achieving greater stability through economic means, without providing any guidelines for application of military power.

The other crucial difference was their views on the US-Japan relationship. Ozawa considered Japan's strict adherence to US bilateralism after the Cold war unreasonable, opposed the continued "outsourcing" of national security to America, and only saw a future for the alliance if Japan's role in it would be increased. Meanwhile, Funabashi's "global civilian power" concept was more supportive of bilateralism and suggested that Japan's leadership role should be "auxiliary" to that of the US.

The 1990s also signified a decrease in supporters of engagement with China among Japan's political actors. As Pyle notes (2009, 333), by the end of the decade, China lost most of its defenders with ties to Beijing within the LDP, while the new generation of politicians was becoming more vocal in criticising China's policies and Japan's perceived acquiescence towards them. The late 1990s also brought about a range of new views and groups with regards to managing China's rise. As Smith writes (2016), on the one hand, a consensus was formed among both the left and the right in Japan that China's rise was going to play a crucial role for Japan's own future. On the other, harsher calls to getting tough on China were starting to be heard coming from the small but vocal minority of the far-right nationalists, and even the generally pro-China business community became more reluctant to advocate greater engagement with Beijing.

As a result of these debates, the first major attempt to formulate a new foreign policy doctrine for Japan came in the form of Hashimoto's "Eurasian diplomacy", unveiled by the prime minister at the July 1997 speech before Keizai Dōyūkai (Japan Association of Corporate Executives). Its primary goal was securing peace and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific based on upholding the US-Japan alliance and creating multilateral frameworks through the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC). Special attention, however, was paid to Japan's ties with China and Russia. Hashimoto intended to create an equilateral "square" in the region between the US, Japan, China, and Russia, which would ensure a stable, peaceful environment for Japan to

prosper. The speech emphasised the need to radically improve Japan's relations with Russia to find a way (*michisuji*) to resolve the territorial dispute. With regards to China, Hashimoto's goal was to achieve common action in tackling international issues and facilitate China's status as a rational, constructive actor. Overall, the "Eurasian doctrine" reflected Japan's intention to honour the US-Japan alliance, but also conduct independent foreign policy with Russia, China, and the broader Asia-Pacific.

The next strategic vision for Japan was unveiled by the Obuchi government in 1998, underpinned by the notion of human security. The idea was specifically promoted by Tsuruoka Kōji, a centrist diplomat, and Takemi Keizō, then administrative Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs, who both believed that Japan should take on more responsibilities towards upholding global security, shaping the international economic order, as well as assisting developing countries. The new burdens were to be shouldered through a mixture of traditional non-military means such as the official development assistance (ODA) and new security activities such as UN PKOs. At the same time, the human security proponents opposed Japan's remilitarisation, believing that an increase in defence spending would not necessarily result in a more secure Japan, but can rather spark concerns among Japan's East Asian neighbours. Instead, they proposed small-scale modernisation of the SDF so as to better coordinate international efforts aimed at upholding peace and prosperity. The 1997 financial crisis, which led to the deepening of East Asian integration processes in the late 1990s, also triggered the growing importance of the human security concept (Soeya, 2005b, 112). Obuchi himself presented the new initiative at the December 1998 conference called "An Intellectual Dialogue on Building Asia's Tomorrow", as well a summit in Hanoi later that month, saying that human security is "the key which comprehensively covers all the menaces that threaten survival, daily life, and dignity of human beings and strengthens the efforts to confront those threats" (Japan Center for International Exchange, 1998). On a practical level, the Obuchi administration contributed ¥500 million towards establishing the "Human Security Fund" under UN authority. Despite being an attempt

to reinvigorate Japan's foreign and security policy, Hosoya (2015, 48) emphasises that the human security initiative still existed within the traditional framework of non-military means.

3.5. Japanese diplomacy under Koizumi

Japan's foreign policy experienced further shifts and recalibrations under the tenure of Koizumi Junichirō, whose political will and bold top-down policy-making was a subject of much research and discussion as shown in the literature review (1.3.1). Shinoda (2007, 6-7) highlights Koizumi's success at achieving swift changes in foreign and security policy, specifically passing the legislation to allow the SDF to participate in active combat operations; enacting the emergency law which established a framework to respond to external attacks on Japan; and pushing through the Iraq legislation enabling the SDF to provide humanitarian and reconstruction aid to said country. Hosoya (2015, 40) notes that while Koizumi had little interest or experience in foreign policy prior to becoming prime minister, his unusually long tenure contributed to his strong international presence, exemplified by participating in six G8 summits and leading the creation of the East Asia Summit. Koizumi's other major achievements included forging a strong, trusting personal relationship with George W. Bush and returning from Pyongyang with an apology from Kim Jong-il regarding the North Korean abductions of Japanese citizens. He spearheaded a strengthening of US-Japan security ties and Tokyo's increasingly proactive international profile. However the Koizumi years also saw ties with China worsening and eventually grinding to an almost complete halt due to the prime minister's controversial visits to the Yasukuni Shrine.

The following subsection will explore the US and China strands of Koizumi's foreign policy, in particular his personal influence on the state of Sino-Japanese and US-Japan ties, as well as the foreign-policy making under Koizumi and his leadership style.

3.5.1. Koizumi and China

Koizumi's premiership transformed the status of Sino-Japanese ties, with the bilateral relations deteriorating during Koizumi's later years to what is often described as an "ice age" (Foster, 2011; Farrer and Nakano, 2008; Swanström and Kokubun, 2009, 45). Japan's regional diplomacy under Koizumi became zero-sum in nature, and as the US-Japan alliance grew stronger, so did Tokyo's ties with Beijing became more tense, starting another cycle of tension after the reconciliation of the late 1990s. It is worth emphasising, however, that Koizumi's stance could hardly be described as "anti-China". While China was already on the rise throughout his premiership and was viewed as a security challenge due to its defence spending outpacing its economic growth, its economy was much smaller than under the DPJ, which in turn resulted in more low-key, less assertive foreign policy. Koizumi himself refuted the "China threat" thesis on more than one occasion, maintaining that China represented an opportunity instead (Sarkisov, 2013).

That dictated a different perception in Japan which did not consider China an outright military threat or a threat to its own economic hegemony. As a senior MOFA official in the Koizumi administration argued in an interview (2018), the Prime Minister himself was aware of China's unpredictability but still saw it as an important partner and a big economic opportunity. There was no push for a harder line towards China among Koizumi's inner circle, either. His primary foreign policy advisors were Tanaka Hitoshi and Okamoto Yukio, both career diplomats wary of what they saw as China's expansionist regional politics, as well as staunch supporters of the US-Japan alliance. However they arguably could not be classified as China hawks and furthermore, there was much support behind continued engagement with China from various sources, including the LDP and METI. The latter was headed under Koizumi by Nikai Toshihiro, known for his pro-China stance and close relationships with many members of Chinese elite.

Nonetheless, bilateral ties under Koizumi suffered from a lot of friction, the main source of which was Koizumi's uncompromising stance on visiting the Yasukuni Shrine in Tokyo, which commemorates those who died serving the Empire of Japan, yet is seen by China and South Korea as a symbol of Japan's past militarism.

Initially, Sino-Japanese relations showed positive dynamics throughout Koizumi's first year of premiership, and the prime minister embarked on a diplomatic trip to China in October 2001 after easing the potential tension surrounding his Yasukuni visit by moving the date to 13 August. The bilateral relations gained further momentum through to mid-2002, arguably culminating in Koizumi's speech at the Asia Forum in Hainan in April 2002. In it, he called Japan a friend of China, welcomed Beijing's efforts to advance openness, and emphasised that, unlike some, he did not see China's economic rise as a threat to Japan (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2002). According to the Chinese Foreign Ministry, China's premier Zhu Rongji expressed appreciation for Koizumi's speech, argued in favour of Sino-Japanese cooperation, and extended Koizumi an invitation for another official visit (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, 2002).

However, the nascent thawing of ties did not last long, and they started deteriorating after a series of events starting soon after the Hainan Asia Forum. On 21 April, Koizumi paid a surprise visit to Yasukuni, which was swiftly followed by China's Foreign Ministry summoning the Japanese ambassador to express a "strong dissatisfaction and emphatic opposition" to the Koizumi's actions.

2004 saw bilateral ties further cooling, with several incidents contributing to an climate of tension between Tokyo and Beijing. On New Year's Day, Koizumi visited Yasukuni for the fourth time, incurring the condemnation from China. In March, a group of Chinese activists landed on one of the contested Senkaku islands where they were apprehended by Japanese law enforcement. However, despite the original intention to charge them with violating immigration

laws, the Koizumi government decided to avoid further exacerbating the issue and instead limited its response to lodging a complaint with China and deporting the activists (Hafeez, 2015, 75). In November that year, a Chinese submarine entered Japan's territorial waters with the goal of testing the Japanese intrusion detection systems; as a result, Beijing had to offer formal apologies.

By 2005, all high-level contacts between Japan and China were severed, and in March, China was rocked by massive anti-Japanese protests. At the time, Japan was striving to get a permanent seat at the UN Security Council amid a campaign to reform the body, to which China remained unequivocally opposed. The first large-scale demonstration took place on 9 April in Beijing, drawing around ten thousand protestors and resulting in rocks being thrown at the Japanese embassy, windows being broken in offices of Japanese companies, and Japanese citizens being assaulted. On 16 April, another protest was held in Shanghai, also leading to damage of Japanese property. The Chinese government called the events "spontaneous" and refused to apologise, instead insisting that the protests were caused by issues of history, and shifting the blame to Japan (Uchiyama, 2010, 103).

After that, while contacts between Japan and China continued, with Koizumi even meeting with Hu during the APEC summit in Bangkok in October 2005, bilateral relations remained decidedly stagnant and damaged. The next attempt to rectify Sino-Japanese ties came at the outset of Abe's first term in late 2006.

3.5.2. The US-Japan alliance under Koizumi

Further strengthening the US-Japan alliance and raising Japan's international security profile became the lynchpin of Koizumi's diplomacy.

He showed unfading dedication to the ties with Washington, embracing US-promoted initiatives, including even those that received little support from the wider international

community, like the Second Gulf War, and reiterating the importance of the alliance in many of his policy speeches.

At the time, despite the US and Japan reaffirming the importance of the bilateral alliance in mid-1990s, fear still existed that America could reconsider the value of the relationship and instead pivot to China as its main partner in the Asia-Pacific. Japan was concerned by Bill Clinton's visit to Shanghai in June 1998 and then Secretary of State Madeleine Albright's trip to Pyongyang in October 2000, both of which were potential security issues for Japan, the former because Sino-American détente could limit US support of Japan, and the latter because a nuclear agreement with North Korea could minimise US pressure of Kim Jong-il's regime.

In the wake of the 11 September terror attacks, the US-led "war on terror" cast doubts on the future of the entire East Asian regional environment. America's counter-terrorism efforts resulted in a significant change of US security policy. Firstly, the US demanded multilateral cooperation in the fight against terrorism. Secondly, the US started drawing down its military presence in the Asia-Pacific. The singular focus on the threat of terrorism in the wake of 11 September took America's attention away from East Asia. Thus, Koizumi's objective was to tether Japan more closely to the US so as to prevent any potential threats to Japan's interests. Koizumi's policies granted the US more flexibility in utilising its Japan-based forces in other regions such as the Middle East.

The importance that Koizumi attributed to the US-Japan security relationship can be gleaned in particular from his June 2001 speech entitled "Partnership for security and prosperity" that he delivered when meeting with then US President George W. Bush at Camp David (Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet, 2001). In it, he argued that the alliance was the cornerstone of peace and security in the Asia-Pacific and promoted the intensification of security cooperation and consultations in such areas as peacekeeping, force posture, and security strategies. Five years on, in a statement called "The US-Japan alliance of the new century" that Koizumi and Bush

released in June 2006, shortly before the former stepped down as prime minister, the two leaders emphasised the need of transforming the alliance for the future, praising the bilateral partnership as one of the most accomplished in history and the enormous progress achieved in the alliance during their tenures (U.S. Department of State Archive, 2006).

Apart from placing the US-Japan strategic partnership at the centre of his foreign policy vision, Koizumi demonstrated an innovative (by Japanese standards) approach to leadership by personalising the relationship between himself and Bush in such a way that it resulted in arguably the closest personal ties between US and Japanese leaders, and while Bush never enjoyed particular popularity in Japan, the personal chemistry between the two proved to be a success for Koizumi (Green, 2006, 101; Clausen, 2013). Amidst the “revolving door” of prime minister before and after Koizumi, he achieved a level of friendship with Bush that was arguably only comparable with the “Ron-Yasu” relationship between Nakasone and Ronald Reagan in the 1980s.

It is worth noting, however, that to some Japanese and international analysts, the ties between Koizumi and Bush were seen as even too close, with criticism being directed at the two leaders for downplaying political differences between Japan and the US and effectively agreeing on everything (Cossa, 2010, 67). Fukushima Mizuho, then leader of the JSP, called Japan under Koizumi the “51st American state” and asserted that the prime minister simply “obeyed” Washington (Lim, 2006). Some have also brought attention at the time to the possibility of Koizumi’s successor not being quite as pro-American, alleging that the enhancement of the alliance was merely the result of Koizumi’s friendship with Bush (Green, 2006, 101-102).

Japan’s increasingly proactive role in the US-Japan alliance was instrumentalised primarily through the signing of numerous bilateral documents reflecting Tokyo’s support for the “War on terror” and the Iraq war, as well creating a broader, more durable consensus among Japan’s political actors and domestic society on the indispensable nature of the alliance. While

the 1997 Guidelines for US-Japan Defence Cooperation already expanded the scope and functionality of the bilateral security relationship, its global goals were further elaborated on in the 2005 Joint Statement of the US-Japan Security Consultative Committee, which for the first time formulated Washington and Tokyo's common aims and was supposed to help the alliance transform from "threat-oriented" to "interest-oriented" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2005a). Among the regional issues highlighted in the document were the reunification of the Korean Peninsula, China's Taiwan policy, the territorial dispute between Japan and Russia, and the development of ties with China. The two countries even planned to update the 1997 Guidelines, but that did not happen due to a lack of initiative on Japan's part (Paramonov, 2011, 35-36). However, while the previous version of the Guidelines remained intact, the two countries did implement the idea of triaging responsibility within the alliance in the shape of approving an October 2005 report by the Security Consultative Committee called "US-Japan alliance: transformation and realignment for the future" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2005b). The report falls within the existing framework of the 1997 Guidelines and recommends features such as improving alliance interoperability, advancing contingency planning, and enhancing information sharing. All in all, the 2005 report gave a more tangible shape to the plans put forward in the Joint Statement from earlier the same year and increased the Japanese share of responsibilities. The Koizumi administration also revised the National Defence Program Guidelines to reflect the 11 September attacks and the consequent War on terror.

Another area of closer cooperation between the two countries under Koizumi was ballistic missile defence (BMD). Deliberations on the possibility of joint BMD go as far back as the Nakasone administration, but was given an impetus after the North Korean ballistic missile test of 1998. The Koizumi government made strides in making headway on the issue, speeding up the institutionalisation of US-Japan cooperation on BMD. In particular, Koizumi approved a series of expensive projects, including purchasing US\$3 billion worth of US-produced anti-

ballistic missiles called Standard Missile 3, and laid the groundwork for Japan to independently build such missiles (Sieffupi, 2006).

Koizumi's tenure was marked by not only broadening the scope of security cooperation with the US but also the legal expansion of the SDF mandate as a direct result of the prime minister's support for the US-led "war on terror" and the Iraq war. As Uchiyama points out (2010, 79), these two events brought the national discussion in Japan on dispatching the SDF overseas to an entire new level. Koizumi's unusually swift, decisive response to both of them, which constituted a major shift from the traditional consensus-based, bottom-up foreign policy, embodied the prime minister's proclivity to gamble in his decision-making (Hughes and Krauss, 2007, 9).

On 17 September 2001, Koizumi organised called an emergency press conference, during which he announced seven "immediate measures" in response to the World Trade Centre terror attack in the US. Among the measures was logistical and medical support to the US and its allies, as well as a launch of intelligence-gathering operations by the SDF. These new functions of the SDF needed to be put into a legal framework, and Koizumi pledged to enact a new law during his meeting with Bush in September. The process of drafting and passing the new bill was extremely rapid: it took less than a month for the three major political parties and the cabinet to approve the Anti-Terrorism Special Measures Law, which was then passed in the Diet. Noteworthy, however, was opposition towards the draft from within the LDP itself. The legislation was criticised by several former Chief Cabinet Secretaries, while then Chief Cabinet Secretary Yamazaki Taku advised Koizumi to exercise caution in his response. The move was dictated by the fear among some right-wing LDP members that an SDF dispatch may harm Japanese economic interests in the Middle East; they instead believed that simply flying the Japanese flag would be enough to show solidarity.

The bill, however, was approved by the Diet and, as Koizumi's seven measures suggested, it expanded the SDF's range of operations to allow use military equipment to defend not only themselves but also persons under their care, a change from the severe restrictions on weapons use placed on the SDF during the First Gulf War. The legislation also allowed the SDF to participate in cooperation and support, relief activities, and search and rescue operations, including logistical assistance, medical care, and refuelling activities.

Japan's legal support in the shape of the new law was bolstered by diplomatic support in the form of former prime ministers Hashimoto and Mori embarking on a tour of countries neighbouring Afghanistan to ensure their support of the international coalition, as well as the more traditional financial support, with Japan freezing Taliban-linked bank accounts, hosting a donors' conference in Tokyo, and contributing around US\$500 million towards reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan.

While the Koizumi administration's response in the aftermath of the 11 September terror attacks constituted unusually audacious and proactive decision-making, it was the prime minister's reaction to the Iraq war that became a watershed in legitimising the SDF's activities outside Japan. For the first time, Japan's Ground Self-Defence Forces were sent abroad without UN sanction. The government's response to the war proved more fraught than the 2011 actions. As Soeya notes (2005b, 108), while the War on terror was a clear-cut case of international security, the second war in Iraq was much more complicated, and Japan was hoping for the UN to authorise Washington's military intervention, exasperated by the Bush administration's unilateralism. As Japan came to back the US, however, the war highlighted that Tokyo had little leverage to oppose US-led initiatives and eventually had to lock step with American foreign policy.

Public opinion, too, was split on what Japan's response to the war should be (Shinoda, 2006, 71). Nonetheless, Koizumi offered the US support in the intervention and, as the military action wound down, moved in to provide reconstruction assistance with the SDF. After three

months of deliberations, the government passed in July 2003 a new law legitimising the SDF presence in Iraq, formally dubbed The Law Concerning the Special Measures on Humanitarian and Reconstruction Assistance Activities and colloquially known as the Iraq Special Measures Law.

This time around, the SDF dispatch took significantly longer than in 2001 and was only implemented by the end of 2003. The government initially avoided presenting the potential legislation to the public or the Diet as debate on emergency defence bills was currently underway. After the defence bills were passed, Koizumi met with the members of the ruling parties in June and after discussions and consensus-building, the bill was presented to the Diet, where, despite opposition from the DPJ, it was passed by both Houses by the end of July. The actual dispatch was postponed due to the deteriorating security environment in Iraq but Koizumi's stance on the issue ultimately remained the same and the SDF troops left for Iraq on 9 December 2003 amid protests from the opposition (Uchiyama, 2010, 91).

Thus, Koizumi's premiership saw a marked enhancement of the US-Japan alliance and Tokyo transforming its security posture by expanding the legal framework of the SDF to imbue them with a wide range of new functions. While their remit was still limited to rear-end logistical support and reconstruction activities, the 2001 Anti-Terrorism Bill and the 2003 Iraq Special Measures Bill constituted a significant progress in Japan's foreign security policy and their relatively easy passage reflected the increased level of support of the SDF among civil society and an incremental decline of the pacifist norm that tethered the Kaifu government in their initial response to the Gulf war in 1990-1991. Koizumi's stalwart support of the US-Japan alliance also signified the start of a more pro-American form of foreign policy the strength of which fluctuated in the following years, reaching its nadir during the Hatoyama administration and its pinnacle during the second Abe government.

At the same time, Koizumi's unilateral orientation on the US damaged Japan's relations with China. While the Yasukuni visits were arguably the primary reason for Chinese and South Korean alienation, Koizumi's singular focus on strengthening the US-Japan alliance predictably caused a loss of balance in Japan's diplomacy between the US and East Asia. The relative disregard by Koizumi of Japan's second major strand of foreign policy became had a detrimental effect on Japan's diplomatic flexibility.

3.5.3. Koizumi's East Asia strategy

Despite Koizumi's limited experience in foreign policy prior to his premiership and his general avoidance of articulating comprehensive regional or global strategies, one notable exception can be found in his East Asian Community initiative. While the Koizumi administration's foreign policy was mostly characterised by the strengthening of the US-Japan alliance, its strategy for East Asia accentuated Japan's Asian identity and was motivated by Japan's desire to play a special role in forming the regional economic order (Chugrov, 2007, 311). This interest-oriented initiative was based on closer cooperation between the increasingly interdependent East Asian states (Japan, China, the Republic of Korea, and ASEAN countries) and became one of the two dominant strategies that Japan adopted towards the region, the other being the Arc of Freedom and Prosperity, detailed in 3.6.

The concept, which was on occasion referred to as "the Koizumi doctrine" (Soderberg, 2011), was created by his foreign policy advisor and Deputy Foreign Minister Tanaka Hitosh and was first introduced by Koizumi in a July 2002 speech in Singapore. In it, he proposed strengthening ties between the ASEAN+3 states, as well as New Zealand and Australia, in order to create a community that would act together and advance together in the region. While Koizumi did emphasise closer relations with fellow democracies that shared Japan's values, the initiative nevertheless included China, as well as developing countries with different political systems such as Brunei or Laos, and was primarily based on economic interests. Thus, the

metaphorical door was opened to the broadest range of participants, including those located on the region's periphery. Interestingly, Koizumi was of the view that the ASEAN states should dominate the East Asian Community as the principle role of Japan would have potentially alienated China, and *vice versa*.

However, the East Asian Community initiative quickly ran out of steam by 2005. Firstly, the specific objectives, substance, and form of the integrational processes that it promoted was left unclear, and the first East Asian Summit convened in 2005 did little to dispel the uncertainty. More importantly, Japan's worsening ties with China and South Korea put a stop to Japan's plans, and by the time Abe succeeded Koizumi in September 2006, the initiative had lost its momentum, leading the Abe government to formulate a new approach towards East Asia. The broader notion of an East Asian Community based on economic cooperation and shared Asian identity, however, did not lose its appeal and was reinvented by the first DPJ prime minister Hatoyama Yukio, who made it the centrepiece of his strategic vision, as elaborated on in 4.1.2.

3.5.4. Foreign-policy making under Koizumi

Koizumi is widely regarded as having broken the mould in terms of Japan's traditionally weak political leadership. A big part of his success had to do with him maintaining a top-down approach to decision-making and seizing the initiative from the traditionally powerful Japanese bureaucracy. This subsection is going to examine Koizumi's leadership and policy-making style to demonstrate how he managed to accomplish his agenda by combining his own personality and exploiting the recent administrative reforms.

As pointed out previously, prime minister Hashimoto initiated in late 1990s a series of reforms which transferred more resources and authority to the prime ministerial office. Specifically, the reforms imbued the Cabinet Secretariat with the power to draft legislation and established a new organ called the Cabinet Office to the same end. Furthermore, the prime

minister could now propose policies, as well as draft them himself. Koizumi, who became prime minister shortly after the reforms went into effect, managed to use the new powers to formulate and advance policies that were unavailable to his predecessors, which in turn allowed him to govern more and longer successfully than most post-war Japanese leaders. Despite having a relatively weak power base within the LDP and not even leading his own faction (instead hailing from the Mori faction), the Prime Minister achieved notable successes in foreign policy, which were on occasion even referred to as “Koizumi magic” (Kingston, 2005). More specifically, as Smith argues (2015), Koizumi’s longevity as prime minister allowed him to become the only leader to reconsider Japan’s strategy towards China.

Of particular importance to the Koizumi government’s foreign-policy making was the augmentation of the role of Kantei, with the help of which Koizumi managed to enact six major bills pertaining to foreign and national security in just three years, from late 2001 to late 2004. These pieces of legislation comprise in chronological order the Anti-Terrorism Special Measures Law, the Emergency Law, the Iraq Special Measures Law, the Law of Protect People’s Rights, the Law on the Use of Public Facilities, and the Law to Facilitate US Military Actions.

Despite these achievements, it is worth emphasising that Koizumi faced strong opposition from both the bureaucracy and especially from within his own party, arguably more so than any of the following prime ministers. While Koizumi derived his public mandate from the popularity he enjoyed among Japanese voters, Gannon and Sahashi (2015, 21) remind that the political elite did not consider him a strong leader for the first two years in office and the bureaucracy only started showing him deference when it became obvious that he was going to govern for a long time and defying his decisions would carry consequences.

A particularly severe split between Koizumi loyalists and his detractors occurred in mid-2003, when the Prime Minister was spearheading the effort to pass legislation enabling Japan to send the SDF personnel to Iraq. Shinoda (2006, 79-80) states that many within the LDP

considered Koizumi's top-down decision-making on the issue hasty and authoritarian and wanted a greater degree of involvement in formulating the specifics of the legislation. The conflict was exacerbated by the upcoming LDP leadership election, with the anti-Koizumi party members planning to hamper his candidacy by opposing the legislation on the grounds of the popular pacifist sentiment. Such intra-party split dictated that, in order to achieve his objective, Koizumi reached compromise with his detractors.

While most prime ministers had to appease and achieve consensus with opponents as far as major national or foreign security policies were concerned, and Koizumi was no different, his management of the 2003 Iraq Special Measures Law exemplifies effective political leadership augmented by the new institutional authority granted by the Hashimoto reforms.

As mentioned before, one result of the reforms was the Cabinet Secretariat now having the power to draft legislation. Once Koizumi had made the decision to support the US in the Iraq War, he created a special task force to prepare the bill and kept the process secret until the policy was formulated. The Secretariat also led the way in reaching agreement with ministries and agencies to approve the bill. Before presenting the legislation to the Diet, Koizumi made sure that the LDP's coalition partners, the Conservative Party and the Kōmeitō, were on board as well, which was particularly important given the Kōmeitō anti-militarist stance. Finally, during the debates regarding the bill in the Diet, Koizumi was willing to compromise and acquiesce on certain aspects of the legislation to the opposition as he was adamant that it was supported by as many lawmakers as possible.

Koizumi's tenure was also characterised by a change in the power balance related to foreign-policy making. He believed in a top-down decision-making approach, which entailed control of central government bureaucracy by the prime minister and his office, Kantei. Before Koizumi, Kantei had little influence on drafting policies despite on occasion stepping up to lead the charge as was the case in early 1990s when the government was preparing the UN peace

cooperation bill. As Shinoda (2007) explains, the MOFA bureaucrats failed to quickly adjust to a shifting international environment after the Cold War and were thus temporarily supplanted by Kantei. A similar scenario occurred early into Koizumi's premiership in the wake of the September 11 attacks, but adding to MOFA's sluggishness in recalibrating Japan's foreign and security policies were a number of scandals and feuds within the ministry.

Koizumi's pick for Foreign Minister Tanaka Makiko (daughter of former prime minister Tanaka Kakuei) was criticised for being underqualified and unprofessional. She also started conflicts with many Foreign Ministry officials, referring to MOFA as a "pandemonium" (*fukumaden*), which led to a state of chaos taking hold over MOFA (Akiyama, 2005, 24). While Koizumi was quick to fire Tanaka, the ministry was still reeling from the internal strife, which created an opportunity for Kantei to increase its influence on foreign-policy making. Moreover, Tanaka's successor Kawaguchi Yoriko had relatively little clout in the political process, and all major foreign policy issues were managed within Kantei, specifically by Fukuda, Abe, and Administrative Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Fukuawa Tejirō. Further, another Kantei official, assistant Chief Cabinet Secretary Yachi Shotarō, became something of a foreign affairs advisor to Koizumi. In effect, foreign- and security-policy making became the domain of Kantei, with MOFA's clout waning.

Examples of Kantei-driven foreign policy during Koizumi's tenure and after lead to suggest that it is a net positive, offering such advantages over a MOFA-dominated diplomacy as responsiveness to rapid external changes, accountability of decision-makers, or a foreign policy that is crafted by a prime minister, i.e. an elected political leader. However, extreme reliance on Kantei at the expense of the Foreign Ministry may also pose some problems. If a prime minister maintains a particularly hands-on approach to foreign-policy making, they may use their clout for short-term political purposes such as temporarily boosting their popularity, a move that Koizumi was accused of when he made a diplomatic trip to North Korea in September 2002 to

meet with Kim Jong-il. Moreover, a Kantei-led diplomacy is likely to fluctuate according to the political vision of a respective prime minister, meaning that a new prime minister with different views enforcing their agenda may create incoherence within Japan's foreign policy. Finally, Kantei diplomacy makes it easier for a prime minister to engage in top-down decision-making and ignore to an extent traditional consensus-building. However, because this approach allows a prime minister to essentially circumvent members of his party, pushing a controversial agenda may cost them their own party's support. And while political opposition may be overcome through sheer public support, as Koizumi demonstrated with the Iraq legislation of 2003, a lack of strong voter support amidst a discontent of a prime minister's opponents may end up isolating him.

Finally, another reason for Koizumi's effective leadership was the stability of his cabinet. Throughout the post-war decades, it was customary for Japanese prime ministers to frequently reshuffle the top positions in their government as every member of the Diet was expected to hold a cabinet portfolio once they had won five or six elections (Kitaoka, 2008, 298). Naturally this practice required constant changes in the top levels of the administration and ultimately destroyed the cohesion and efficiency of the cabinet. Koizumi, however, only rarely reshuffled his cabinet, with Fukuda Yasuo serving as Chief Cabinet Secretary for three years, and Kawaguchi Yoriko and Ishiba Shigeru occupying the positions of Foreign Minister and head of Defence Agency, respectively, for two years. Koizumi's first major cabinet realignment came only seventeen months into his premiership, in contrast to his predecessor Mori, who reshuffled his cabinet three months after becoming prime minister, or his successor Abe, who implemented a realignment eleven months into his tenure.

3.6. Japan's changing strategy between Koizumi and the DPJ: Abe, Fukuda, and Asō

Koizumi was succeeded by his protégé Abe Shinzō. While Abe's personal views and background will be analysed in detail in 5.2.2., this sub-section will instead briefly examine the changes in Japan's grand strategy that occurred under his first administration.

As former Russian ambassador to Japan Alexander Panov writes in his memoirs (2010, 159), Koizumi's support of Abe was based on three considerations. Firstly, he saw Abe as a successor to his policies, and indeed, as a fellow member of the LDP revisionists, Abe signalled his intention of following in his predecessor's footsteps. Secondly, at slightly over fifty, Abe was relatively young by the standards of Japanese politics and was meant to show a new, fresh face of the LDP to the voters. Finally, and most importantly, Abe was well-known and popular among the electorate because of his hardline stance on the North Korea abductions issue. Since 1970s, North Korean secret service agents had been kidnapping Japanese citizens and taking them back to North Korea, where they would be forced to work in training centres for spies and special agents. Under Koizumi, Japan conducted a powerful anti-North Korean campaign, which was curated by Abe, whose toughness earned him strong support from various far-right nationalistic organisations.

Like Koizumi, who heavily relied on his foreign policy advisor Tanaka Hitoshi, Abe would often defer to Yachi Shotarō whom he appointed administrative vice-minister at MOFA in 2006. Yachi acted as a foreign policy counsellor to Koizumi as well, but his outsized presence in both Abe governments became so significant that he was referred to as the foreign policy brain behind the first Abe administration, considered the de-facto ideologue behind Japanese diplomacy, and called by some bureaucrats the "shadow Foreign Minister" (Pugliese, 2016; *The Japan Times*, 2013). In 2006, Abe installed him as director of the China and Mongolia division at MOFA, the first time since the 1972 normalisation of Sino-Japanese ties that the division was headed by a diplomat without pro-Chinese views or much experience in China-related affairs.

Yachi was notably responsible for introducing the mantra of a “mutually beneficial relationship based on common strategic interests” that Japan and China should strive to maintain, which proposed to “restart” Sino-Japanese relations and was espoused by all prime ministers starting with Abe himself (Mifune, 2013, 241). The concept was first unveiled during Abe’s visit to China in October 2006, with the two sides agreeing to achieve “the noble objectives of peaceful co-existence, friendship for generations, mutually beneficial cooperation, and common development” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2006). As a result, Abe managed to improve the bilateral ties somewhat, putting an end to the cycle of tension of the Koizumi years and signifying temporary reconciliation. Despite that, however, the fact remained that not all of the strategic interests held by Japan and China were common. For example, while China’s claims to Taiwan are not in conflict with Japan’s interests *per se*, Japan has traditionally demanded that China’s efforts be only limited to diplomatic, non-military means. Similarly, Japan’s policies aimed towards strengthening security cooperation with the US are in contrast to China’s desire for a weaker US-Japan alliance (Takagi, 2008).

In a speech before the Diet in January 2007, Abe presented his vision of Japan’s place in the world. Promising a return to “beautiful Japan”, he advocated a change from the traditional, reactive diplomacy to an “assertive” diplomacy (*shuchō suru gaikō*). Such diplomacy would be based on three principles: strengthening ties with like-minded countries sharing universal values like democracy, freedom, and human rights; creating an open and technologically advanced Asia; and contributing to international peace and stability (Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet, 2007). “Beautiful Japan” was a reference to Abe’s bestseller *Towards a Beautiful Country* (Abe, 2006) written in 2006, in which he first laid out his political philosophy. Its central theme seems to be the desire to make Japan a truly independent country able to pursue its national interest on equal footing with other states. Of interest is also the book's preface where Abe identifies two types of leaders - those who fight for their beliefs despite criticism, and those who choose not to make decision that would garner disapproval. Abe counts himself among the

fighters which might go towards explaining his hands-on, authoritarian leadership style he demonstrated during his second and third terms.

Abe's proposed grand strategy based on "assertive diplomacy" notably excluded China from its geographical and ideological scope. The concept called the Arc of Freedom and Prosperity was jointly created by Yachi and senior MOFA official Kanehara Nobukatsu, another confidante of Abe's, who returned during his second term as Assistant Chief Cabinet Secretary. The Arc referred to nascent democracies in the outer rim of Eurasia, from Northern Europe to North East Asia, which Japan intended to cooperate with and support through ODA. This framework broadened Japan's foreign policy outlook, bringing closer attention to the Eurasian rim - from ASEAN member states to Central Asian and Eastern European nations. The framework was different in principle to the East Asia Community initiative proposed by Koizumi and later espoused by Hatoyama: where the East Asia Community was supposed to promote win-win type of relations in the region between all states regardless of the nature of their political regime, the Arc of Freedom and Prosperity specifically promoted ties with likeminded democracies and reflected the China's rise and the steady growth of its influence on affairs in East Asia. This strategy also focussed on the importance of the US-Japan alliance and shared values such as democracy, rule of law, and free market capitalism.

While even Koizumi's strategy, despite emphasising "acting and advancing together" with like-minded democracies, still embraced China (Hosoya, 2013), Abe's vision presented a different vector in the idea of "values-based" diplomacy, directed at improving relations with countries sharing universal values such as democracy, rule of law, and free markets. However, Abe's attempts at stimulating regional integration based on ideology were not successful as it was the economic interests rather than common values which had come to necessitate integration, as Sarkisov notes (2009, 165). That was the reason why this ideologically-driven strategy did not receive support from the Foreign Ministry as the foreign policy officials argued

that excluding China from Japan's diplomatic priorities would only damage its economic interests (Filippov, 2017).

With regards to the US-Japan relations, Abe became the first prime minister who presided over not just the broadening of the security alliance in geographical terms, but also its deepening, according to Kitaoka (2012). One of the major proposed reforms of the first Abe administration was the creation of a National Security Council, a legislative body tasked with comprehensively formulating foreign and defence policies, which the existing Security Council could allegedly no longer do due to the large number of participants and rare meetings. As Takahashi explains (2011), it was traditionally the senior officials who formulated the direction of Japan's foreign policy, not the prime minister or his cabinet, which led to a lack of strategic planning and coordination between MOFA and MOD. However, the bill that the Abe government submitted to the Diet failed to win the necessary approval, and the proposal was ultimately dropped by the next administration.

Another initiative spearheaded by Abe was establishing a panel charged with finding ways to change the legal basis for Japan's national security. In particular, four points were to be investigated: whether Japan can take action if a US vessel comes under attack in Japanese territorial waters; whether Japan can shoot down a missile launched by another state, which is targeting Japan's ally; reviewing the SDF use of weapons protocol when participating in UN PKOs; and whether Japan is allowed to provide logistic support to other countries while taking part in UN PKOs. The new panel submitted its report only in June 2008, by which time Abe had already resigned, arguing in favour of enabling Japan to participate in collective self-defence, as well as looser standards concerning the SDF's use of force while participating in PKOs. However, much like with the National Security Council proposal, the new LDP government took no interest in implementing these recommendations.

After Abe's first tenure was cut short by a combination of his focus on ideology-based foreign policy, corruption scandals, and his poor health, Fukuda Yasuo became prime minister. Like Koizumi and Abe, Fukuda also appointed Yachi as his foreign policy counsellor. Despite being a co-creator of Abe's Arc of Freedom and Prosperity strategy, Yachi was notably a pragmatist as well, which due to the bureaucratic backlash towards the "values-based" diplomacy resulted in the Fukuda administration adoption a more Asianist, China-friendly strategy based on Japan's national interests rather than common values. It is also possible that such shift was underpinned by Fukuda's own views, as he seemed to favour engagement with East Asia more so than Koizumi or Abe (Yamamoto, 2013). Fukuda's vision was based on Japan's "synergy" or "resonance" (*kyōmei*) between the US and China. Overall, Fukuda tried to balance a strong US-Japan alliance with a robust policy in East Asia, which was reflected in his May 2008 speech at the 14th International Conference of the Future of Asia. In it, the prime minister suggested five areas of concrete actions that his administration was going to take: supporting ASEAN to realise a community; reinforcing the US-Japan alliance; transforming Japan into a "peace fostering nation" promoting peace in the Asia-Pacific and the world; stepping up efforts in youth exchanges; and achieving economic growth while tackling climate change through joint efforts (Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet, 2008). Fukuda's policy of engagement proved successful and resulted in a visit by Hu Jintao to Japan in May 2008.

Fukuda, however, did not last long as prime minister either, and was replaced in September 2008 by Asō Tarō. Despite Asō, like Abe and Koizumi, being a neoconservative politician and a China hawk, his administration did not return to the Arc of Freedom and Prosperity strategy or the "values-based" diplomacy, the latter of which he himself coined in 2007. As those ideas failed to garner support within MOFA, Asō adopted a more pragmatic, conventional approach to diplomacy instead. However, Aso viewed China as a serious threat, being wary of its growing naval potential which he thought would be used to back up its claims to maritime resources, as well as its increasing military spending that lacked transparency. He

paid attention to Asia as well, delivering an East Asia-oriented policy speech in May 2009. In it, he voiced support of further Asia-Pacific integration and ASEAN's efforts of creating an East Asian Community (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2009a). The lack of any major foreign policy initiatives by the Asō administration was possibly due to the fact that by 2009, the LDP was looking increasingly likely to lose the upcoming general election, therefore the government did not have enough time to dedicate serious attention to that area.

3.7. Summary

As this chapter showed, Japan's foreign policy went through major changes in the years after the Cold war. Events such as the collapse of the Soviet Union, the financial crises on 1997 and 2008, and the 11 September terrorist attack drastically altered the East Asian security environment and made Japan acknowledge the global challenges and thus broaden the scope of its diplomacy. The new realities of global security highlighted the insufficiency of Japan's "cheque-book diplomacy", which had been one of the foundations of the Yoshida doctrine. The First Gulf War also demonstrated the effect of conflicts outside of the region on Japan's security, while the "War on terror" further convinced Japan of the necessity to adapt to the new security threats. As Dobrinskaya states (2006, 54), the post-Cold War environment dictated a departure from the Yoshida doctrine, as Japan no longer could isolate itself from international affairs and focus on domestic issues. Similarly, the new generation of ambitious politicians like Abe wanted for Japan to gain more prestige on the international stage and thus were not content with maintaining the low-risk, low-profile diplomacy characteristic on the Yoshida doctrine.

The initial failure of Japan's response to the First Gulf War also started a trend towards incremental evolution of its security posture. The 1992 International Peace Cooperation Law became the first sign of things to come, enabling the SDF to take part in limited capacity in UN-mandated operations abroad. Japan's participating in UN PKOs throughout the 1990s continued the gradual development of the SDF roles, while Koizumi's policies during the War on terror

saw the SDF deployed to Iraq, engage in logistic support of the US in the Indian Ocean, and global disaster relief operations. The revised US-Japan Defence Cooperation Guidelines of 1997 shifted the goals of the alliance from simply defending Japan to upholding stability in the Asia-Pacific, while the 1998 North Korea missile test caused Japan and the US to expand military equipment cooperation.

Japan also had to come up with new approach towards each of the three pillars of its postwar foreign policy: UN-centrism, Asian diplomacy, and the US-Japan alliance. While different prime ministers gave different priority to each of these principles, Hosoya asserts (2018) that all three were essential and found reflection in the respective post-Cold War grand strategies: the UN-oriented diplomacy can be found in Obuch's human security doctrine; Asianism was espoused through Koizumi's East Asia Community initiative; while the primary of the US-Japan bilateral relationship was emphasised by Abe's Arc of Freedom and Prosperity.

Overall, the US-Japan ties remained the bedrock of Japan's own foreign and security policies. In particular, Koizumi's efforts aimed at "tethering" the US to Japan in the wake of the US rebalancing to the Middle East were instrumental in strengthening the bilateral alliance. However, improved ties with Washington did not come without a price and the Japan-US-China trilateral relations became increasingly zero-sum in nature. Beijing's defence and foreign policies alienated many pro-engagement elements in Japan, shrank China advocacy groups, and made Tokyo rethink its approach to its neighbour. Finally, Japan's approach to integration in the East Asia evolved as well, with Japan promoting regional cooperation in both economic and security areas. Despite Koizumi's East Asian Community strategy not being implemented, the idea of shifting Japan's foreign policy priorities in the direction of East Asia, which originally gained some momentum after the 1997 financial crisis, became even more enticing after the next financial crisis in 2008 and became the lynchpin of the DPJ's strategic vision, discussed below.

Chapter 4. Case study 1: Japan's grand strategy under the DPJ

4.1. The DPJ's stance on foreign policy

4.1.1. Overview

The following section will analyse the shifts in Japan's grand strategy under the DPJ, including their foreign policy principles, the prime ministers' views, and both domestic and regional environment that affected the party's foreign-policy making.

4.1.2. Hatoyama's ideology: the search for a new grand strategy

To put Japan's grand strategy under the DPJ within an ideological framework, it would be appropriate to scrutinise the Democrats' views on foreign policy, with a focus on Hatoyama who was the only DPJ Prime Minister with a comprehensive political philosophy and whose vision for Japanese diplomacy was well documented since the 1990s, after he left the LDP and established the DPJ alongside future Prime Minister Kan Naoto.

Since its inception in 1996, the DPJ was characterised by disparate political views of its members. While many Democrats came from the LDP like Hatoyama, others had a different political history. Kan, for instance, was first a Social Democrat and then moved to centrist New Party *Sakigake* before co-establishing the DPJ. Ozawa Ichirō, meanwhile, left the LDP to create the Japan Renewal Party, then launched the New Frontier Party, co-created the Liberal Party, and finally merged the Liberal Party with the DPJ. Naturally, the presence of so many experienced politicians from different backgrounds meant that the DPJ consisted of several loosely tied groups, which often held conflicting views on issues, with Asano (2009, 35) identifying as many as nine groups that existed as of 2009. Unlike the LDP factions, groups within the DPJ did not have a rigid internal structure and were not tied by strict disciplinary regulations. They were, however, more divided along ideological lines, as evidenced by the conservative Maehara group or the left-wing Yoshimichi group consisting of former Socialists.

From a foreign policy standpoint, it is possible to break down the DPJ politicians into four schools of thoughts: realists, pacifists, centrists, and neo-autonomists (Konishi, 2012, 15-18). The realists, who included Noda or Maehara Seiji, were relatively small in number, consisted primarily of younger party members, and supported a strong US-Japan alliance, as well as reinterpreting the constitution to allow Japan the right to collective self-defence. Pacifists such as Saito Tsuyoshi or Yokomichi Takahiro opposed revising Article 9 of the constitution, envisioned only a minor international security role for Japan, and support Asian regionalism. Centrists, which included Kan or Sengoku Yoshito, did not have particularly strong foreign policy views, but generally leaned towards the traditional LDP brand of diplomacy, often shifting to more pragmatic, moderate stances once in power. Finally, the neo-autonomists were in favour of an independent Japanese foreign policy, neither relying on the US (which they perceived to be in the decline), nor being drawn into China's orbit. They embraced the idea an East Asian Community as a balancing option against Japan's overreliance on the US and generally espoused a liberal view of the international system, dealing with threats through integrating them into multilateral institutions. The most notable proponent of neo-autonomism was Hatoyama, though Ozawa and Okada Katsuya could arguably also fit this group.

Despite the contending foreign policy views outlined above, the DPJ's strategic vision entailed transforming Japan's traditional reactive diplomacy into a new, "independent" one. Kotani summarises (2010) the DPJ's foreign policy vision in five principles: establishing a more "equal" US-Japan alliance, in which Japan is less dependent on America; creating an East Asian Community based on free trade and historical reconciliation; contributing to international security through UN-led PKOs; pursuing nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament; and reforming Japan's national security to prioritise human rights.

Overall, while the Democrats did see the US-Japan alliance as the cornerstone of Japan's national security, they also sought to create a strategy that would be less dependent on

US foreign policy and instead be more Asia-oriented. This idea stemmed from two considerations. Firstly, the DPJ leadership was weary of getting too entangled in American grand strategy and wanted to minimise the financial burden of joint military operations. Secondly, the financial crisis of 2008 was viewed by many in the party as a portent of the declining US leadership and an end to the US-led brand of globalism. As Nosova points out (2011, 136-137), by 2009, there was a push among Japan's political elite for greater engagement with East Asia as it was the first region to overcome the 2008 crisis. Meanwhile the US and Europe were hit the hardest and were not expected to recover quickly, thus precluding Japan from looking to them for ways of revitalising its own economy.

Furthermore, regional challenges facing East Asia became more acute over the previous decade, with non-traditional issues such as environmental pollution, natural disasters, and terrorism becoming more pressing. As such, the DPJ believed that the US-Japan alliance is not sufficient anymore in fully guaranteeing Japan's security and that the new security and economic environment necessitated closer engagement with neighbouring East Asian states. In essence, the party's strategy under Hatoyama involved a shift from a unilateral, US-oriented diplomacy to a broader, multilateral approach focused on East Asian regionalism, embodied in Hatoyama's idea of an East Asian Community, discussed in detail below.

It is worth emphasising that despite having an image of a more "dovish" party than the LDP as far as foreign policy was concerned, the DPJ, too, envisioned a bigger international role for Japan, supporting a departure from the "inward-looking" pacifism of the past towards an "outward-looking" pacifism, allowing Japan to be more proactive in contributing to global security. However, rather than promoting greater military cooperation with the US, the DPJ under Hatoyama prioritised traditional non-military means instead, with 2009 Manifesto pledging to "study the implementation of economic assistance, strengthening of government institutions, and humanitarian and reconstruction activities" (DPJ, 2009). Overall, the DPJ's

strategic vision drew from the concept of human security introduced by the Obuchi government in the late 1990s, as well as the idea of Japan as a global civilian power pioneered by Funabashi (Funabashi, 2009b, 115). Thus, it can be said that, while the party certainly saw value in the bilateral alliance, it prioritised the other two traditional pillars of Japanese diplomacy, Asianism and UN-centrism.

As far as Hatoyama's own ideas on politics, both domestic and foreign, are concerned, they were underpinned by a nebulous philosophy of *yuai*, or fraternity. The concept was originally introduced by Hatoyama Ichirō, the DPJ prime minister's grandfather, who defined *yuai* as a philosophy that respected individual freedom and dignity, as well as those of others (Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet, 2009a). Under *yuai*, people respect each other's independence and diversity, while searching for a common basis for cooperation. Such views represented a significant shift away from the views of previous LDP prime ministers like Abe and Asō, who emphasised common values and prioritising relations with like-minded democratic countries. Hatoyama wrote (2009) that, applied to politics, *yuai* would entail adjusting to the excesses of capitalism and supporting traditional Japanese economic practices. Under the principle of *yuai*, areas pertaining to human lives and safety would not be left "to the mercy of globalism".

While Hatoyama's philosophy represented a backlash against the US-promoted brand of free market capitalism and globalisation, the Prime Minister pushed the idea of tighter political and economic integration with neighbouring countries, including China under the banner of an East Asian Community also based on the principle of *yuai*, which meant understanding and engaging them despite ideological differences.

Hatoyama's views on Japan's international relations were particularly influenced by Terashima Jitsurō, head of Tama University, who became Hatoyama's foreign policy advisor. Terashima was a committed anti-militarist who wrote that Japan should be proud of its post-war

pacifist history and strengthen ties with East Asian states. He suggested that the international balance of power reflected rivalry between the US and China, envisaged Japan as the third side of that triangle, and argued that Japan should abandon its unilateral reliance on America (Terashima, 2009, 159).

Asano (2011, 32) provides a quote by Hatoyama from 1997 which perhaps encapsulates his attitude towards the US-Japan alliance: “Japan has always depended on the US in foreign policy, which may have been appropriate during the Cold War, but now Japan is simply following the US blindly, while new realities require formulating and implementing an independent foreign policy”. In a piece for *The New York Times* called “A New Path for Japan” published several days ahead of the 2009 general election, Hatoyama acknowledged the US-Japan alliance as the bedrock of Japanese diplomacy, but stressed Japan’s Asian identity and suggested that East Asia should be “recognized as Japan’s basic sphere of being”. Arguing that the US-led unipolar world order was declining, he pointed to China as the emerging superpower and proposed to accelerate East Asian regional integration in order to both protect Japan’s independence and pursue national interests as a country caught between the US and China. In effect, Hatoyama argued that an East Asia-oriented diplomacy would be better suited for Japan’s national interests than a US-centric one.

With regards to Japan’s role in the world, Hatoyama seemed to partially espouse both major concepts that emerged in the 1990s as an alternative to or evolution of the Yoshida doctrine, Ozawa’s and Funabashi’s. Like Ozawa, he was in favour of Japan becoming more independent of the US and creating a more autonomous strategy. At the same time, while Ozawa envisioned Japan as a “normal country” free to use military force and viewed Japanese pacifism as a source of shame rather than pride (Hagström, 2015), Hatoyama opposed Japan’s “normalisation”, supported the contemporary constraints of the SDF’s use of force, and preferred contributing to international security mainly through socio-economic tools. That brought him closer to

Funabashi's concept of Japan as a global civilian power, but unlike Funabashi, whose idea was based on Japan acting as a US "auxiliary", Hatoyama favoured a revision of the US-Japan relationship's parameters. Thus, his strategic vision was in direct opposition of the Yoshida doctrine: Hatoyama's desire to correct Japan's overreliance on the US stood in contrast to the outsourcing of national security to America during the Cold war, while the "outward-looking" pacifism that he promoted seemed to go beyond the remit of Japan's low-profile diplomacy under the Yoshida doctrine.

It is worth pointing out that, according to Pempel and Lee (2012, 136), Hatoyama was rather inexperienced in foreign policy despite belonging to a political dynasty. Moreover, he was considered unpredictable on foreign affairs issues even within his own party (Uchida Ando, 2015, 122-123), as no one in the DPJ, including his inner circle, had a good grasp of what his foreign policy was going to look like as prime minister. His East Asia Community concept, for example, reflected his own views rather than the party's consensus and was characteristic of his diplomacy, which was seemingly guided by his personal decisions and on occasion belied the DPJ's prior policy documents. According to Tokyo University professor Takahara Akio (2018), Hatoyama's views on foreign policy were uniquely idealistic and did not represent the consensus within the DPJ in general. For instance, Ozawa showed awareness of China's military build-up, while Maehara was regarded as a China hard-liner. Even Hatoyama himself echoed a rhetoric reminiscent of the first Abe government by emphasising during a 2009 Indonesia summit the importance that Japan places on democratic values (Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet, 2009d).

East Asia became the focal point of Hatoyama's diplomacy in both word and deed, with the Prime Minister choosing to hold the first summit with Chinese President Hu Jintao in September 2009, during which he called for China and Japan to recognise and overcome mutual distrust and differences (Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet, 2009c). Throughout his short

term, Hatoyama also met with the heads of state of South Korea, Indonesia, East Timor, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, Myanmar, Vietnam, Malaysia, and Singapore. While his predecessors Abe and Aso sought to strengthen ties with India, Australia and NATO states based on shared values such as democracy and rule of law, Hatoyama promoted the idea of “fraternity” towards countries with different political systems.

At the APEC meeting in Singapore in November 2009, he introduced his East Asia Community proposal: referring to it as the axis of Japanese diplomacy in Asia, he emphasised the significance of achieving peace and reconciliation in the region devastated by Japan during World War II. The task of building up mutual trust and cooperation, Hatoyama said, could be completed through deeper regional integration and open cooperation on various subjects. However, while the ASEAN states, China, South Korea, Australia, India and New Zealand were all proposed as potential members of the Community, the US was notably absent from the list, with Hatoyama explicitly stating that he did not see a place for America in his vision.

However, the response to Hatoyama’s East Asia Community proposal from South-East Asian states was hardly enthusiastic. Before 2009 came to a close, these countries started expressing reservations about the initiative on account of the importance of US leadership in the region (Sahashi, 2015, 143). Further, the American “pivot to Asia”, first brought up in late November 2009 and laid out in January 2010, also undercut whatever momentum for the community that Hatoyama might have generated in the previous months. Hatoyama also faced the same pitfalls as Koizumi with his variant of an East Asia Community in that both of the prime ministers’ proposals were very nebulous and unclear from the structural, organisational, and ideological perspectives.

Perhaps the biggest reason why Hatoyama’s East Asian Community failed to receive support in the region, however, has to do with East Asia’s significant diversity in many areas. Economically, the countries in the region range from the post-industrial Japan and the “tigers” of

North-East and South-East Asia, to the rapidly developing China and India, as well as the less advanced economies of mainland South-East Asia. Politically, East Asian states vary from communist dictatorships to liberal democracies. In addition to economic inequality, lack of common cultural traditions, and disparate systems of government, many states in the Asia-Pacific have long-standing unresolved territorial disputes with its neighbours. Islands in the East China sea and the South China sea are a particular source of discord: the Senkaku islands in the East China sea are claimed by Japan, China, and Taiwan; China, Vietnam, and Taiwan contend for the Paracel islands in the South China sea; China, Vietnam, Taiwan, the Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei, and Indonesia all jockey for the status of the Spratley islands in the South China sea.

For all of his idealism and inexperience, however, the general parameters within which Hatoyama operated with regards to the US and China did not particularly run counter to mainstream views. For example, Professor Takahara Akio of Tokyo University maintains that Hatoyama's general foreign policy goals were not that different from previous or future prime ministers as he strived to both improve ties with China and maintain the US-Japan alliance, with Hatoyama himself considering the US-Japan alliance as the necessary condition for establishing an East Asian Community. However it was the rhetoric he used to articulate his vision, the approach for which he opted to achieve those goals, and the way he presented those ideas was different, idealistic, and ultimately not conducive to his foreign policy's realisation.

That view is largely supported by Sahashi Ryō, a researcher at the Japan Center for International Exchange. On the one hand, he doubts that Hatoyama had a particular strategic vision at all, arguing that his foreign policy vision was underpinned by his anti-Americanism embodied by the slogan *taibei jiritsu*, or independence from the US, a term sometimes used on both the left and the right sides of Japanese politics to criticise the supposedly excessive reliance of Japan on the US for providing security. On the other hand, Sahashi states that Hatoyama's

foreign policy ideas were not especially idiosyncratic compared to more mainstream prime ministers in that he, too, was preoccupied by seeking a balance between the US and the rising China. While the Hatoyama government was chaotic and its foreign policy decisions somewhat unorthodox, it nevertheless did uphold many mainstream views. For example, in the November 2009 Singapore speech (Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet, 2009a), he talked about maintaining the peace at sea, thus delivering on South East Asian states' expectations. That speech was also noteworthy as it was written by MOFA rather than Hatoyama's usual speech writer, playwright Hirata Oriza.

Hatoyama's idiosyncrasy, however, lay in his assumption that the age of US hegemony was over and his intention to hedge against the US by jumping on the China "bandwagon", which was the opposite of the traditional views of the Japanese political elites. Sahashi adds that the Prime Minister's opinion on an issue would often depend on whom he talked to last as he himself did not possess experience in or much knowledge of foreign policy. While he had many advisors to whom he listened, many of them were not even members of the government, which caused controversy as Hatoyama's opinions were largely shaped by people without relevant expertise or affiliation, and it is a matter of contention how much exactly of what Hatoyama advocated even stemmed from his own convictions and how much was influenced by his many advisors and confidants.

4.2. The domestic political factors affecting the change in Japan's grand strategy under the DPJ

4.2.1. Overview

A major setback in the implementation of the DPJ's foreign policy, particularly in Hatoyama's case, was presented by opposition from the bureaucracy, a volatile alliance with the Democrats' coalition partners, as well as simmering disagreement between the factions of the DPJ itself.

As Clausen (2013) points out, Hatoyama's authority as prime minister was very limited despite being the leader of the ruling party and initially enjoying levels of support not seen since Koizumi. Because of a rift between the DPJ and the Social Democratic Party on the issue of US military bases and a lack of cohesion within the cabinet of ministerial colleagues, the new government struggled to project a unified foreign policy vision. Meanwhile, pushing for an administrative overhaul which would transfer more power to politicians resulted in alienating the bureaucracy. This proved detrimental for an inexperienced political party that had never before engaged in foreign-policy making. All in all, not only did the domestic political factors not assist the DPJ in implementing efficient foreign policy, they aligned to sabotage it and proved an insurmountable obstacle for the Hatoyama administration.

The following subsection will focus on the hurdles posed by domestic political actors in implementing the DPJ's foreign policy.

4.2.2. Intra-party conflicts and coalition disagreements

As explained in 4.1.2, the DPJ was characterised by competing political views due to comprising politicians from various ideological backgrounds, holding diverse opinions on issues, including foreign policy. The disparate nature of the DPJ members' backgrounds and political views contributed to the fact that all three DPJ administrations suffered from a lack of party cohesion and weak discipline (Uchida Ando, 2015, 114-115).

The DPJ's triumph in the 2009 general election only highlighted the factional disputes, and foreign policy was one of the contentious areas – for example, Kan's Foreign Minister Maehara Seiji, being a realist, was a staunch supporter of the US-Japan alliance and tough on China (Yamaguchi, 2010), while Hatoyama and Ozawa both espoused more Asianist views. Meanwhile, Yokomichi Takahiro was a pacifist leading a far-left faction within the DPJ (Easley *et al.*, 2010, 45). The impasse over Futemma proved particularly divisive, as Hatoyama's statements with regard to moving the base outside of Okinawa were openly opposed by Foreign

Minister Okada Katsuya and Defence Minister Kitazawa Toshimi, both of whom were pursuing a more realistic approach entailing Futenma remaining on Okinawa (Pempel and Lee, 2012, 139).

As noted before, the coalition government that Hatoyama presided over also proved shaky, with foreign policy being one of the points of contention. Despite winning enough seats to form a one-party cabinet, the DPJ, usually described as centrist or centre-left (in Japanese political realities), entered a coalition with the left-wing Social Democratic Party and the right-wing People's New Party, with such ideological diversity unsurprisingly causing friction. The Social Democratic Party, while shifting to more moderate views since the 1990s when it was known as the Japan Socialist Party, was still characterised by its hard-line stance towards the US-Japan alliance, opposing the US military presence on Japanese territory, and the People's New Party insisted that Futenma be relocated outside of Okinawa. It seems likely that Hatoyama was constrained in foreign-policy making by the DPJ's coalition partners as evidenced by the condemnation drawn from the Social Democratic Party for suggesting in October 2009 that Futenma could still be moved somewhere else within Okinawa. After Hatoyama accepted the 2006 Futenma relocation road map in May 2010, the leader of the Social Democrats Fukushima Mizuho decided to exit the government, stressing that her party was not going to compromise on the issue (Konishi, 2012), which undoubtedly further accelerated Hatoyama's resignation. Somewhat paradoxically, the splintering of the coalition may have been beneficial to the DPJ as the new Kan administration no longer had to accommodate the Social Democrats' foreign policy view to preserve the partnership and became free to pursue a more pragmatic line.

4.2.3. Pushback from the bureaucracy

However the main source of political backlash on the domestic front hobbling the actualisation of the DPJ's foreign policy came from the foreign policy officials, primarily from MOFA. To better understand the reasons why the Democrats turned the bureaucracy, including the Foreign

Ministry, against themselves, it is worth analysing some of the DPJ's administrative reforms which they called for in their Manifestos and tried implementing once in power.

Transforming the entire policy-making process was a big part of the DPJ's agenda for many years. In their policy documents, they proposed moving from "bureaucratic leadership" (*kanryō shudō*) to "political leadership" (*seiji shudō*), meaning transferring more authority to the politicians while unshackling them from bureaucratic or big business influence.

As briefly explained in the literature review, under the LDP dominance and the 1955 system, a structure referred to as an "iron triangle" came to characterise Japanese policy-making, characterised by closer, interdependent ties between the politicians, the bureaucrats, and big business. On the one hand, these ties came to exert a stabilising influence on Japan's political system and ensured the drafting and actualisation of policies crucial to the economic development of the state (Kalmychek, 2011, 8). On the other hand, they resulted in corruption and a loss of trust in the institutions, with the "iron triangle" often coming in the crosshairs of public criticism. Interestingly, public discontent was usually directed at the politicians rather than the bureaucracy as it managed to mostly retain its reputation for competence and efficacy. In reality, it was often the bureaucrats that effectively seized the policy-making initiative with the politicians serving as a mere rubber-stamp.

It was this dependence of the cabinet upon the bureaucracy that the DPJ deemed the biggest flaw of the "iron triangle". Another target of the party's criticism could be found in the dual system of decision-making that formed under the LDP rule and fostered corruption within the iron triangle. The system, which the Democrats called "pluralistic" (*tagenshugiteki*), forced each piece of legislation to be separately reviewed and agreed on both within the cabinet and within the ruling party. Perhaps ironically, once the DPJ became the ruling party itself, it suffered from the same "pluralistic leadership" problem as the LDP, as throughout Hatoyama's tenure he would often clash with Ozawa, the party's Secretary-General, leading to the party and the cabinet voicing different opinion on a number of issues.

A big part of the DPJ's intentions to curtail bureaucratic dominance had to do with a large-scale personnel replacement in most government ministries and agencies. The party proposed empowering the Kantei and its staff by forming a team of competent and reform-minded officials from diverse backgrounds. In all ministries, a third of staff would be replaced with new personnel who would engage in policy-making under the ministers' direct control.

Before examining how exactly the DPJ's plans to limit bureaucratic influence proved detrimental to its foreign-policy making, it is worth noting that most of their proposals and policies with regard to "political leadership" were not original and did not constitute a major departure from other prominent politicians' views on the issue.

The concept of "political leadership" was in fact put forth by Ozawa when he was still member of the LDP. In 1993, he suggested to jettison the dual decision-making system in favour of the unity of the cabinet and the ruling party, as well as proposed the creation of a prime minister-centric model of governance. Both these ideas are repeated, though in more detail, in some of the DPJ Manifestos, likely due to Ozawa joining the party in 2003. Moreover, the Hashimoto administration passed in 1998 an administrative reform bill which clearly defined the prime minister's mandate and strengthened the cabinet's authority. Strong political leadership was also advocated by Abe during his first term and Fukuda, with the latter passing a civil service reform which introduced new positions to assist the cabinet. In the run-up to the 2009 election, the LDP proposed empowering the Kantei and forming a national strategy team to assist the prime minister. Another proposal by the Democrats – to transfer a hundred lawmakers from the Diet to government positions – had already been implemented during the first Koizumi cabinet, though it was seventy MPs then. Finally, the necessity to combat the practice of *amakudari* was emphasised by both Koizumi and Abe, although their initiatives did not produce any substantial results.

Thus, most ideas suggested by the DPJ had been promoted or even actualised by the LDP leadership since mid-1990s. “Political leadership” was also supported by Liberal Democratic prime minister in the 21st century, although they used different courses of action to implement it.

While some LDP leaders preceded the Democrats in promoting “political leadership” or did so while they were actually in power, none of them feuded with the bureaucracy as much as the Hatoyama government. The reason for this was that most statements about the need to achieve strong political leadership remained just that, while concrete institutional change was incremental at best and did not present much of a threat to bureaucratic influence. The DPJ, however, wasted no time in making good on its promises, with administrative reforms arguably being the most fruitful and coherent area of the party’s reforms, curbing the bureaucratic role in policy-making and, unsurprisingly, turning many officials against it. While Kan stated before the 2009 election that the DPJ’s intention was to achieve *post*-bureaucratic, rather than *anti*-bureaucratic, politics, and the party managed to avoid starting an all-out war with the bureaucracy, the Democrats thwarted Japan’s traditional decision-making system and balance of power, thus getting off to a rough start with the officials, especially from MOFA and MOD.

Possibly the first signal of the politicians seizing the initiative from the bureaucrats was the decision of the Hatoyama cabinet to no longer read policy memos prepared by officials beforehand during press conferences or cabinet meetings (Funabashi, 2009a). The DPJ was also quick to cancel the meetings between administrative vice ministers, who were also prohibited from holding press conferences.

The next step was to enhance the representation of politicians at high levels of government. The Hatoyama administration appointed lawmakers from the Diet to the three highest positions in each ministry, those of ministers, vice ministers, and political advisors. Thus, the initiative in coordinating and formulating Japan’s political course was transferred from the officials to the politicians. That policy came to be known in the media as “triumvirate” or

“troika” (*toroika*) on account of the number of senior positions allocated to MPs. While staffing policy under the LDP was decided within the respective ministries, the DPJ redirected that authority to the newly formed Cabinet Personnel Bureau which was tasked with managing senior ministry personnel, including the “troikas”.

George Mulgan (2010) points out that the Hatoyama government’s reforms had a direct bearing on foreign- and security-policy making in particular, as special legislation was prepared that banned senior figures in MOFA (namely Directors-General of the Cabinet Legislation Bureau and the International Legal Affairs Bureau) from taking part in the Diet sessions. That move held significance because it was the Director-General of the Cabinet Legislation Bureau who had historically had the decisive say in reinterpreting the constitution, while the Director-General of the International Legal Affairs Bureau had been the one primarily responsible for managing the US-Japan alliance. The reform shifted the authority to both reinterpret the constitution with regard to security issues, and coordinate the US-Japan alliance, from officials at MOFA to politicians in the Diet.

The drawback of the aforementioned measures became immediately obvious in the DPJ’s mismanagement of its relationship with the US. Shinoda (2013) succinctly summarises the party’s policy with regard to the bureaucracy by saying that, while Hatoyama intended to empower the politicians, all he did was weaken the officials instead. The new administration with no prior experience of governance willingly shut itself off from bureaucratic expertise – Hatoyama, for example, refused to take advice from MOFA officials who had negotiated the 2006 Futenma agreement when he himself was trying to get the military base off Okinawa (Clausen, 2012) – and poor, chaotic coordination of foreign policy ensued. Hatoyama’s attempts to relocate Futenma were met with pushback from then Defence Minister Kitazawa Toshimi, who questioned the possibility of moving Futenma outside of Okinawa (Ministry of Defence, 2009). Also frustrated by the new administration’s approach to the US-Japan alliance were MOFA officials: as cables released by Wikileaks show, former US-Japan alliance managers from

the Foreign Ministry harshly criticised the DPJ for cutting even senior officials out of the policy-making process on Futemma and called on the US to express public dissatisfaction (Wikileaks, 2009).

4.2.4. Synopsis

Because the DPJ government effectively shelved the traditional decision-making mechanism but had nothing as efficient to replace it with, policy-making in the Hatoyama cabinet quickly became poorly coordinated, with different politicians sometimes voicing disparate opinions on the same issue. Such a lack of cohesion can arguably be blamed on Hatoyama himself, at least to some extent, as he appointed cabinet members primarily on the basis of seniority within the party, as opposed to Koizumi who would promote those willing to implement his own policies. Because Hatoyama lacked strong support from his own party on his East Asia Community initiative and Futemma relocation, while his dropping approval ratings precluded him from relying on public support instead, like Koizumi often did, he failed to keep enough clout in foreign-policy making to achieve his desired goals. And given the fact that Hatoyama confided in numerous advisors, from experienced academics to people completely unaffiliated with the government, it is ultimately difficult to say who exactly was responsible for conceiving policies at the highest level.

It should be emphasised, however, that most foreign policy stances of the Hatoyama government – even its approach to China – generally represented MOFA's own position (Sahashi, 2011, 97). Thus, when looking at the DPJ's foreign and security policy, it was the Futemma relocation impasse (discussed in detail in 4.4.3) that inflicted the most damage on the new ruling party's relationship with the foreign policy officials, rather than his pro-China views. Nevertheless, despite the DPJ coming to power with a more China-friendly agenda, Sino-Japanese ties never quite took off under Hatoyama and deteriorated even further under his successors.

4.3. The regional environment and its influence on the DPJ's strategic thinking

4.3.1. Overview

While the previous two sub-sections attempted to look at the DPJ foreign policy through the lens of the prime ministers' personal views or the result of domestic political tensions, it was also affected by the current security environment around Japan. Takahara (2018) insists that the changes between Hatoyama's foreign policy and that of his successors should not be interpreted as merely a difference in the personal views of the three leaders. While Japan's reintegration into the US alliance network started as soon as Kan succeeded Hatoyama, Japan's China policy was not altered right away and it was not until the 2010 boat collision incident that it hardened its stance towards China, proving that structural factors still played a role in Japan's behaviour.

The DPJ's triumph in the 2009 general election, which disrupted the LDP's almost continuous 54-year rule, went against the odds of many analysts and seemingly symbolised the advent of another era in Japan's political history. The Hatoyama government endeavored to present itself as bold reformists breaking away from the LDP's policies. While foreign policy was not at the forefront of the party's Manifestos, the new administration sought to revamp Japan's diplomacy as well as its domestic politics, with cultivating a more cordial relationship with China being one of Hatoyama's principal intentions. However, throughout just one year in power, the new ruling party's foreign policy essentially went full circle (Nosova, 2011, 129): from moving towards less US-oriented and more Asianist diplomacy, through trying to find a balance the US and China strands, through dampening pro-China overtures and mending ties with America, and finally shifting to the traditional pragmatic, US-centric approach under Kan. His successor, Noda Yoshihiko, largely followed in the footsteps of the previous prime minister, the necessity of which was underscored for Japan's political elite by China's volatile response to the nationalisation of the Senkaku islands.

The following section will focus on Hatoyama's approach to China, his management of the US-Japan alliance, and the impact of regional dynamics on the outcome of his policies.

4.3.2. Hatoyama's approach to China: overt engagement

As Atanassova-Cornelis (2013, 60) states, the Hatoyama government chose to respond to China's economic rise by emphasising engagement with Beijing and attempting to shore up support for an East Asian Community. Despite all the political unknowns associated with its realisation, as well as its nebulous nature, with the main parameters never detailed in any of the DPJ's Manifestos or Hatoyama's speeches, the Democratic government wasted no time in trying to put the framework into practice. Japan first pitched the idea to China and South Korea during the September 2009 ministerial meeting and the Japan-PRC-ROK summit the following month. Three principles were declared key for building the East Asian Community in the post-meeting statement: openness, transparency, and inclusiveness, while the three states agreed to develop ties, while respecting each other's interests and addressing sensitive issues (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2009b). The five objectives established in the document were: to "build up mutual trust in the political field"; "deepen mutually beneficial cooperation"; "expand people-to-people exchanges"; "promote peace and stability of Asia"; and "actively respond to global issues".

The Prime Minister's rhetoric aimed towards Beijing drew parallels with the integration processes in post-war Western Europe, whereby China and Japan were likened to France and Germany. During his Singapore speech in November 2009, Hatoyama emphasised (Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet, 2009a) that even after two World Wars, Germany and France were able to achieve reconciliation and cooperation, which eventually led to the creation of the European Union. Like the two biggest political and economic powers in post-war Europe, Hatoyama seemed to imply, China and Japan can also achieve a rapprochement based on a common vision.

Hatoyama's overtures to China were not limited to rhetoric – on 10-12 December 2009, for instance, Ozawa led a group of 140 DPJ lawmakers on a visit to Beijing (Zhang, 2009). While the aim of the trip was mostly formal, significant controversy was caused due to the fact that the delegation was received by Chinese President Hu Jintao who took the time to take a photograph with each of the 140 MPs, while during the following banquet, Ozawa voiced his support for an equal Japan-China-US triangle. After Ozawa's visit, Beijing returned the favour by sending then Vice President Xi Jinping to Tokyo on 14-16 December 2009. Xi met with the DPJ leaders and they discussed the details of the East Asian Community, with Japan confirming the dominant position of the Japan-China-South Korea triumvirate in the framework, and Xi officially voicing China's support of the Community for the first time.

However, the very start of 2010 was already marked by a gradual change of rhetoric with regard to both East Asia and the US-Japan alliance (Nosova, 2011, 133). January became the month of repairing ties with Washington, with then Foreign Minister Okada Katsuya meeting with Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, which was followed by a joint statement declaring the desire of both Japan and the US to reinforce and expand cooperation (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2010a).

The process of rebuilding trust with the US was accompanied by a shift in Tokyo's Asia statements. For example, Japan suggested that China should move to a more responsible foreign policy commensurate with its growing influence in the world. Meanwhile, the East Asian Community became a long-term plan, with priority being moved to creating a regional network of partnerships based on shared interests in a range of areas such as energy, trade, or disaster relief.

A Sino-Japanese rapprochement arguably no longer became feasible in March 2010, after the Korean corvette "Cheonan" was sunk by a North Korean torpedo causing a heightening of tensions in the region. After the incident, Japan further concentrated on rectifying relations with

America and improving ties with the Republic of Korea, thus returning to the traditional, LDP-style foreign policy. In May 2010, the US and Japan presented a joint statement, in which they reaffirmed the status of the bilateral alliance, as well as addressed the issue of Futenma's relocation (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2010b).

Thus, Hatoyama's inconsistent strategy, underpinned by his reliance on the vague concept of *yuai*, or fraternity, failed to generate a détente with China, so that bilateral ties never took off. China proved unresponsive to Hatoyama's overtures, treating the US-Japan alliance as a tool of containing it even in spite of Hatoyama's attempts to achieve a more independent foreign policy. Equally, China's increasingly assertive activities in the East China Sea served as a wake up call for the DPJ, which by 2010 recognised that the US-Japan alliance remains the only viable security framework for Tokyo amidst the rise of China (Green, 2011, 103; Atanassova-Cornelis, 63). Hatoyama himself seemed to have realised the value of the alliance with, as evidenced by his admission during an Okinawa visit in May 2010 that he had underestimated Okinawa's role in the US deterrence strategy (Pempel and Lee, 2012, 139) – that, despite the Prime Minister speaking harshly of Japan's unilateral orientation on the US mere eight months earlier, on an October 2009 trip to Beijing. Other East Asian states did not demonstrate particular interest in Hatoyama's East Asian Community vision either, and, as Brooks (2012, 125) points out, Hatoyama apparently abandoned his own pet project by the end of his tenure.

4.3.3. US-Japan alliance under Hatoyama: a stress test

US-Japan relations under the DPJ were fraught with difficulties, with Hatoyama presiding over a period of possibly the greatest discord in the history post-war bilateral ties. Under Hatoyama, the alliance endured a stress test stemming from the prime minister's desire to minimise Japan's reliance on Washington for national security and instead deepen relations with China. However, the biggest stumbling block in the alliance development came when Hatoyama unilaterally

decided to renege on an existing bilateral agreement regarding the relocation of a US air base Futenma, where the bulk of the US forward-deployment troops in Asia were stationed. Initially created for a potential conflict on the Korean peninsula or in the Taiwan strait, the base was later used during the “War on terror”. As a result of the impasse surrounding the relocation issue, the ties between Tokyo and Washington suffered much damage, the undoing of which fell upon Hatoyama’s successors Kan and Noda.

The main source of tension in the US-Japan alliance stemmed from the problem of relocating Futenma. The issue of relocation first came up in the 1990s, after a series of crimes committed by US soldiers in Okinawa triggered a scandal within the media, as well as a discussion in the political circles about a possible revision of the US soldiers’ conditions of stay, including their right to extraterritoriality, i.e. privilege of being prosecuted by the US court rather than Japanese. In 2006, the two countries reached an agreement, which involved the relocation of Futenma from Ginowan city to Nago city in the north-east of Okinawa, where another US base Camp Schwab is located. However, when Prime Minister Hatoyama promised in 2009 to move it outside of Okinawa and ordered a search for alternative sites, thus contravening the existing agreement, he created a rift within the US-Japan alliance. This rift cast a shadow of distrust on Hatoyama’s other foreign policy initiatives and ended up becoming his undoing – in May 2010, he resigned as prime minister so as to bear the brunt of responsibility for the failure of negotiations with the US with regard to Futenma’s relocation.

When tracing the DPJ’s views on the US-Japan alliance laid out in its Manifestos, it becomes obvious that the party considerably moderated its proposals before the 2009 election. For example, the 2003 Manifesto (DPJ, 2003, 18) called for a revision of the US troops’ Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) signed in 1960, and the 2007 Manifesto (DPJ, 2007, 46-47) paid special attention to the issue of relocating US military bases from Okinawa. However, the 2009 document (DPJ, 2009, 28) signified a departure from the more radical measures – merely proposing a revision of the SOFA instead of demanding it be revised within three years - and

essentially came to resemble the LDP platform. The main difference was that Liberal Democrats advocated further strengthening the US-Japan alliance, whereas the Democrats supported developing an equal relationship and an independent foreign policy. The lowering of the DPJ's demands towards the US before the election possibly demonstrated a pragmatic streak, an intention of making its policies more realistic and jettisoning the more hard-to-implement plans.

Despite the DPJ softening its stance of the US-Japan alliance in the run-up to the election, the Obama administration turned out to be less than accommodating to the party's foreign policy, especially when Hatoyama made the promise to move Futenma outside of Okinawa. The US showed no intention of even slightly recalibrating the key principles of bilateral cooperation, and it ultimately took Hatoyama's resignation to turn the US-Japan security ties back on track.

It is worth mentioning that at first, the US welcomed Japan's new ruling party and showed no signs of apprehension of Hatoyama's foreign policy ideas – for instance, Kurt Campbell (Assistant Secretary of State at the time) referred to Tokyo as an “equal partner” in the alliance (Easley *et al.*, 2009). The Obama administration's generosity seemed to run out, however, by October 2009, when it became obvious that Hatoyama was serious about his intention of relocating Futenma outside of Okinawa or even Japan, and was unwilling to abide by the 2006 agreement. During his trip to Japan in October, US Secretary of Defence Robert Gates stated unequivocally that the Obama administration was only ready to accept small changes on the air base relocation issue (Azimi, 2009). The negotiations were confounded by the bureaucracy being left out and the DPJ government's inexperience resulting in the cabinet's inability to project a single, unified vision. Moreover, Hatoyama failed to establish a strong rapport with Obama, at one point asking the US president to simply “trust him” on the Futenma impasse; Rogin (2009) speculates that, while Obama construed Hatoyama's request as a sign of readiness to go through with the 2006 agreement, what Hatoyama really asked of Obama was to demonstrate patience and cooperation.

While the Futenma relocation was the biggest point of contention between Japan and the US, Hatoyama's overtures towards China did nothing to mitigate the tension either. Hatoyama's vision of an East Asian Community was, as was mentioned earlier, formulated in such a way that it excluded the US from the framework, adding to the Obama administration's suspicions. Additionally, Hatoyama promptly ordered to discontinue Japan's refuelling operations for US vessels in the Indian Ocean, which could also have sent a signal that the new prime minister was planning to decouple Japan from the alliance with the US. This last decision, like moving Futenma off Okinawa, also ran counter to the party platform as the opposition to the refuelling mission is nowhere to be found in the 2009 Manifesto. Not only that, but the long-time pledge to discontinue the operation (particularly pushed by Ozawa who called it unconstitutional) was specifically dropped from the Manifesto in July 2009 by none other than Hatoyama himself. He justified the change by stressing the importance of continuity in diplomacy, which makes his about-face later the same year all the more puzzling.

Sahashi (2011, 94) and Clausen (2012) both argue that Hatoyama's main mistake when it came to building ties with the US, was imposing a deadline for Futenma's relocation. Once he himself set an unrealistic timeline for the negotiation process without consulting with the US, he became hampered by that timeline and, as the two sides reached an impasse, Hatoyama was forced to break his own pledge and consequently resign. In December 2009, the prime minister expressed the hope of finding a new site for the base by May 2010, but in May, he admitted that the issue was more complicated than it had seemed while emphasising that the pledge to move Futenma outside of Okinawa belonged to him personally rather than his party (Asano, 2011, 31). Finally, when Hatoyama visited Okinawa in late May 2010, he apologised to the locals for failing to secure the relocation of the air base and explained that the regional environment demanded that the US troops be stationed in Japan and that it was not feasible to move Futenma far away from its original location. During Hillary Clinton's visit to Japan in the same month, an agreement was reached between the two countries, which essentially reaffirmed the 2006

document on Futenma's relocation, which was to be moved close to Camp Schwab (Harris, 2010). It is worth noting that in an interview to *Ryūkyū Shimpō* in 2011, Hatoyama revealed that the deterrence rationale he brought up to justify keeping the base in Okinawa was merely a pretext on his part, a *post factum* excuse he told to Okinawans after he failed to secure Futenma's transfer.

Shinoda (2013) also showcases the mayhem and lack of cohesion within Hatoyama's cabinet by presenting the disparate statements coming from different ministers and top bureaucrats. In September 2010, then-Okinawa Governor Nakaima Hirokazu supported the 2006 relocation plan, and Defence Minister Kitazawa Toshimi endorsed it as well after meeting with Nakaima. Meanwhile, Land and Transport Minister Maehara, while being a strong supporter of the US-Japan alliance, expressed doubts over implementing the original relocation agreement. Similarly, Foreign Minister Okada suggested that Futenma be merged with the Kadena base, though he admitted that moving Futenma outside of Okinawa was not feasible. In November, Hatoyama again supported seeking alternatives to the 2006 agreement, saying that the government wanted to "express [its] own will on this issue".

The government's indecision also stemmed from intricate coalition politics. The Social Democrats were emphatically opposed to the existing relocation deal and, while party leaders since Murayama Tomiichi in 1994 had recognised the legality of the SDF, then-party president Fukushima Mizuho reverted to the view that the SDF were unconstitutional (*Mainichi Shimbun*, 2010). Thus, Hatoyama was caught between the proverbial hammer and the anvil, faced with prospects of either further damaging the US-Japan alliance or the Social Democrats leaving the coalition. All in all, the DPJ government failed to come up with a unanimously supported option regarding Futenma's relocation or even make it clear to the US who exactly was responsible for managing the issue.

Apart from straining the US-Japan security ties and causing Washington to view the new Japanese government with suspicion, Hatoyama's failure to secure an alternative relocation site illuminated three points. Firstly, it revealed that the US was not ready to entertain major changes pertaining to the alliance, especially the parameters of its military presence in Okinawa. Secondly, as Green (2011, 106) points out, the controversy exposed the remit of the Japanese prime minister's authority as Hatoyama lacked both the political will and the public mandate to successfully recalibrate the decades-old guiding principles of Japan's security. Finally, Shinoda (2013) uses the Futemma issue to highlight the complexities of efficient political leadership: Hatoyama refused bureaucratic expertise, could not achieve cohesion within his own cabinet, and sacrificed America's goodwill in exchange for saving the coalition with the Social Democrats. As a result, the DPJ's mismanagement of domestic politics had a clear and severe impact on the state of Japan's relations with the US.

4.3.4. Synopsis

Throughout his short tenure, Hatoyama arguably became the prime minister in contemporary Japanese history to attempt to break away from the cornerstone of the Yoshida doctrine in the most significant way and abandon complete reliance on the US in favour of a closer relationship with China and other East Asian states. East Asia, which quickly recovered from the 2008 financial crisis, promised the necessary economic growth that could sustain Japan's own prosperity. Hatoyama hoped that his "fraternity" diplomacy would create a spirit of trust and friendship between the regional countries, but the difficult security environment, created by North Korea sinking a South Korea corvet and the Senkaku conflict, precluded Hatoyama's policies from taking off. His strategic vision was poorly suited for the foreign policy realities, and Hatoyama did not appreciate the importance of US military presence providing deterrence, or China's willingness to resort to coercion to change the *status quo*.

4.4. Explaining the change in the DPJ's diplomacy after Hatoyama

After Hatoyama's resignation, the DPJ's foreign policy experienced significant shifts. The following sub-sections will look at it through three distinct lenses: as a reflection of Kan and Noda's personal political disagreements with Hatoyama's vision; as a result of a closer relationship with the bureaucracy; and as a response to the changing regional security environment.

4.4.1. Prime Ministers' views

Even Hatoyama himself seemingly lost interest in creating the East Asian Community by mid-2010, and once he stepped down as prime minister on 2 June 2010, there was no one left in the government with enough desire to continue pursuing his vision. As an anonymous source at Waseda University argued in an interview (2018), the entire notion of an East Asia Community had been discredited by the time Kan became prime minister, due to a clear lack of reciprocity from China. While Kan and his appointed Foreign Minister Maehara never explicitly rebuked Hatoyama's idea of organising an East Asia Community, they never brought it up and instead highlighted the US role in East Asian security. However, Maehara did deliver a policy speech in January 2011, in which he talked about enhancing cooperation in the Asia-Pacific, but emphasised that the US should be included in any regional frameworks.

With regards to the US-Japan alliance, Kan made the effort to bridge the chasm of mistrust that had opened up between Tokyo and Washington under Hatoyama. During his first Diet speech (Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet, 2010a), as well as many speeches after that (Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet, 2010b; 2010c), Kan referred to the alliance with the US as the "cornerstone of [Japanese] diplomacy", while the DPJ's 2010 Manifesto advocated "further [deepening] the US-Japan alliance to meet the needs of Japan-US relations in the 21st century" (DPJ, 2010, 25). Meanwhile, the subject of US military bases was absent from the Manifesto, and Kan, when asked about Futemma, would simply point to the agreement achieved

between Washington and the outgoing Hatoyama cabinet in May 2010, and commit to adhering to it. In his speeches, Kan often ignored the Hatoyama period altogether as if it had not existed. The prime minister heralded a fresh start to the bilateral relationship and promoted Japan's participation in PKOs, rejecting an adherence to "selfish pacifism".

While Kan, a centrist politician, put Japan's diplomacy back on its traditional, LDP-period track, Noda, a conservative follower of the realist school of thought in the DPJ, approached foreign and security policy with more boldness than his two predecessors. His foreign policy team included realist academic Nagashima Akihisa, pro-US China hawk Maehara Seiji, and Gemba Koichiro who all by and large shared Noda's views on the US-Japan alliance and China (Konishi, 2012, 40). These views found reflections in Noda's own writings, namely his 2009 book titled *Enemies of Democracy* (Noda, 2009) and the 2011 piece for the *Voice* magazine (Noda, 2011, 44-53). In them, the prime minister laid out his vision of a strong US-Japan alliance serving as a guarantee of both Japan's and the broader region's security. Noda also rebuked Hatoyama's East Asia Community initiative, saying that the creation of such a community should be delayed until greater political stability takes shape in East Asia.

4.4.2. Domestic politics

The change in foreign policy after Hatoyama's departure can be explained through the prism of more effective management of the bureaucracy, which the Hatoyama government had antagonised, according to a personal interview with Hosoya (2018), who was involved in drafting both the 2010 National Defence Guidelines for the Kan government and the 2013 National Security Strategy for the Abe administration. After the backlash from MOFA due to the DPJ administration's mishandling of the Futenma issue, as well as the more general attempts to transfer power away from the bureaucrats, Kan, and later Noda, managed to ensure better cooperation with foreign policy officials and, as a result, smoother policy-making. Particularly noteworthy is the figure of Sengoku Yoshito, Chief Cabinet Secretary in the Kan cabinet, who

could work with the bureaucracy and guarantee the implementation of the government's agenda. A former progressive activist-turned pragmatist, Sengoku was the one chiefly responsible for the foreign policy change after Hatoyama's resignation. He was also the one who convinced Kan to bring the officials back into the fold. Despite Sengoku being forced by the opposition to step down in early 2011, he was later brought back to the junior position of Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary when his expertise and connections became necessary in the wake of the Great East Japan earthquake.

Despite better coordination between the cabinet and the bureaucracy, however, the Kan administration also suffered from a lack of cohesion in policy-making and competition between different groups within the DPJ. Sarkisov (2011, 116) points to intra-party discord as a major reason for Japan's reversal to a more traditional foreign policy in the wake of Hatoyama's resignation, bringing up Kan's inexperience in diplomatic matters and power struggle inside the DPJ which both constrained the government's political will to implement major foreign policy initiatives. Without Hatoyama to push forward his grand vision, however vague it was, even more power was relegated to MOFA which favoured continuity and was averse to significant shifts in foreign policy. Kotani (2010) also notes that Kan had no foreign policy agenda to speak of, let alone a strategic vision comparable to Hatoyama's. He showed no interest in following up on the August 2010 report of his Council on Security and Defence Capabilities in the New Era, and while some of the recommendations made its way into the December 2010 National Defence Program Guidelines (elaborated on in the next sub-section), Kan himself made no effort to expedite their implementation. Furthermore, Kan's personal leadership was limited by the strength of the Ozawa group and he had to give many positions in the government to pro-Ozawa politicians.

After Kan's resignation, Noda tried to improve the decision-making process by creating an institutional foundation for bold policy-making. To that end, he appointed Maehara to the

position of head of the reformed Policy Research Committee (*seichōkai*), authorised to tentatively approve all legislation presented to the Diet by the cabinet. The new powers were supposed to promote dialogue between the committee and the opposition parties in the hopes of building consensus. The Noda administration also planned to institute two new executive bodies, the National Strategy Council (*kokka senryaku kaigi*) and the National Security Council (*kokka anzenhoshō kaigi*). The first was to map out long-term economic growth strategies, as well as play a leading role in the matter of budget, taxation, and social security. More importantly, the National Security Council, proposed to be established as part of Kantei, would be tasked with formulating key foreign and security policies, as well as providing advice to the prime minister. However, despite recommendations on creating the National Security Council being presented by a DPJ working group on diplomacy and the Noda administration showing support of the idea, no practical action was taken. Noda also demonstrated greater willingness to work with the bureaucracy, reinstating the administrative vice-ministers meetings under the new name of interdepartmental coordination councils (*kakufusho renraku kaigi*). Overall, while acknowledging the shortcomings of the traditional policy-making process, Noda tried to reform rather than eradicate the practices that existed under the LDP.

4.4.3. Changing regional environment in East Asia and its effect on the DPJ's foreign policy after Hatoyama

4.4.3.1. The US

The US-Japan alliance development under the consecutive the Kan and Noda administrations was framed by the Washington-led pivot, or strategic rebalancing, to Asia – a central pillar of the Obama administration's Pacific policy since 2011. In 2009, during his first visit to Japan and even before the DPJ won the general election, Obama referred to himself as America's first Pacific president and proclaimed that Japan would strengthen US leadership in the region (The White House, 2009). The rebalancing began in earnest, however, in 2011, with the unique role

attached by Washington to the Asia Pacific region emphasised by then Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in a piece for the Foreign Policy magazine (2011), in which she advocated a strategic turn to the region, referring to the Asia Pacific as the new key driver of international politics. The six priorities that she put forward as the basis of the rebalance were as follows: strengthening bilateral security alliances; deepening ties with emerging powers; engaging with regional multilateral organisations; expanding trade and investment; creating a broadly-based military presence; and promoting democracy and human rights.

While the US had already begun a rebalancing to the Pacific under George W. Bush, in what Silove (2016, 46) refers to as “the pivot before the pivot”, the Obama administration’s approach to the region differed in both substance and intensity and turned out to be one of the most distinctive and criticised (Tisdall, 2016; Ford, 2017) vectors of US foreign policy during Obama’s presidency.

As previously mentioned, Kan was faced with the necessity of mending the US-Japan relations after Hatoyama’s resignation. However, due to Kan’s own lack of interest in foreign affairs, as well as his attention being occupied by the aftermath of the Great East Japan earthquake of March 2011, hardly any progress was made on strengthening the US-Japan alliance, and the two states even decided to postpone signing a joint security declaration to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the alliance in 2010.

Meanwhile, Noda, succeeding Kan as prime minister in September 2011, managed to promote some notable developments which paved the way for Abe’s defence reforms, and further solidified Japan’s ties with the US, stressing the paramount importance of the alliance to both Japan and the broader region.

Noda’s trajectory towards deepening security ties with the US, however, was cut short by his party’s major electoral defeat in December 2012, and by the time he left the government the issue of Futenma’s relocation’s had not been resolved. However, Washington and Tokyo did

agree in February 2012 to separate the Futenma relocation problem from the planned transfer of eight thousand US marines from Okinawa to Guam. The move arguably helped allay some of the tension as the marine transfer no longer hinged on a timely relocation of the air base (Takenaka, 2012).

Overall, during Noda's tenure, the DPJ's management of the US-Japan alliance morphed so much compared to the Hatoyama era, let alone the declared policy in the party's Manifestos, that it became almost indistinguishable from the traditional LDP approach of enhancing security cooperation with Washington, if from a position of a junior partner. In particular, Noda's appointment as defence minister of Morimoto Satoshi, former SDF serviceman and Nippon Kaigi member, symbolised the DPJ's acceptance of the decades-old parameters of the US-Japan alliance (Brooks, 2012, 132).

4.4.3.2. China

Kan's premiership spanning from June 2010 to September 2011 signified the worsening of Sino-Japanese relations, with the metaphorical pendulum swinging from engagement to explicit balancing, or hard hedging. It should be emphasised, however, that the rift between Beijing and Tokyo did not suddenly appear once Kan had become prime minister; it rather resulted from a combination of two factors. The rift started growing under Hatoyama already and was in no small part dictated by the Obama administration's exasperation over the way Hatoyama handled the issue of Futenma, as well as over his persistent overtures towards China. As Hosoya (2011a, 20) puts it, Hatoyama had to learn the importance of deterrence *vis-à-vis* China based on a strong US-Japan alliance. Thus, moving back closer to the US at the expense of ties with China was a process that Kan merely continued. However it was accelerated by the September 2010 collision of a Chinese fishing trawler with Japan's coast guard vessel, which brought Sino-Japanese relations to their lowest point since Koizumi's tenure (McCurry, 2010). Additionally, despite the trawler collision becoming a watershed in Sino-Japanese relations, the

falling-out between the two states did not come out of thin air. For several years prior to 2010, security concerns had been building up in Japan regarding China. Those concerns were triggered in particular by the 2001 collision between the US aircraft and Chinese fighter near Hainan. Furthermore, the incursions of Chinese ships into Japan's territorial waters in the East China sea became regular since mid-2000s. In April 2010, a flotilla of ten Chinese ships, including submarines and destroyers, passed the Miyako strait between Okinawa and the Miyako island on its way to a military exercise.

After the trawler collision, the Kan administration continued to hold the trawler captain in custody for about half a month, unlike in the past, when the Japanese government would quickly release detained Chinese citizens, who had entered Japan's territorial waters. As Sunohara (2013, 9) notes, this new course of action was spearheaded by Maehara and Okada, then Minister of land, infrastructure, and transport, and Foreign Minister, respectively. Such response further soured relations with China, as the measures undertaken by Japan in dealing with the incident were harsher than usual. Kotani (2010) argues that the Kan government suffered from a lack of common thinking when responding to the incident. While Maehara and Okada insisted on keeping the trawler captain in custody, Chief Cabinet Secretary Sengoku, known for his pro-China sentiments, made the decision to release the captain, as well as refused to publish the video on the collision in the hopes of appeasing China.

As a result of the incident, however, large-scale protests took place in China, accompanied by a heated war of words from both sides with regard to the sovereignty of the Senkakus. As Atanassova-Cornelis (2011, 178-179) argues, the ensuing tensions illustrated Tokyo and Beijing's stances on the issue of the disputed islands, with Japan denying the existence of a dispute at all, and China criticising Japan for infringing on its territorial integrity. However, the following attempts to contain the conflict and minimise the damage was also indicative of the two sides' awareness of the necessity of a stable working bilateral relationship. Nonetheless, the incident heralded a period of heightened tensions between the two countries,

from which they have still to recover. The collision which became a critical juncture in the bilateral ties, as Koga (2016, 8) argues, firmly put Japan on a course towards a more hardline stance on China and national security reforms. Beijing's response to the incident hardened the DPJ's views on the rise of China, which came to be viewed as a threat to Japan. The incident also became a watershed in Sino-Japanese relations insofar as it was the first time that China mixed politics with economy in its response to Japan and resorted to economic measures, namely banning all rare-earth metal exports, to retaliate against Tokyo. The hardening views of Kan and the DPJ at large on China could perhaps be illustrated by the fact that Japan's response to the trawler incident was spearheaded by Maehara, a well-known China hawk and proponent of the US-Japan alliance.

Apart from economic sanctions, China ratcheted up incursions into Japan's territory: while Beijing's intrusions in the contested waters of the East China Sea had barely registered prior to the trawler incident, they spiked in September 2010 and, while decreasing since October, still remained a regular occurrence. Similarly increased became the manoeuvres of Chinese aircraft in the skies above the East China Sea, from 38 times in 2009 to 96 in 2010 (Koga, 2015, 10). The shift towards a less China-friendly stance was evident in both the National Defence Program Guidelines approved in December 2010 (analysed in the following sub-section) and the government's steps aimed at enhancing the US-Japan alliance after Hatoyama's volatile tenure. Finally, Japan (already under Noda) proposed to review the Guidelines for Japan-US Defence Cooperation which had not been changed since 2007 and were eventually reviewed under Abe in 2015. At the same time, it is worth pointing out that Japan's defence budget not only did not increase under the Kan and Noda governments, but actually decreased in both in 2011 and 2012.

Sino-Japanese ties did not recover after the 2010 collision incident, and the conflict around the Senkaku islands was simmering for two years before erupting again in September 2012 and putting bilateral relations on ice for several years. While in 2010 the Chinese government deployed economic measures for the first time to retaliate against Japan's handling

on the trawler collision, the newly-elected leader Xi Jinping took a step further in 2012 by exacerbating the Senkaku dispute through military, political, and propaganda tools (Drifte, 2014, 1).

In April 2012, then Tokyo governor Ishihara Shintarō, a nationalist politician notorious for contentious statements, declared that the government of Tokyo was planning to buy three of the eight Senkaku islands from their private owner. Fearing that Ishihara would then start constructing facilities on the islets, thus provoking China, the Noda government decided to nationalise the islands in question instead by outbidding the Tokyo governor. As Koga (2016, 11) points out, the goal was to retain the “physical” *status quo* and prevent any construction on the Senkakus, while also keeping nationalist activists from landing on the Senkakus.

Despite holding talks with China over the issue, the two sides failed to achieve a mutually acceptable position, with Beijing demanding that complete status-quo remained, that is, that the Japanese government keep the islands in private hands. However, the Noda administration eventually decided to nationalise the Senkakus and stated on 11 September 2012 that the islands would now belong to the government. As a result, a wave of anti-Japanese protests broke out across China, which exceeded the 2010 protests and were marked by large-scale property damage and a boycott of Japanese goods. Beijing dramatically increased the number of vessels entering both Japan’s territorial waters and the disputed waters around the islands, and in December 2012, a Chinese aircraft entered Japan’s airspace for the first time since 1958.

Sahashi (2015, 147) points out three key mistakes made by the Noda administration in handling the new bout of the Senkaku crisis. Firstly, while Japanese foreign-policy makers made the effort to explain the reasons for the nationalisation to Beijing, they failed to recognise the stance of the new Chinese leadership which refused diplomatic settlement of the dispute. Secondly, the Noda government overestimated the incoming Chinese administration’s willingness to “reset” the bilateral relations. Finally, the task of informing the Chinese

government of Japan's rationale behind nationalising the Senkakus was allotted to Senior Vice Foreign Minister Yamaguchi Tsuyoshi, who did not make China's opposition to Noda's move clear enough.

China's escalation of the dispute in the wake of Japan nationalising the islands was arguably partly guided by the calculation that, as Noda's approval was very low, he was not to remain prime minister for long and thus, the Chinese government could afford a powerful response. Such highly pragmatic approach was the result of what was perceived as a lack of strong leadership in Japan, a notion which only gained more traction during the DPJ period of governance, and is noteworthy because China ceased the escalation once Abe became prime minister despite having a well-known reputation for being a China hawk.

Interestingly, while the Noda administration's nationalisation of the disputed islands was likely dictated by the desire to avert a further exacerbation of ties with Beijing, Atanassova-Cornelis (2013, 61) suggests that the decision may have also had domestic considerations given the government's dropping approval ratings and a potential snap general election looming on the horizon. Regardless, the result of the September 2012 spiral of tension was that Japan became even more willing to pursue a more hedging-based policy towards China. However, Noda did not have the opportunity to significantly modify Japan's existing strategy *vis-à-vis* Beijing as the domestic political troubles forced him to announce a snap election in December 2012 which his party went on to lose.

4.4.4. Japan's strategic shift under the Kan and Noda administrations in response to the growing regional tensions

Japan's changing security posture in the wake of the trawler incident was reflected in the adoption in December 2010 of new National Defence Program Guidelines (NDPG), spearheaded by Chief Cabinet Secretary Sengoku. This landmark document effectively changed Japan's post-war security stance by exchanging the "basic defence strategy" underpinning the Yoshida

doctrine in favour of the “dynamic defence strategy”, the former representing passive and reactive defence posture and the latter signifying a more proactive and robust approach. The dynamic defence force would be developed that would be the ultimate guarantee of Japan’s national security and possess “readiness, mobility, flexibility, sustainability, and versatility” to allow the SDF to more fully utilise its capabilities in accordance with the contemporary security environment, as well as engage in “dynamic deterrence”. As Hosoya Yūichi, a Keiō University professor involved in the drafting of the NDPG, summarises the role of the document (Hosoya, 2012), it “permits defensive power to be built up in a rational way”, facilitating a “more effective response by the SDF to the ambiguous threats of the modern day”. The entire concept of the “dynamic defence strategy” represents a consensus among four DPJ leaders: Sengoku, who led the process, Maehara, then Defence Minister Kitazawa Toshimi, and Noda, who in 2010 was the Finance Minister.

The document set out the three basic objectives of Japan’s security policy as “to prevent any threat from directly reaching Japan and to eliminate external threats that have reached it so as to minimize the ensuing damage, and thereby secure the peace and security of Japan and its people”; “to prevent threats from emerging by further stabilizing the security environment in the Asia-Pacific region and by improving the global security environment, so as to maintain and strengthen a free and open international order and ensure Japan’s security and prosperity”; and “to contribute to creating global peace and stability and to secure human security” (Ministry of Defense, 2010). It also reflected a broader shift in Japan’s strategic outlook, paying much attention to the changing nature of security threats posed to East Asia and Japan in particular. The Guidelines referred to China’s growing defence budget and increasing maritime activities coupled with a lack of financial and political transparency as a “concern for the regional and global community”. The document also accused China of trying to change the *status quo* through coercion, which is incompatible with existing maritime and air laws. This was a significant change from the 2004 Guidelines adopted under the Koizumi administration which paid little

attention to China as a security threat, mostly focusing on the issue of global terrorism, let alone the 1996 Guidelines which did not mention China at all. Meanwhile, the 2010 iteration of the Guidelines officially replaced the Soviet Union with China as the primary potential threat to Japan (Ito, 2010). In effect, the document shifted Japan's security focus from its northern borders (the former Soviet Union threat) to the South-West, where it shares a sea border with China, in order to fill a "strategic vacuum" and close the "window of deterrence" in that region. The new Guidelines also prioritised regional cooperation with the ASEAN states, as well as India, South Korea, and Australia, which are referred to as US allies sharing common values and security interests with Japan.

Additionally, the 2010 Guidelines called for enhancing Japan's international peacekeeping efforts, as well as contributions to tackling new, non-traditional security threats and challenges, such as disaster relief and nuclear non-proliferation. Specifically, the document posited the need to relax the 1992 International Peace Cooperation act to maximise the SDF's contribution to UN PKOs.

Another development presented in the 2010 document was the introduction of the "grey zone incidents" concept – confrontations over territory, sovereignty, or economic interests which fall short of a war. As Takahashi emphasises (2012), the thinking behind the dynamic defence force was that it would be equally capable of both engaging in peacetime deterrence and responding to high-end conventional conflicts. The recognition of and emphasis on grey zone incidents was thus crucial to the new dynamic defence strategy.

Finally, the 2010 NDPG called for the establishment of a body in Kantei which would be responsible for coordinating national security policy among ministers and advising the prime minister. That passage likely referred to the National Security Council, the creation of which was unsuccessfully explored by Abe during his first term, and which eventually was established during his second.

The 2010 Guidelines represented a “quantum leap” (Streltsov, 2015, 64) in Japan’s security posture, which for the first time since World War II lost its primarily reactive nature and evolved towards greater proactivity. Berkofsky (2015, 49-50) argued that there was “very little (if anything) Japan [did] not allow itself to do in the context of its defence and security policies”.

It should be noted, however, that despite the significant reorganisation and modernisation of the SDF, as well as the shift in the national defence strategy, the Guidelines did not modify the core principle of Japan’s security policy, which remained exclusively defensive (*senshū bōei*), meaning that Japan would only employ military force if it was attacked by another country and even then, only the minimum force would be used to defend itself. Japan’s military capabilities were still geared towards deterring and repelling an attack from the outside, and precluded Japan from launching an attack against another country.

Another landmark decision (Brooks, 2012, 132) with regards to national security was undertaken by the Noda administration in December 2011 in the form of easing Japan’s arms exports principles which streamlined its cooperation with the US on ballistic missile defence. The so-called three principles, a key part of Japan’s pacifist foreign policy, were introduced by Prime Minister Sato Eisaku in 1967 and prohibited arms exports to communist states, states under the UN arms exports embargo, and states involved in international conflicts. The revision of these principles was initially planned to be included in the 2010 National Defence Guidelines but was ultimately rejected by the Kan administration due to strong backlash

The new arms exports guidelines enabled Tokyo to engage in joint development military-grade equipment and technology with other countries. In practical terms, the decision made it possible for Japan to join an international project working on the F-35 fighter which Japan was planning to adopt but was hobbled due to the weapons exports limitations.

4.5. Summary

The course of action taken by Kan and Noda reflected the vital need for Japan to secure itself amidst the shifting strategic environment. The major threats emanated from North Korea's missile and nuclear tests, and China's maritime expansion and ambitions, which were seen as a clear threat after the 2010 collision incident. As a result, the DPJ launched Japan's most transformative reforms that were developed or completed by the Abe administration.

The development of Sino-Japanese ties under the DPJ governance resembled a full circle. While the DPJ won the 2009 election intending to strengthen ties with China and other regional states in a bid to create an East Asia Community, it was defeated in 2012 amidst severely damaged Sino-Japanese relations and Japan's influence in East Asia on the decline for want of substantial political investment on the DPJ's part. After the 2012 Senkaku crisis, the formula of a "mutually beneficial relationship based on common strategic interests" between China and Japan, coined by the first Abe administration and relevant up until the nationalisation, all but disappeared. By the end of 2012, the DPJ's initial engagement towards China under Hatoyama had not merely been rolled back to resemble the LDP's stance, but gave way to a more hardline approach, which even went above and beyond the pre-DPJ strategy.

The US-Japan alliance management under the DPJ reflected the party's stance on China in that it also came full circle, although in the opposite direction. With China, the new ruling party shifted from pronounced engagement to explicit balancing under Noda. With the US, the DPJ started off intent on recalibrating the alliance towards greater equality and hoping to scrap the 2006 Futenma relocation agreement. However, as the prime ministers changed, the government reverted to the *status quo* views on the alliance and accepted the original Futenma relocation plan. Moreover, it was the DPJ prime ministers Kan and Noda who made headway in upgrading Japan's defence posture and deepening security ties with the US. The 2010 NDPG postulated an overhaul of Japan's defensive strategy from basic to dynamic, the 2011 easing of arms exports principles, and the 2012 initiation of the US-Japan defence guidelines review

process all paved the way for Abe's bold security policy which continued in the same direction. At the same time, the DPJ's national security reforms, while moving Japan's strategic trajectory further away from the Yoshida doctrine with its modest security policy and minimal military capabilities, still maintained the self-imposed constraints which characterised Japan's postwar security posture and were thus hardly radical even in the Japanese context.

Overall, the analysis of DPJ's national security reforms provides points to the overlooked continuity between the DPJ foreign policy and that of the Abe administration, revealing the crucial role of the post-Hatoyama Democratic administrations in continuing Japan's incremental shift towards adapting Japan's strategy to the current security environment, which Abe later accelerated, as examined in the following case study.

Chapter 5. Case study 2: Japan's grand strategy under Abe Shinzō: the Abe doctrine

5.1. Overview

After Abe Shinzō led his the LDP to victory in the December 2012 general election, he sought to invigorate Japan's diplomacy and enhance its role in regional and global affairs. Proclaiming that "Japan is back" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2013a), he embarked on a vigorous international tour, visiting 49 countries in his first 20 months in office (Panda, 2014b). Abe's foreign and security policy agenda was articulated so elaborately and coherently that they collectively came to be referred to as the "Abe Doctrine", both by Abe himself (Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet, 2013c) and Japan analysts (Hughes, 2015; Walker and Azuma, 2016).

The following case study will focus on the Abe administration's role in transforming Japan's grand strategy. As with the DPJ case study, this chapter will be divided into subsections based the prime minister's views and vision; his relations with and approach towards the bureaucracy involved in foreign-policy making; the security environment around Japan throughout his tenure; and finally Abe's response to the threats and challenges facing Japan, both internal, embodied in the national security reforms, and external, represented by strengthening the US-Japan alliance, developing new security linkages in South-East Asia, and for the first time including Russia in Japan's strategic vision.

5.2. Abe Shinzō's political vision and leadership style

5.2.1. Overview

As the first case study demonstrated, while Hatoyama Yukio's general goals in diplomacy were hardly unique, his objectives and their articulation were idiosyncratic in Japan's traditional US-oriented foreign policy environment. His Doctrine of *yuai*, or fraternity, proved too idealistic and failed to improve Sino-Japanese relations, while his attempts to achieve a higher degree of

independence within the US-Japan alliance only exasperated Washington. The following section will explore Abe's views on foreign policy.

5.2.2. Abe's background and ideology

This section will provide an overview of Prime Minister Abe's leadership vision, or intended political change, defined by Envall (2015, 9) as "the values and goals of political leaders, their motivations, perceptions, biases and morality". While Abe's foreign policy initiatives throughout his first term were examined in 3.5, this section will scrutinise his personal political views.

Abe's views have been characterised as "nationalist" (Yoshida, 2015), or "revisionist" (Morris-Suzuki, 2015), while Takahashi (2010, 26) considers Abe part of the neoconservative school of thought, characterised by the support of Japan's national traditions and values, as well as the desire for Japan to attain more prestige in the international community. Unlike the more traditional Japanese right-wing politicians, neoconservatism represents a reactionary backlash against the post-war liberalisation and demilitarisation from politicians, journalists, and public intellectuals who were born already after the war. Abe is also a member and a special advisor of *Nippon Kaigi*, or the Japan Conference – a grass-roots conservative movement and the biggest right-wing organisation in the country (Robertson, 2013, 66). *Nippon Kaigi* members include both public intellectuals, politicians or religious figures, and ordinary citizens such as students, doctors or even housewives. According to the organisation's website, its goals include "normalising" the education system; supporting the peacekeeping activities of the Self-Defence Forces (SDF); and rewriting the constitution to reflect Japan's traditions. While *Nippon Kaigi* has been portrayed by some (Gelernter, 2016) as a "radical nationalist" organisation or a shadowy cabal behind Japan's government, it has been very open about its goals and vision, which, despite being historically revisionist, is hardly different from right-wing lobbies in other countries (Fahey, 2016). In the Diet, *Nippon Kaigi* is represented by a Parliamentary Panel comprising over 250 deputies (Shimazono, 2016, 32).

Abe's political views were known even before his first premiership - Green (2006, 103) points out that Abe was adamant in wanting to pass the bill pertaining to the dispatch of the SDF to Iraq and was generally very supportive of Japan's participation in the US-led War on terror.

While Abe showed himself a pragmatist at the outset of his first premiership, downplaying his revisionist stance and instead trying to repair ties with China after the damage done to them under Koizumi, this approach gave way to a more ideologically-driven stance on China by the end of 2006. It is also true that he refused to shelve his own conservative views entirely at the outset of his second tenure, paying in December 2013 a visit to the Yasukuni Shrine as he had previously promised (even though he refrained from visiting in 2006-2007). Amidst Japan's cool relations with China and South Korea, the visit naturally drew condemnation from both Beijing and Seoul. The move was even criticised by the United States, with the US embassy in Tokyo lamenting Abe's decision, as it would "exacerbate tensions with Japan's neighbours" (Nishiyama, 2013). Speaking to the press, Abe stated that, far from honouring war criminals that are, among many others, interred at Yasukuni, he was trying to "show... determination to create an age where no one will ever suffer from the tragedies of war" (Yoshida and Aoki, 2013). Later, in an interview with the *Foreign Affairs* journal, Abe repeated his claims, saying that he simply offered prayers for those who died in Japan's wars, and arguing that his visit was not unlike what other foreign leaders did (Abe, 2013b).

It is worth mentioning, however, that, while Abe's right-wing ideology is widely acknowledged, the extent of its direct influence on his foreign policy has been questioned, particularly by Japanese academics (for analysis of the connection between Abe's personal views and his foreign policy, see 5.2.3). For instance, a retired senior foreign policy official has argued in a personal interview that, despite Abe's image as an avowed conservative, he is first and foremost a pragmatist, even in his approach *vis-à-vis* China. Another strong proponent of viewing Abe as a realist has been Hosoya Yūichi, whose examination (2011a, 17-18) of Abe's

influence on Japan's grand strategy in his first term also hints at Abe holding pragmatic views on foreign policy regardless of his personal convictions and despite having a reputation of an anti-China "hawk". Hosoya explains that as prime minister, Abe had to offer a balanced approach towards Japan's diplomacy, and, while he pushed for a closer security partnership with the US, Australia, and India, he also managed to avoid major Sino-Japanese tensions and visited Beijing in October 2006. He also emphasises (2018) Abe's pragmatism during his second term, saying that despite Abe often being portrayed in the media and academia as a right-wing revisionist, he received a lot of criticism from conservative groups and organisations and accused of being too liberal for confirming the Murayama statement, acknowledging the comfort women issue, and showing willingness to compromise with Russia over the Northern Territories.

5.2.3. Abe's views on Japanese diplomacy

In the run-up to the December 2012 general election, the LDP campaigned on the slogan "Take back Japan" (*Nihon o Torimodosu*), while Abe released a book in January 2013 called "Towards a New Country, Towards a Beautiful Country", in which he called for "returning Japan to the people" and reviewing the trajectory which Japan followed since its defeat in the World War II (Abe, 2013a, 254).

At the outset of his second premiership, Abe re-introduced the Arc of Freedom and Prosperity into Japan's diplomacy. As previously explained, the Arc of Freedom and Prosperity was created in 2006 by Abe's advisors and involved supporting like-minded democracies from East Asia to Europe, but also excluded China from Japan's foreign policy priorities. It was faced with opposition from the Foreign Ministry, which supported a healthy relationship with China, and ultimately did not gain particular traction. However, it returned to the Abe administration's lexicon and was initially promoted by senior foreign policy officials such as Yachi, the strategy's creator.

Additionally, Abe unveiled in 2012 the concept of a Democratic Security Diamond consisting of Japan, the US, Australia and India - maritime democracies sharing common values - with a view to uphold maritime order in the region (Abe, 2012). Both of the above frameworks represent an ideological shift from previous administrations in that they all manifestly exclude China and instead focus on like-minded democracies sharing the same values.

In a January 2013 speech (Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet, 2013a) in Jakarta, which is sometimes viewed as the launch of the Abe doctrine (Nilsson-Wright and Fujiwara, 2015), Abe first laid out his administration's five principles for Japanese diplomacy: universal values; upholding maritime laws and rules; strengthening economic ties in the Asia-Pacific; promoting intercultural ties with regional states; and setting up exchanges among the next generation of leaders.

Overall, Abe's vision for Japan's role in the world was underpinned by the concept of "proactive pacifism" aimed at contributing to global peace and stability, and emphasising the necessity of stepping up security cooperation with other democracies around the world. According to Kitaoka Shinichi, Abe's advisor on constitutional reinterpretation, while passive pacifism posited that the "the less militarised Japan is, the more peaceful the world becomes" (2014a), proactive pacifism involved boosting Japan's military capabilities and enhancing its role in global security. As such, the official adoption of "proactive pacifism" as the underlying logic of Japan's foreign policy under Abe can be interpreted as a condemnation of the Yoshida doctrine, which viewed the potential resurgence of Japanese militarism rather than a foreign invasion as the greatest security threat facing Japan. While the proponents of the Yoshida doctrine argued that limiting Japan's military capabilities and minimising its participation in international affairs would lead to a greater degree of global peace, the growing military threats emanating from China and North Korea since the end of the Cold War seemed to disprove that idea. To Abe and his ideological fellows, the fact that Japan's pacifist, low-profile diplomacy did

not result in a more stable and secure East Asia represented the failure of the Yoshida doctrine. As Kitaoka argued (2014b), the rapid increase of China's military spending and the acceleration of North Korea's missile and nuclear development, despite Japan's defence budget remaining virtually the same, highlighted the "greatest evidence of the fallacy of passive pacifism". While the Yoshida doctrine's defence of the liberal, rules-based international order was limited to economic diplomacy, Abe intended to uphold these values through military means as well. Furthermore, while the Yoshida doctrine saw the US-Japan alliance as a custodian of Japan's national security that would help integrate Japan into the US-led global economic order, Abe seemed to embrace it on account of supporting the US hegemony and the universal values that both countries share.

While Abe was the first prime minister to put the notion of "proactive pacifism" at the centre of his strategic vision for Japan, the rhetorical roots of the phrase are decades-old (Liff, 2015, 84). Akimoto (2018, 14) traces its original usage back to the 1970, and it was later popularised by Ozawa in his 1992 report, which argued in favour of Japan's security "normalisation". Similarly, while the DPJ eschewed this specific wording, its 2009 Manifesto put forward the idea of Japan as a peace-creating country, guided not by the "inward-looking" pacifism of the Cold War years, but instead the "outward-looking" pacifism, allowing Japan to contribute to global security in a more proactive way.

As the previous sub-section outlined, whether Abe's own political views inform his actual policies as prime minister is a matter of debate, despite him being usually portrayed in Western media as a staunch nationalist. When analysing Abe's foreign policy doctrine, it behoves one to make a distinction between the Prime Minister's personal ideological leanings and some of his administration's rhetoric on the one hand, and his actions as head of the Japanese government on the other. Two key points need to be raised about the reality of Abe's

foreign policy given the gap between his government's rhetoric and the actual diplomatic course implemented.

Firstly, it remains a question just to what extent exactly The Arc of Freedom and Prosperity, which essentially put forward as Japan's grand strategy during Abe's first term, translated into action during his second. As mentioned before, the concept received pushback from MOFA specifically because it seemed to exclude many states that did not share Japan's values, most importantly China. Foreign Ministry policy-makers argued that the Arc of Freedom and Prosperity would hurt Japan's economic interests, which should take precedence over any ideological considerations. Abe's insistence on implementing this ideologically-driven strategy at the expense of focusing on revitalising the economy during his first premiership cost him his position, as the Japanese public has traditionally been more concerned with domestic rather than global issues. Indeed, Envall (2011, 154) argues that the brevity of Abe's premiership was partly his own fault insofar as it was his nationalist ideology bleeding into politics that failed to receive support from the voters.

Abe's shift towards a more realist, economy interests-oriented approach is best embodied by his Russian policy (see 5.4.4). This shift was also reflected in the marked decrease in official rhetoric endorsing the Arc of Freedom and Prosperity or values-oriented diplomacy. These initiatives were still mentioned, with Yachi supporting the Arc in 2013 and Kitaoka explaining the notion of proactive pacifism in 2014, but the frequency with which they appeared in speeches or documents dropped in 2015. Furthermore, despite the Abe administration regularly invoking the rule of law and democratic governance while criticising China, such rhetoric is rather based on Japan's key strategic interests as opposed to ideological animosity towards Beijing. Similarly, Takahara (2018) argues that Abe's increasingly hedge-based approach towards China was not the result of his own ideology but rather the consequence of tensions running high around the

Senkakus and was motivated by pursuing Japan's national interest, not Abe's personal views on China.

Abe's foreign-policy making is tersely summarised by Sahashi (2018), who argues that while Abe's personal views can be described as nationalistic and anti-Chinese, his ideological leanings in the prime ministerial capacity are superseded by two considerations: ensuring his own political survival and creating a legacy. To that end, all of Abe's foreign policy decisions, including those pertaining to China, primarily hinge on how a particular policy can affect his legacy and only secondarily whether he can insert his own values into it.

The second key point is that Abe's staffing policy throughout his second term has also pointed towards him embracing a more pragmatic stance on foreign policy. One of his most controversial appointments was Inada Tomomi, picked by Abe to become Defence Minister in August 2016. Inada lacked security-related credentials, being previously responsible for overseeing administrative and civil service reforms, but shared with Abe many views on Japan's foreign policy and history, and was also a member of Nippon Kaigi; her name was even bandied about by some media outlets as a likely successor to Abe in 2018 (Shimizu, 2016). However, her term as Defence Minister proved short as she resigned along with the rest of the cabinet in 2017, after making a series of gaffes. Moreover, as Hosoya argued (2010), while Inada projected an image of a conservative revisionist, she in fact was also a pragmatist who merely used right-wing populist rhetoric to boost her popularity. Abe's other foreign policy-related appointments underscore his national interest-driven pragmatism even more, demonstrating his apparent willingness to listen to dissenting opinions and work with his political adversaries. For instance, Fumio Kishida, serving as Foreign Minister from 2012 to 2017, is a liberal leading the moderate Kochikai faction of the LDP. The other two Defence Ministers, Itsunori Onodera (who returned to the position after Inada's resignation) and Gen Nakatani were Abe's political opponents during his 2012 LDP leadership bid and instead supported Shigeru Ishiba, Abe's main adversary.

Further, Abe's appointment as executive secretary of Takaya Imai, who plays a big role in foreign-policy making, signifies Abe's shift to a diplomacy based on economic interests, as Imai comes from METI rather than MOFA or MOD. And while Abe appointed Yachi as head of the new National Security Council (discussed in the following sub-section), that appointment did not lead to a resurgence of values-based diplomacy from Abe's first premiership, much like the Asō government did not promote such diplomacy either, despite Yachi remaining foreign policy advisor and Asō himself being one of the architects of the concept.

5.2.4. Foreign-policy making under Abe and his relationship with the bureaucracy

Staffing policy was also of particular importance for Abe in order to effectively actualise his diplomatic Doctrine. Under his government, a highly centralised, top-down process of foreign-policy making was institutionalised, with the executive branch represented by The Prime Minister's Office, or Kantei, significantly strengthened. Abe exerted an unprecedented degree of control over the bureaucracy, a stark contrast with the Hatoyama administration which quarrelled with the officials, imperiled their interests, and ultimately failed to rein them in. The top posts responsible for foreign and defence policies were, too, allocated in accordance with readiness and efficiency in implementing Abe's vision, and given to either political lightweights or those who shared Abe's views on global affairs.

As Shinoda (2013) argues throughout his book on the institutional changes in Japanese politics, policy-making is only effective when the leader controls and cooperates with the bureaucracy, without the support of which it is impossible to achieve meaningful changes. As per Shinoda's approach, the Hatoyama administration is classified as one of weak leadership and ineffective bureaucratic support; Kan exhibited strong personal leadership but had little support from the officials; and Noda had the backing of the bureaucracy yet failed to demonstrate effective personal leadership. While Shinoda does not go into detail about Abe's relationship with the bureaucracy, as the book referenced was published less than a year into his premiership,

he mentions that, based on the first several months of Abe's performance, he could be placed into Koizumi's category – a powerful prime minister enjoying strong bureaucratic support. Unlike Hatoyama, Abe made full use of the bureaucratic expertise and signalled his intention of working closely with the officials. That pattern largely continued further into his premiership; however, Abe also showed clear signs of tightening the reins and exerting more control over the bureaucrats than any recent Japanese leader, while at the same time striving to elevate the position of Kantei.

Abe's approach to foreign-policy making throughout his second premiership could be characterised as being three-fold: largely espousing the same line as during his first term, including employing the same concepts and frameworks; strengthening the executive by concentrating more power at the Kantei; and tightening the reins over the MOFA officials by personalising and politicising bureaucratic decision-making. As a result, the source of Japan's foreign policy, specifically towards China, effectively moved from MOFA to Kantei, while the officials specialising in foreign policy and national security came to be involved more in implementing the policies already decided at the top than formulating these policies by themselves. Applied specifically to Abe's strategy towards China, the prime minister's authoritarian leadership style and the rise of Kantei influence spelt a considerable reduction of the bureaucracy's power in formulating Japan's foreign policy Doctrine. While the big business which retained a measure of political clout still considered Chinese markets highly lucrative, and some liberal elements within the LDP called for a softer line on China, Abe's premiership created a unique political situation in Japan. According to a personal interview with a former senior member of MOFA (2018), the current consensus with regard to how Tokyo should approach China is now shaped by the triumvirate of the government, the LDP, and the general public, with the bureaucracy coming a distant fourth – a clear change in the balance of power from the "iron triangle" consisting of politicians, bureaucrats, and big business.

Abe exercised a much more hands-on, personal approach than previous leaders in the area of foreign-policy making. It was argued by a retired MOFA official in a 2018 interview that the traditional bureaucratic leadership could not, for example, have produced the 2015 series of security legislation aimed at modernising Japan's SDF and broadening the scope of its operations. However, rather than ascribing the current nature of the relationship between the government and the bureaucracy entirely to Abe's leadership style and strategic vision, it can also be viewed as the logical result of the process started by the Hatoyama administration aimed at reducing bureaucratic influence on decision-making and giving greater authority to the politicians. In fact, Abe exercised even bigger control over the foreign policy bureaucratic apparatus than Koizumi, noting that, while Koizumi had the image of a strong, authoritarian leader, in reality he put a lot of trust in the bureaucracy. The official recounted Koizumi's controversial visit to North Korea in 2002, whereby the United States were heavily opposed to the trip, but MOFA officials, including said official personally, were adamant that Koizumi made the visit, and the prime minister followed their advice.

Abe, on the other hand, retained the initiative with the bureaucracy that was first seized by the DPJ administrations, and made the officials follow his lead. As a former senior member of MOFA argued in an interview (2018) on condition of anonymity, Abe's grip on the staffing policy of Kantei and his persistence effectively give him free rein in crafting the kind of foreign policy vision he wants to without having to defer to the foreign policy bureaucratic establishment nearly as much as previous prime ministers. It's possible to identify three key factors that helped Abe curtail bureaucratic authority and empower the position of the prime minister.

Firstly, Abe's premiership currently rounding out four years and set to last at least until late 2018 represented a drastic change from the "revolving door" of prime ministers that preceded his second term. After Koizumi stepped down in 2006 and until 2012 when the LDP returned to power, Japan saw six prime ministers (including Abe himself) in as many years.

Moreover, as of 2016, there was a possibility that Abe might remain prime minister even after 2018 when he had to step down as LDP leader according to the party's rules. Japan's constitution does not set any limits to the prime minister's tenure, and the LDP is technically within its rights to change its internal rules so that Abe can continue serving as the party president and, by extension, prime minister. Further, Abe enjoys unusually high approval ratings. As of December 2016, his was supported by 63 percent of the Japanese public (Sasakawa USA, 2016), while his approval rating since 2012 was consistently over 40 percent (Japan Macro Advisors, 2016). As a former foreign policy advisor to Koizumi told in an interview on condition of anonymity, there was no contender from the LDP in sight that could effectively challenge Abe for the position of party leader.

Stability also characterises major positions in the Abe cabinet. Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga Yoshihide (who among other things was responsible for relations between the cabinet and the ministries), Finance Minister Asō Tarō, and Foreign Minister Kishida Fumio have been part of the administration since the beginning. As a result, Abe's team managed to build a long-lasting rapport with the bureaucracy and push it towards implementing the kind of foreign policy Doctrine that the administration was interested in. No longer could the foreign policy and national security officials afford to draft policies that reflect their own vision, while disregarding the current administration which in the past would have been gone in a year (Winter, 2016).

Additionally, unlike Hatoyama whose policies put the bureaucratic interests in the line of fire, Abe appeared to allay the officials' concerns from the first days in office. From the beginning, he brought back the weekly administrative vice ministers meetings abolished under Hatoyama. Attending the first meeting on 28 December 2012, Abe emphasized the necessity of mutual trust between the politicians and the bureaucracy (Shinoda, 2013). The meetings reestablished a complex network of coordination between ministerial bureau chiefs, directors, and deputy directors in order to actualise the government's initiatives.

Secondly, the government became more closely involved in overseeing ministries and agencies, exemplified by a sharp increase in the number of political appointments to bureaucratic positions (Winter, 2016). While this process gained traction under Hatoyama, Abe was the one to make full use of it to quash bureaucratic opposition. As Sahashi Ryō, a senior research fellow at Sasakawa Foundation, explained in an interview (2018), Abe's first term as prime minister was largely destroyed by the mistakes of his allies, which is why during his second term, he decided to maintain the strongest possible grip on policy-making and control everything himself. Such approach is helped by the fact that Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga, who is seen as Abe's main tool in overseeing the bureaucracy, does not have any particular ideological leanings himself and is thus guided by notions of efficiency and pragmatism. Suga's degree of involvement in the decision-making process is such that he allegedly insists on personally reviewing every policy related to China. That is not to say, however, that Abe simply relies on Suga in calibrating Japan's strategy towards China, as the Prime Minister plays a role in the process as well. For instance, the 2015 statement on history to mark the anniversary of the end of World War II (Abe, 2015) was crafted by Abe himself and his staff rather than by MOFA or a special speech writer like Hirata Oriza, who penned policy speeches for Hatoyama.

The most efficient method Abe used in reining in the bureaucracy was the system of personnel appointments. In 2014, the government established the Cabinet Bureau of Personnel Affairs headed by Katō Katsunobu, a close ally of Abe's (Yoshida, 2014). The new organ gave the prime minister and chief cabinet secretary the authority to personally appoint over 600 officials to senior posts in the central government's ministries and agencies, a significant increase from the 200 appointments the politicians presided over before. Moreover, if previous prime ministers or chief cabinet secretaries rarely took full advantage of that power, usually serving as rubberstamps for already agreed-upon ministerial promotions, Abe actively utilised his clout by deeply involving himself in bureaucratic appointments, thus indirectly encouraging the officials to amenablely implement his policies. Some have warned, however, that such

personalised policy-making posed obvious risks – if Abe tightens the reins too much, the bureaucrats might cease criticising questionable legislation and become little more than a rubberstamp for the Abe administration, saying the pleasant things instead of the right ones.

Finally, Abe ensured the implementation of his foreign policy by concentrating further power in the Kantei at the expense of the bureaucracy through the aforementioned system of personnel appointments. These measures served to augment centralised, top-down foreign-policy making and guarantee that the bureaucrats would comply with Abe's vision.

The portfolio to Kantei's Legislative Bureau went to Komatsu Ichirō, an ideological ally of Abe's in favour of constitutional amendment and Japan's security normalisation (*The Japan Times*, 2014). He also brought back Yachi, first giving him the post of Cabinet Counsellor and then the directorship of the new National Security Council (NSC), a US-style security organ reporting directly to Kantei. It was created in an attempt to further centralise foreign- and security-policy making and wrestle control from the bureaucracy as the previous version of a similar organ, established in 1986, were plagued by inefficiencies, red tape, and lack of swift decision-making (Miller, 2014). As mentioned in 3.5, Abe originally planned to create the NSC during his first term, but he failed to pass the bill, while Fukuda abandoned the idea. The basic format of the NSC operations entailed regular meeting between Abe acting as chair, foreign minister, and defence minister, as well as chief cabinet secretary. The NSC also included secretariat meetings chaired by Yachi, which would engage in coordination between various government agencies. The NSC became a key element in the centralisation of foreign-policy making, shifting further power away from the officials and towards the prime minister, and for all intents and purposes becoming the place where Japan's diplomatic strategy originated. Interestingly, Abe first proposed the creation of the NSC already in 2007 but the bill failed to pass the Diet approval. The process was sped up in 2013 after the hostage crisis in Algeria in January where 39 people were killed, including ten Japanese citizens (*Nikkei Shimbun*, 2013).

However, while the masterminds of Japan's China strategy resided at the top, Kantei still required efficient coordination with MOFA to work on the policies at the granular level. Therefore, as Pugliese (2016) reveals, Abe simultaneously tilted the foreign-policy making balance from the bureaucracy to Kantei by appointing ostensible political lightweights Kishida and Onodera Itsunori to lead MOFA and MOD, while also giving the administrative vice-ministerial position in MOFA to another ally of his Saiki Akitaka. This was in contrast to the power balance during Abe's first tenure when the foreign-policy making clout was reportedly shared relatively equally by Abe, then Foreign Minister Asō, and Yachi, then administrative vice-minister at MOFA.

5.2.5. Synopsis

Abe's views on Japan's foreign policy remained virtually unchanged during both his tenures as prime minister and stood in contrast with Hatoyama's or, to a lesser extent, the DPJ's in general. A representative of the revisionist faction of the conservative LDP, his own views stemmed from ideological considerations and were based on the desire to restore Japan as a great power in the face of the rising China. The concepts and frameworks he promoted in his rhetoric to operationalise Japan's diplomacy were underpinned by the notion of universal values and seemed to deliberately exclude and isolate China on account of it being a renegade state showing contempt for these values. Practically speaking, however, Abe's foreign policy became a lot more pragmatic compared to his first term, and the Prime Minister himself showed the willingness to separate his personal views, the direct implementation of which might have had a detrimental effect on Japan's diplomacy, from his action in the prime ministerial capacity.

On the policy-making level, Abe showed authoritarian tendencies, creating a more centralised, top-down system of decision-making and staffing ministries and agencies with hand-picked personnel who would readily implement his Doctrine. By elevating the executive branch and transferring more authority to Kantei, he seized the policy-making initiative from the

bureaucracy and managed to make the officials draft the policies that he saw fit. He also appointed likeminded figures to top positions, surrounding himself with people who shared his vision of a proactive Japan that can defend itself and assist other countries, as well as improves relations with neighbouring democracies. The desire for the government to control central bureaucracy represented direct continuation of the vision implemented by Koizumi, as well as the Hatoyama administration's attempts at giving more authority to politicians over unelected officials. Despite succeeding in not antagonising the bureaucracy and using both the proverbial stick and the carrot to rein in the foreign-policy making officials, Abe's effective top-down decision-making essentially brought the DPJ's aspirations of "political leadership" into life.

The following sections will analyse the security environment surrounding Japan, as well as Abe's response to these challenges in the national security and foreign policy spheres.

5.3. The regional environment around Japan throughout the second Abe administration

5.3.1. The deceleration of US pivot to Asia and its effects on regional security

As previously mentioned, the United States under Barack Obama committed to a so-called pivot to Asia, a policy of rebalancing which entailed increasing military and political engagement with the Asia-Pacific. Since its proclamation, however, some criticised the rebalancing for falling short of delivering on its lofty promises (Glosserman, 2013), while others recommended abandoning it altogether (White, 2014). Lidow (2014) has pointed out that, while the pivot showed promising signs during Obama's first term, it decelerated during the second as a result of the overall anaemic foreign policy. On the one hand, the US maximised its presence in the Asia Pacific and involvement in the region's affairs. Washington diversified its political, economic, and security-related interactions, and spared no capital, both literal and figurative, to invest in its Pacific strategy. The US both boosted military ties with traditional allies such as Australia and

the Philippines, and improved security relations with other regional powers like Singapore, Malaysia, and India.

On the other hand, insofar as ensuring America's hegemony in the region for the years to come is concerned, the pivot faced many challenges and its results were decidedly mixed (Gill, 2016). In East Asia, both China and North Korea came to represent a bigger challenge than under George W. Bush. North Korea, partly abetted by Beijing, accelerated its nuclear program and intensified missile launches, regularly sparking concern in neighbouring countries. Meanwhile, China grew more proactive in pursuing its interest as evidenced by its "One Belt, One Road" and Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank initiatives, and its foreign policy became increasingly more contentious, testing the limits of Washington's readiness to respond, especially in the East and South China Seas. As Miller (2016) points out, America's allies remained unconvinced that Washington was truly willing to confront China and considered the Obama administration's conciliatory approach to Beijing only served to encourage the latter to proceed with its assertive foreign policy in the region.

Doubts were also cast on the United States' readiness of committing more resources to and focusing its attention on the region. The sequestration of the US military budget was confounded by Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 and the following stand-off with the West over Ukraine, as well as the onslaught of the so-called Islamic State in Syria and Iraq, which diverted much of Washington's attention from East Asia. The failings of the pivot to Asia arguably proved that, faced with international crises and budgetary constraints, the United States was no longer able to project its military might as efficiently as before. However, as Panda (2014a) has argued, the lacklustre nature and the slow pace of the US pivot paradoxically might have had a positive influence on the region's security. Without the massive build-up of American military and greater resource allocation, US allies in the Pacific avoided the danger of relying on Washington completely to uphold the status-quo and guarantee their security. Instead, the flawed

execution of the American rebalancing gave the Asia Pacific countries an impetus to invest more in defence, with Japan being the prime example. As Koga (2016, 13) explains, concerns lingered in Japan as to the extent of attention and commitment to East Asia that the United States could guarantee amidst international crises elsewhere. Therefore, rather than depending completely on the alliance with America, Abe chose to upgrade Japan's own defence capabilities by loosening constitutional constraints.

Another factor driving Japan's national security modernisation was the Obama administration's China policy. While Obama became the first American president to state in 2014 that the US-Japan alliance jurisdiction covers the Senkaku islands, his government also tried to maintain a positive relationship with China. These attempts were not received well by the Abe administration which expected firm assurances of US support in the case of an armed conflict with Beijing. To Japan, China and the US appeared to be considering an idea of a "G2", based on the two states understanding each other's spheres of influence, with Japan supposedly belonging to a China-centric East Asian order. This possibility of the US allowing China to do as it wished in its own back-yard coupled with the structural changes in the relative power balance between Washington and Beijing in both economic and military areas had an effect on Japan's perception of the alliance. To the Japanese political elite, Obama's hopes of finding a diplomatic way of resolving China-related conflicts sounded like a threat of abandoning Japan should a conflagration with China occur. Despite that, Abe managed to make headway on the alliance development as examined in 5.4.3.

Overall, the perception of the Abe doctrine in the US was ambiguous. On the one hand, the Pentagon welcomed Japan's robust security reforms as the pivot to Asia was considered impossible without enhancing cooperation with US allies and them shouldering more burdens (Wright-Nilsson and Fujiwara, 2015). At the same time, the US State Department was less enthusiastic about Japan's new proactivism as many American policy-makers feared of the US

being embroiled in an armed conflict between Japan and China, which would either hurt US credibility if it stays out of the conflict, or commit the US to a full-fledged war with China.

5.3.2. Tensions with China

When the LDP returned to power in December 2012, memories of the September crisis, when the Noda government's nationalisation of the disputed islands sparked widespread protests and riots in China, were still fresh. During a press conference in January 2013 (Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet, 2013e), Abe stressed his unchanging resolution to defending Japan's territories but nevertheless expressed the hope of mending the bilateral ties and returning to the "mutually beneficial relationship based on common strategic interests". Hemmings and Kuroki (2013, 63) note that some of Abe's foreign policy picks suggest his readiness to engage with China at the outset of his premiership: Foreign Minister Kishida Fumio was a member of the Kochikai pro-China faction within the LDP; his mentor Koga Makoto also enjoyed close ties with Beijing; finally, China ambassador Kidera Masato expressed after his appointment the desire to facilitate Sino-Japanese friendship.

As diplomatic channels of communication between Japan and China closed for two years, tensions around the Senkakus, conversely, flared up. Since late 2012, Chinese fighter jets began flying over the contested islets, in addition to surveillance aircraft. In February 2013, a Chinese ship aimed its military radar on Japan's Maritime Self-Defence vessel (Fackler, 2013).

Since September 2012, Chinese incursions in Japan’s waters around the Senkakus spiked, with August 2013 seeing as many as 28 Chinese vessels within Japan’s territorial sea (see table below).

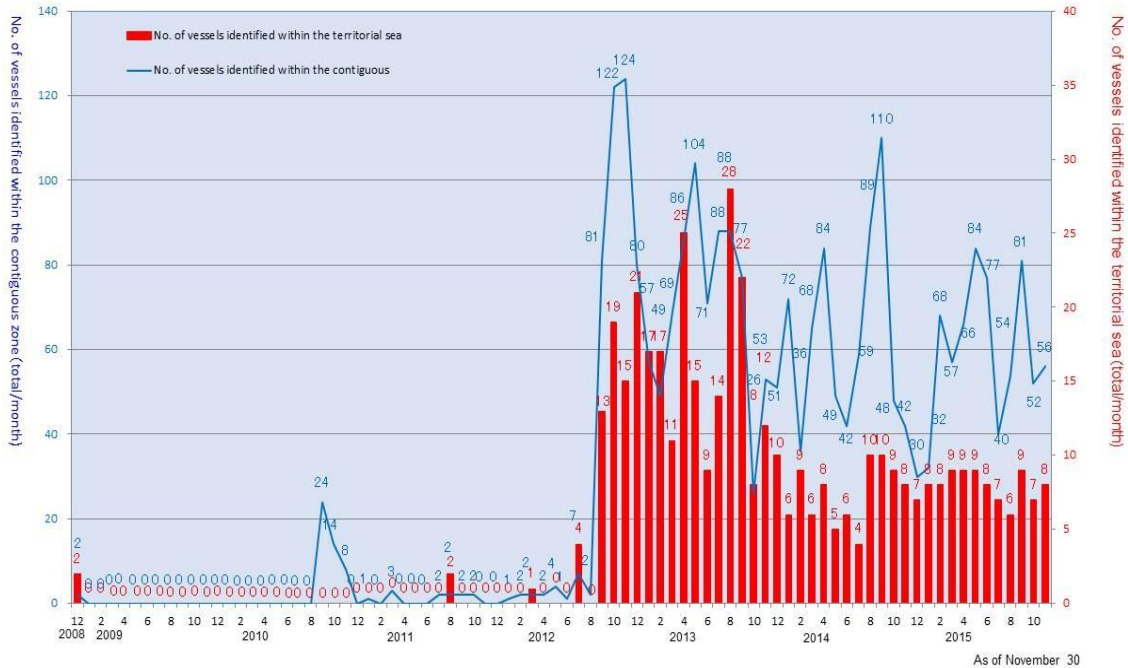


Table 2: number of Chinese vessels identified within Japan’s territorial waters (Tiezzi, 2015b)

Additionally, in November 2013, China established an Air defence identification zone (ADIZ) over the territory including the Senkaku islands. While the ADIZ did not carry any legal weight, the unilateral nature of the action, as well as the fact that it covered the disputed islets, caused an international stir, especially in Japan, with Abe vowing to respond firmly but calmly (Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet, 2013f). As George Mulgan (2013) has pointed out, the ADIZ expanded the “zone of confrontation” between China and Japan from the East China Sea to the skies above the Senkakus and could be used by Beijing to take “defensive emergency measures” against foreign aircraft entering the ADIZ. As Feng (2014) notes, China’s chief goal in establishing the ADIZ was to keep pressure on Japan – because the Chinese ADIZ overlapped with Japan’s (established long before), Beijing was technically within its rights to send jets to encroach on Japanese aircraft flying in that area. And while China did not have the military

capabilities to assume control over the Senkakus by force, the creation of the ADIZ contributed to the simmering, low-intensity conflict with which China was content.

By December 2016, the situation around the Senkakus was heading to a higher degree of urgency due to China's increasingly regular incursions (*Reuters*, 2016c). Indeed, while the absolute number of Chinese vessels showing up near the Senkaku islands relatively decreased, this circumstance might become a prelude for a more dangerous phase of the dispute (Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative, 2016a). Firstly, Beijing repurposed several warships by removing their offensive capabilities and deployed to Japan's territorial waters as patrol vessels. Moreover, despite the sheer number of Chinese ships patrolling the Senkakus dropped in 2014, their size and displacement increased – from an average of 2,200 tons in 2014 to 3,200 in 2015, which would make them more effective than any Japanese coast guard ships for ramming other vessels (de Luce, Johnson, 2016).

Additionally, the tensions in the South China Sea have intensified since 2014. Initially, the conflict started to simmer around the Sino-Vietnamese claims to the Spratly and the Paracel islands. As time went on, tensions increased when significant deposits of oil and gas were discovered under the water. In 2009, China sent a letter addressed to the Secretary General of the UN, to which it attached a map claiming eighty percent of all maritime territory of the South China sea as part of China. In response, Vietnam, the Philippines, Indonesia, and Malaysia all condemned China's expansionism. Furthermore, China announced in January 2013 the right of the Hainan province police forces to board, survey, and assume control of foreign vessels that have illegally entered the Chinese territorial waters in the South China Sea. Given that some of the world's key maritime trade routes pass through the South China Sea, the state which controls them would inevitably exert great influence on global economic and political processes, as well as dictate favourable arrangements to regional states.

Japan is a maritime state highly dependent on sea lines of communication for energy imports, with almost 90 percent of Japan's oil imports and 33 percent of its LNG imports passing through the South China Sea. Thus, it is of vital importance for Japan that the freedom of navigation in the region is maintained (Herberg, 2016). However, the security of these vital lines of communication was endangered by the increasingly frequent incidents involving China and its neighbours, which seemed to confirm the predictions that Beijing was resorting to a more aggressive approach to tackling territorial disputes in its back-yard: backing up its claims to contested territories with military presence and consequently seeking to establish jurisdiction over them as a *fait accompli* (George Mulgan, 2013).

In May 2014, China dispatched an oil rig to the waters belonging to Vietnam's exclusive economic zone, near the disputed Paracel islands, leading to naval clashes between the two countries' ships, with the Vietnamese vessels eventually being outnumbered and repelled (Bower and Poling, 2014). In early 2015, the Philippines accused China of provocative behaviour near the Scarborough Shoal (which Beijing took over from Manila in 2012), whereby Philippine fishing boats were rammed by Chinese coast guard vessels (*Reuters*, 2015a). Beijing's muscular policy pertaining to contested territories even led other South East Asian states, including Malaysia and Indonesia, to express concern over China's behaviour, a shift from their usually neutral rhetoric. Under the Xi presidency, China also ramped up the process of land reclamation and artificial island construction in the South China Sea, especially around the Spratly islands, for sovereignty over which it contends with the Philippines, Vietnam, Taiwan, Malaysia and Brunei. While Xi pledged in 2015 to not pursue the militarisation of the Spratlys (*Reuters*, 2015b), he seemingly reneged on it as the December 2016 satellite images by the Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative think-tank showed (2016b) signs of military capabilities on the Beijing-controlled parts of Spratly islands, including anti-aircraft guns and close-in weapons systems. Earlier that year, China installed similar anti-aircraft systems on the Paracels (NHK, 2016). While Beijing used to describe the reclamation and artificial islands construction as pursuing

civilian aims before that, China's Defence Ministry referred to the recent activities on the islands as fairly and legally installing the "necessary military facilities" (*China Daily*, 2016).

There is, however, another reason for the rising tensions in the South China sea as the states involved in the territorial disputes are engaged in an arms race. According to Denisentsev (2012), the Asia-Pacific states account for about a third of global arms imports, which grew by over twenty percent in 200-2011 compared to 2002-2006. In August 2010, China conducted massive naval and aviation drills in the South China sea, which included anti-ship and anti-aircraft defence tests. New drills followed in November 2010, featuring over a hundred Chinese vessels practicing an amphibious landing. These events point to China not only wishing to control eighty percent of the South China sea, but generally striving for economic and political dominion over South-East Asia. This was a clear departure from China's traditional policy towards contested territories, which was based on the Confucian principle of moderation and Deng Xiaoping's principle of low-profile diplomacy. During Xi Jinping's rule, however, China shifted to a more belligerent approach to territorial disputes, and its views on their resolution became effectively incompatible with those of Beijing's neighbours.

A number of hypotheses have been put forward as to why this radical change occurred under Xi's presidency (Meyer, 2016). The most likely explanation is that Xi needed to divert the population's attention from domestic issues and shore up the Communist Party's support by creating an external conflict in the South China Sea, which the Chinese people consider a matter of national dignity (Dobell, 2015). Similarly, as Japanese military analyst Ogawa Kazuhisa notes (2014), "the driving force for the China of today is not Maoist ideology but nationalistic pride" which makes "maintaining a hardline posture toward Japan and countries around the South China Sea... of pivotal importance for the [China Communist] party and the military".

A second hypothesis suggests that Xi might be trying to ramp up the fight against corruption within the military by going after the generals, and using the South China Sea conflicts as a pretext to reshuffle the military leadership.

Finally, by adopting a more bellicose stance towards the territorial disputes, Beijing is possibly testing the limits of the US resolve to confront China with a view to use this more aggressive approach in the East China Sea.

By shifting to a more assertive policy with regard to contested territories, Leaf (2014) explains, China was reinforced in the view that the US and generally the international community was highly reluctant to confront it, giving it almost free rein in the South China Sea. Despite Beijing flouting maritime law, militarising disputed islets, and even attacking other countries' vessels, Washington's reaction was limited to words of condemnation, with no sanctions being placed or naval presence increased. Moreover, while China's neighbours were trying to push back against its belligerent approach, there remained no steadfast, coherent opposition to Beijing, with the ASEAN even avoiding to call China the aggressor during its oil rig stand-off with Vietnam.

5.3.3. Russia

A new period of Russo-Japanese ties was ushered in during Abe's second premiership and was spearheaded by the Prime Minister himself. For the first time Russia became part of Japan's strategy aimed at responding to the rise of China. The dynamic within this triangle, however, became inverted: while Tokyo balanced with Beijing against the Soviet Union after Richard Nixon's "opening" of China in 1972, Abe came to view Moscow as a potential extra option in Japan's balancing act against China. This period of bilateral relations which started in late 2012 was characterised by Japan's taking a softer than usual approach to Moscow, thus going against the grain of the shifts within the structure of international relations brought about by the Ukrainian crisis and Russia's annexation of Crimea in March 2014. Between 2013 and

2016, Abe met with Russian president Vladimir Putin a total of thirteen times, more than with any other foreign head of state, including Barack Obama. Abe's visit to Moscow in April 2013 became the first official visit of a Japanese Prime Minister to Russia since Koizumi in 2003. Further, Abe became one of the few leaders to attend the Winter Olympics opening ceremony in Sochi in 2014. Russia was also featured in a separate sub-section in Japan's 2013 National Security Strategy (examined in 5.4.5), which calls for advancing cooperation with Russia "in all areas, including security and energy", as well as proactively negotiating on the issue of the Northern Territories and seeking to conclude a peace treaty.

The Northern Territories dispute revolves around the South Kuril islands of Kunashir, Iturup, Shikotan, and Habomai. Japan considers them part of its territory in accordance with the Saint Petersburg Treaty of 1875 signed between Japan and Russia. Since then and until 1945, Russia had never claimed the territories, and when the Soviet Union occupied the islands in the final days of World War II, it breached the 1941 Neutrality Pact with Japan which retained legal force until 1946. Moscow, however, maintains that the four islands became the Soviet Union's spoils of war and the sovereignty over them was passed down to Russia as the successor of the USSR. Further, while Japan yielded the claim to the South Kurils at the 1951 San Francisco conference, the treaty that followed failed to specify to whom Tokyo was supposed to cede the territories, and the Soviet delegation refused to sign the document. These circumstances are used by Japan to this day in its argument that Russia does not hold sovereignty over the islands. In 1956, the two countries signed a Joint Declaration which was acknowledged for all intents and purposes as a substitute for a peace treaty by both sides. Article 9 of the document posited that the islands of Shikotan and Habomai were to be returned to Japan as a gesture of good will, but not until a full-fledged peace treaty had been concluded. However Tokyo insists that, since the islands do not legally belong to Russia in the first place, they should all be transferred to Japan irrespective of the peace treaty.

Abe's line of policy experienced a considerable setback, however, when the Ukrainian crisis broke out in early 2014, thwarting the nascent détente between Moscow and Tokyo. Japan was faced with a dilemma as "not supporting the G7's sanctions against Russia would go against Japan's traditional, low-risk, reactive foreign policy, and its asserted role as a responsible member of the international community, [y]et supporting the sanctions might easily cancel out any recent improvement in Russo-Japanese relations and indefinitely stall any resolution of the territorial dispute" (Filippov, 2014b). Ultimately, Japan did impose a series of anti-Russian sanctions from March through May 2014, and while these measures had little practical effect, the political blowback effectively put the bilateral relations on ice for over two years.

Western sanctions sped up Moscow's "pivot to Asia", which had been envisioned by some Russian policy-makers even before the advent of the Ukrainian crisis. In May 2014, Putin made an official visit to China during which he signed a record number of bilateral agreements with Xi Jinping. However, while Putin's visit was held up by Russia as proof that Moscow did not need the West and can successfully rebalance to China, there was precious little progress to present for its eastward pivot. Most of the agreements signed had previously been in discussion for several years before Russia was hit by sanctions and initiated its pivot. So despite the political significance of Moscow's overtures to Beijing – defying the West and securing a new strong partnership – was hardly deniable, their economic advantages were in doubt from the very beginning and even more so after the steep decline in oil prices (Filippov and Marino, 2016).

5.4. Abe's response

5.4.1. China

In January 2013, in an attempt to repair bilateral relations, Abe dispatched Yamaguchi Natsuo, leader of Kōmeitō, to Beijing in order to probe the possibility of normalising relations. At the time, both sides discussed the idea of shelving the dispute altogether, leaving it to be

resolved by future generations, which, as Ishida (2013) has suggested, remained the only realistic way to stabilise Sino-Japanese relations. These talks, however, led nowhere, and high-level bilateral contacts essentially came to a halt from the September 2012 until September 2014, when MOFA and its Chinese counterpart held a meeting of the High Level Consultation on Maritime Affairs (Koga, 2016, 12). The freezing of dialogue represented a departure from previous years, when, despite bilateral tensions, contacts were maintained off-and-on. As Hemmings and Kuroki (2013, 61) emphasise, the Senkaku dispute was further complicated by the fact that, unlike Koizumi's visits to Yasukuni or differing World War II accounts in history textbooks, the object of contention in this case were a chain of islands, "visible, accessible, and perfectly situated between the two nations".

In January 2014, during the Davos World Economic Forum, Abe's remarks to the press drew international attention, when he compared the current state of Japan-China ties to that of UK-Japan relations before World War I, when strong economic cooperation failed to overcome strategic rivalry (Perlez, 2014). Abe's comments were met with condemnation in Beijing, with the Chinese Foreign Ministry accusing the prime minister of trying to escape Japan's history of aggression.

Meanwhile on the policy level, Chinese intrusions in Japan's waters were not left without a response. In the long term, Tokyo adopted in 2013 a defence plan entailing an almost ¥25 trillion (around \$21 billion) expenditure from 2014 to 2019. Under the plan, Japan was supposed to conduct a comprehensive upgrade of its military, from unmanned drones, submarines, and destroyers to early-warning aircraft and stealth fighter jets (Eshel, 2013). In December 2016, the government unveiled a new policy on strengthening the coast security system (Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet, 2016). In more immediate terms, Tokyo enabled in January 2016 the Maritime Self-Defence Forces (MSDF) to engage in maritime policing operations in the case of a foreign warship entering Japan's territorial waters (Yoshida, 2016). Additionally, the Abe

government installed new defence facilities in the area surrounding the Senkakus, including a radar station on the Yonaguni island (Kubo and Kelly, 2016). Tokyo also boosted its security presence in the area by adopting a bigger coast guard budget for 2017, with a view to deploy five more large patrol vessels to the East China Sea and increase the maritime law enforcement agency's personnel by over 200. Transport minister Ishii Keiichi, meanwhile, pointed out

Finally, Xi and Abe held a half-hour meeting during the APEC summit in Beijing in November 2014. Abe told the press afterwards that they had discussed implementing a maritime communication mechanism so as to prevent armed conflict around the Senkakus, but the territorial dispute itself was reportedly not on the table (Kaiman, 2014). Furthermore, Kishida emphasised after the Xi-Abe meeting that Japan's stance on the islands was unchanged and denied the existence of any sovereignty issue, which drew criticism from Chinese diplomats (Floracruz, 2014).

2015 saw some thawing of bilateral ties, with the two countries launching the China-Japan high-level political dialogue in Beijing. The meeting was co-chaired by Yachi Shotarō, Abe's foreign policy advisor and head of the National Security Council, who in 2013 secretly visited Beijing in an effort to improve Sino-Japanese relations. While Yachi was one of the architects of Japan's values-oriented diplomacy, as well as the Arc of Freedom and Prosperity (Hemmings and Kuroki, 2013, 65), he also stated (Yachi, 2013) that Japan was neither capable nor interested in encircling China, and expressed hopes of a bilateral rapprochement.

Despite the Abe administration's more robust regional security policy and domestic remilitarisation leading some to suggest that Japan was trying to contain China (Carpenter, 2013; Kistanov, 2015), such term was generally put into doubt, in particular by a former high-ranking MOFA official, who on condition of anonymity contended in a private interview that, despite conservative Japanese outlets and Chinese state media alike claiming that Japan was pursuing containment of Beijing, Abe's policies of upgrading national security and insisting that China

respected international law did not amount to containment. However proactive Abe's approach towards Beijing was, the official argued, it merely represented a response to China's contentious foreign policy as from a foreign policy standpoint, maintaining friendly relations with China and sitting tight was not enough in the current international environment. It was evident, however, that Abe jettisoned Hatoyama's pro-China engagement approach and further accentuated Kan and Noda's balancing policy, reinforcing it through internal balancing – upgrading Japan's military capabilities, adopting bigger defence budgets, and passing security-related legislation in the Diet. Furthermore, while he remained certain that a thawing of Sino-Japanese ties was to come sooner or late, he stressed that engagement with China was an unpopular political stance as of 2016. While many younger LDP members had more liberal, pro-engagement views on China, the strong popularity of Abe's policies precluded them from promoting a softer approach towards Beijing so as not to hurt their career prospects.

All in all, however, Japan's general strategy towards Beijing under Abe did not especially deviate from that of previous governments. Koga (2016, 13-14) sees more continuity than change in Abe's approach towards China, reminding us that most of his policies were originally suggested before his premiership, particularly under the DPJ administration. Equally, Liff (2015, 80) has argued that Japan's response to China, reflected in its shifting security policy do not in any way constitute a radical departure from its past strategy, but, rather, reflect a considerable – but evolutionary – rationalisation of policy that was first initiated by previous administrations, both from the LDP and the DPJ.

Thus, given the increasingly inflammatory actions undertaken by China in the East China sea, the Abe government's response was in line with the general trend of the transformation of Japan's China strategy.

5.4.2. South-East Asia

Diversifying Japan's foreign and security policy beyond the historical ties with the US was a major part of Abe's first administration. As Hemmings and Kuroki (2013, 60) remind us, enhancing relations with Australia and India became an integral element of Japanese foreign policy under Abe in 2006-2007. Already then Abe hoped to use the rhetoric about universal values in order to exclude China from the regional community and instead promote closer diplomatic ties with other Asia Pacific states. As Hughes and Krauss (2007, 170) suggested, Abe's desire to construct an anti-China alliance of sorts was dictated by his worldview – according to which, China was an authoritarian state that should be confronted, not appeased – inherited from his grandfather, Prime Minister Kishi, a “Cold War warrior” par excellence. That view is corroborated by Abe's foreign policy advisor Yachi Shotarō who in 2013 pointed out that Abe's dedication to fostering stronger ties in South East Asia was based on Kishi's own strategy in the region (Yachi, 2013). At the same time, Streltsov (2014, 38) points out that Abe's interest in South-East Asia stemmed from a more practical view that the Sino-Japanese conflict around the Senkakus was intertwined with the tensions in the South China sea, which in turn necessitated closer security coordination with the regional states sharing Japan's concerns for China's growing military ambitions.

As was discussed in the case study on the DPJ's grand strategy, Hatoyama also gave priority to South East Asia in his diplomacy undergirded by the concept of East Asian Community. However, Hatoyama placed the emphasis on the notions of fraternity (*yuai*) and reconciliation between Japan and regional states, with East Asian countries embracing closer ties based on the principle of regional cooperation in the fields of trade, investment, and education (Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet, 2009). In other words, his vision was underpinned by the liberal belief in improving relations with other states based on strengthening economic interdependence and cooperation through multilateral institutions. In contrast, Abe's policy with

South East Asian states was primarily based on closer defence cooperation, particularly in the areas of arms exports and intelligence sharing aimed at upholding the rule of law in the South China Sea and enhancing maritime security the Asia Pacific. As Pollman (2015) notes, the reasons for the Abe administration demonstrating a heightened interest towards the region were manifold.

Firstly, rising tensions in the South China Sea portended further risks to the security of sea lines of communication on which Japan relies for trade. Secondly, China successfully using force to resolve its territorial disputes with South East Asian governments would set a dangerous precedent for Tokyo's own dispute with Beijing. Finally, by engaging more proactively in the region's security, Japan attempted to signal to the US that it was ready to take on a bigger military role and thus, give an impetus for greater US involvement in the Asia Pacific.

The latter has been a crucial component of Abe's diplomacy since 2013. As he himself wrote (Abe, 2014b):

“[T]he region's political leaders must ensure respect for international law. Nowhere is that need clearer than in the area of international maritime law... The sources of instability [of Asia Pacific] include not only the threat of weapons of mass destruction, but also – and more immediately – efforts to alter the territorial status quo through force or coercion.”

While Abe did not name any state in particular, thinly veiled concerns regarding China's inflammatory policies in the East and South China Seas could easily be discerned. Like his values-oriented diplomacy which treated China as a “political heretic” (Zhang, 2013), a state not sharing universal values represented by Japan, Abe's rhetoric with regard to maritime security also singled China out as a country that wishes to transform the existing order of things and flouts international law.

Seeking to forge new partnerships and strengthen existing ones, Abe became the first prime minister to visit all ten ASEAN states in 2013. The December 2013 summit to commemorate the 40th anniversary of ASEAN-Japan friendship became a significant step in Japan's developing ASEAN policy. A joint statement (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2013b) was signed after the summit, which emphasised the role of ASEAN in the Asia-Pacific security, as well as the need to follow international law, particularly in the maritime navigation area.

During his bilateral and multilateral visits, Abe promoted closer security cooperation and attempted to earn support in Japan's territorial row with China, essentially touting Tokyo as a counterbalance to Beijing (Panda, 2014b). These attempts were particularly welcomed by the Philippines and Vietnam, which have strategic partnership agreements with Japan and are expected to strike such an agreement between each other. Both countries are jockeying with China over disputed islands in the South China Sea, making for natural allies with Japan (though the Philippines has embarked on a China engagement trajectory under President Duterte) especially due to Japan itself embroiled in a simmering conflict with Beijing over the Senkakus.

In February 2015, the government also updated the charter of (ODA), adding to the original passage about ODA being used to contribute to the "peace and development of the international community" a phrase that ODA would also "help ensure Japan's own security and prosperity". That enabled Japan to extend non-lethal military aid for civilian purposes to South East Asian countries, and to that end, the Abe administration established the Humanitarian and Disaster Relief and started medical cooperation with Vietnam, the Philippines, and Indonesia. Furthermore, Japan supplied Hanoi, Manila, and Jakarta with patrol vessels under the broadened scope of ODA, as well as provided training for these countries' coast guard personnel. The discrepancy between Tokyo's pacifist constitution and the relative "securitisation" of its ODA

was embodied by the fact that Vietnam had to separate its coast guard from its military since Japan could not provide ODA for military aims.

While Manila became Tokyo's strategic partner in 2011, under the Noda administration, bilateral security cooperation was accelerated and intensified under the next government, with Abe becoming in July 2013 the first Japanese leader to visit the Philippines since 2006, when he himself paid a visit. He proceeded to meet with then president Benigno Aquino several more times and identified the Philippines as Japan's key partner, while Aquino expressed support to Japan taking on a bigger role in the region's security affairs and welcoming the July 2014 constitutional reinterpretation (Przystup and Tatsumi, 2015).

In January 2015, the two countries signed a defence agreement which established regular defence talks on the vice-ministerial level. In May 2015, Manila and Tokyo held their first joint naval drills near Scarborough Shoal, underscoring Japan's wariness of China controlling the Sea lanes of communication, on the safety of which Japan's trade depends (Kelly and Mogato, 2015). In June 2015, Aquino's trip to Tokyo resulted in the signing of the Joint Declaration on the Strengthened Strategic Partnership, and the two sides exploring the possibility of Japan transferring military equipment and technology to the Philippines, as well as the status of visiting Japanese forces (Takenaka and Mogato, 2015).

Vietnam's role as Japan's security partner in the region was also maximised under the Abe government. While Hanoi is considerably more dependent on trade with China than Manila and thus has to manoeuvre between China and Japan more carefully than the Philippines, its defence cooperation with Tokyo has a longer history – the two countries became strategic partners in 2006, during Abe's first term. In 2015, Japan transferred six vessels to Vietnam under the ODA programme and agreed to provide two more in 2016 (*Reuters*, 2016a).

According to Jimbō (2014, 53-54), however, maintaining the status quo with regards to maritime security became more precarious during Abe's tenure than before due to three factors.

Firstly, China's rapid development of its military capabilities, including patrols ships, surveillance vessels and aircraft, and submarines, portends both naval and air supremacy for China over the Southeast Asian states. Secondly, Beijing's muscular approach to tackling territorial disputes and establishing dominance over the South China Sea largely defies the attempts by regional states to enforce a rules-based order and is unlikely to cease given China's previously stated military superiority over its contenders. Finally, while the US pivot to Asia potentially might have given China an incentive to behave in a more cooperative manner, many Southeast Asian states, especially Vietnam, share very close economic ties to China and thus eschew antagonising Beijing by choosing between China on the one hand, and Japan or the US on the other.

Additionally, Wallace (2018) has argued that, while Abe possibly wanted to demonstrate his resolve to deter China in the South China Sea, it would be unlikely for Japan to exert direct influence on the security environment in South-East Asia as the SDF was already operating at its maximum capacity, while Japan's defence budget still sat below one percent of GDP despite its incremental increase under the Abe administration.

5.4.3. The US-Japan alliance

Abe's return to power invigorated the US-Japan security ties, while the US-Japan alliance, in turn, became a catalyst for Abe's security reforms. In a joint statement after the "2+2" meeting between Japanese and US Foreign and Defence Ministers in October 2013, the two countries "reaffirmed the indispensable role [the US and Japan] play in the maintenance of international peace and security" and resolved to be "full partners in a more balanced and effective Alliance in which [the Us and Japan] can jointly and ably rise to meet the regional and global challenges of the 21st century" (Ministry of Defense, 2013a). During the meeting, then Secretary of State John Kerry and Defence Secretary Chuck Hagel both emphasised Washington's approval of Japan's

intention to review its approach to the collective self-defence and relax the weapons exports principles.

In the spring of 2015, Abe embarked on a week-long visit to the US, becoming the first Japanese prime minister to speak before the US Congress. The visit was concluded by the two countries signing a Joint Vision Statement (The White House, 2015), which included the seven “shared principles” which were to guide future US-Japan cooperation: respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity; commitment to resolving disputes peacefully; support for democracy, human rights, and the rule of law; promoting free trade and open markets; promoting internationally recognised forms of behaviour in shared domains, including freedom of navigation; advancing global and regional institutions; and support for tri- and multilateral cooperation among like-minded partners (The White House, 2015). These seven principles largely show continuity with the priorities for the US pivot to Asia set out in Hillary Clinton’s *Foreign Policy* essay in 2011. What is different is the shift from promoting ties with emerging powers to expanding cooperation specifically with like-minded partners, as well as the 2015 document’s respect for territorial integrity and commitment to resolving disputes peacefully, which were meant to show support for Japan’s sovereignty over the Senkaku islands.

During the same visit, Japan and the US revised the Guidelines for Defence Cooperation which had existed in their previous form since 1997. Since the previous iteration of the document was signed, the regional environment in the Asia-Pacific underwent significant changes which necessitated a recalibration of the bilateral alliance. It also had to be adapted to the evolution of Japan’s national security posture, as well as reflect America’s new foreign policy priorities under the pivot to Asia.

The revised document (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2015) stipulated that, while Japan is primarily responsible for its own national security, the necessary provisions are in place for the United States to respond to a third party attack on Japan. An important change from the

previous iteration of the Guidelines was that this document did not specify the geographical scope of the incidents which could affect Japan's peace and security and to which the two countries could respond, effectively globalising the alliance. In order to strengthen bilateral cooperation within the alliance framework, the Guidelines stipulated a creation of a coordination mechanism between the US and Japan, which would allow the two states to seamlessly and effectively respond to common security threats. The document also highlighted the importance of enhancing operational coordination for flexible and responsible command and control. To that end, the two states would exchange personnel for the purpose of information sharing and supporting international activities.

Arguably the most notable part of the new Guidelines, however, was the sub-section entitled "Actions in response to an armed attack against a country other than Japan", which states that Japan will closely cooperate with the US to respond to and further deter (involving the use of force) armed attacks against the US or a third country even if Japan itself is not under attack. While the range of cooperative operations in such an event was limited to logistics support, asset protection, or search and rescue, this part of the document was key to the development of the US-Japan alliance as it officially stated the two countries' readiness to introduce collective self-defence into the alliance framework. For the first time in its post-war history, Japan had the legal right to use the SDF in overseas operations for the purposes other than specifically defending Japanese territories (Streltsov, 2016).

In essence, the new Guidelines reflected and formalised the changes in the regional balance of power, Japan's evolving security posture, as well as new challenges and threats to both the US and Japan (Manggala, 2016). They signalled Japan's readiness to take on a larger responsibility for ensuring its national security, contribute to America's security-related activities around the world, and take part in collective self-defence.

Another way in which the US-Japan security cooperation was enhanced under Abe was after the 2014 constitutional reinterpretation giving Japan the right to collective self-defence and the 2015 security laws (examined in detail in 5.4.5). Streltsov points out (2015, 58) that the new constitutional interpretation laid clearer legal foundation to joint US-Japan operations around Japan's territorial waters. As such, the SDF received a larger mandate in inspecting or arresting vessels which transport arms to states at war with the US, or mid-air refuelling of US jets engaged in military operations in East Asia. Additionally, the 2014 reinterpretation and the 2015 security legislation expanded the legal basis for Tokyo's technological, financial, and logistic contribution to the development of US ballistic missile defence.

Another action that the Abe administration undertook to maximise its burden-sharing within the US-Japan alliance was gradually hiking Japan's defence budget. Japan's military spending saw very little change since late 1980s and even decreased every year throughout the 1990s and 2000s due to economic stagnation, with a slight increase in 2002 (Rich, 2016a). However, Abe's return to premiership led to a steady annual rise of the defence budget. The first defence budget of the Abe administration was only increased by 40 million yen and was more of a symbolic gesture representing an end to the trend of decreasing military spending. However, despite still being well within the one percent GDP range, Abe's budget increases culminated in 2017 in the record-high 5.1 trillion yen, or US\$44.6 billion (*Nikkei Asian Review*, 2016). Budget hikes allowed the SDF to expand its personnel, as well as the quality and quantity of armaments. Between 2012 and 2013, the SDF increased its ranks by 12 thousand people, from 147 thousand to 159 thousand (*The Japan Times*, 2013).

Two things should be noted, however, concerning Japan's growing defence expenditure. Firstly, it is almost the same as the military budget of Germany, both in terms of the GDP share and actual spending, and considerably lower than that of the UK (SIPRI Military Expenditure Database, 2016), a smaller country in a less perilous security environment. Secondly, as Fahey

(2016) points out, Japan's military spending pales in comparison with that of the neighbouring China and Russia, with China's expenditure exceeding Japan's by three or four times and only inferior to that of the US, and Russia's budget being twice as large. Moreover, Japan's military spending hovers around one percent of its GDP, while it accounts for over five percent of GDP in Russia, two percent in China, and three to four in America.

Finally, Japan continued the SDF's military modernisation within the alliance framework, on land, in the air, and at sea with priority given to maximum compatibility of the equipment and weapons with those used by the US. Among the most important points of the SDF's remilitarisation programme were the 42 fifth generation F-35A jets, 15 V-22 Osprey convertible aircraft, 3 RQ-4 Global Hawk surveillance drones, all of which Japan bought from the US. The Izumo and Kaga helicopter carriers, the largest ships Japan had built after World War II, were commissioned in 2015 and 2017, respectively.

5.4.4. Russia

As Russia entrenched itself deeper *vis-à-vis* the West, the plummeting oil prices taking further toll on its economy, and Moscow falling into Beijing's embrace of unequal partnership, Japan has come to possess more leverage in its negotiations with Russia. While the latter was tethered by sanctions and considerable international isolation, Japan was only country in the G7 to reach out to Russia on the highest level and keep signalling the readiness to mend the bilateral relations. As a result, in May 2016, Abe held a three-hour long meeting with Putin in Sochi, the results of which gave grounds for some optimism that an opening for a bilateral rapprochement had finally materialised. In addition to a 8-point plan of economic cooperation proposed by Abe, the two sides released a statement agreeing to streamline the peace treaty and territorial talks based on an undisclosed new concept. Bilateral ties picked further momentum in 2016 as Abe and Putin met in early September in Vladivostok on the side-lines of the Russia-organised Eastern Economic Forum (Filippov, 2016b). Ahead of his visit, Abe emphasized the importance

he attaches to Russo-Japanese ties by creating a separate position of a minister for economic cooperation with Russia in his cabinet, with Minister of Economy, Trade, and Industry Seko Hiroshige being given the new appointment. He also appointed a special advisor on Russia in Hasegawa Eichi, also from METI and known for pragmatism with regards to Russia.

Abe and Putin also finalized the Russian president's visit to Japan which had been in the works for over two years but kept being postponed due to the cool international climate around Russia. Putin would visit Abe's hometown of Nagato in Yamaguchi prefecture – a choice likely dictated by practicality of making Putin's trip look like a low-profile, informal visit as opposed to officially welcoming him in Tokyo.

As Adachi Yuko, professor of Russian studies at the University of Sophia, told the author in a 2018 interview, the intensifying political and economic contacts between Japan and Russia might signal a beginning of productive talk with regard to the Northern Territories. However, she emphasized that a resolution of the dispute remained a hope rather than a realistic expectation, adding that hardly any real way forward would be achieved in the near future.

Indeed, while Abe seems convinced that by demonstrating to Russia that China is not the only useful partner in the region, he would push Moscow to compromise on its rigid stance on the Northern Territories, there are some doubts as to the extent to which Russia can meaningfully step up energy cooperation with Japan, and, more importantly, whether tightened economic ties would translate into Moscow's acquiescence with regard to the disputed islands. Making good on the plans to increase hydrocarbons exports to Japan will be hindered by two obstacles - the scarcity of infrastructure and the challenges of developing new oil and gas fields in the Far East (Filippov, 2016c). Thus, the more LNG Russia exports to Beijing, the less amount it would be able to provide for Tokyo, and in order to ramp up LNG production, Russia needs to construct another facility. However, Russia's economic malaise brought about by the tumbling of

hydrocarbons prices has complicated the matter of developing the gas and oil fields currently in operation, let alone developing new ones.

There is another, arguably bigger reason why Tokyo might want to rethink its extremely accommodating approach to Moscow. As explained before, Abe's rhetoric made much of a "values-based" diplomacy which asserts the importance of Japan to assist and improve ties with like-minded states sharing such values as democracy, free-market economy, and rule of law. The more pronounced balancing of China that Japan initiated under his premiership comes at least partially from the notion that China is a something of a renegade state which renounces these universal values and ignores international law. With that in mind, one would find it problematic to rationalise Japan's détente with Russia given that the latter should be ostracised by Tokyo based on the core principles of "values-based" diplomacy (Filippov, 2016d). By shelving ideological differences in exchange for sheer pragmatism in its relationship with Russia, Japan goes against its well-established identity as a low-risk, responsible member of the international community. Further, it effectively normalises Russia's annexation of Crimea which represents precisely the approach – changing territorial status quo by military force – that Japan rails against when dealing with China. Such line of thinking was presented by *Asahi Shimbun* (2016) shortly before Abe's trip to Vladivostok. Adachi argues (2018) that the damage to Japan's international standing over Abe's overtures towards Putin has already been done. However Abe would likely ignore the potential fallout as he appears bent on hastening the resolution of the dispute at almost any cost.

As professor James Brown of Temple University Japan points out (2018), Abe is forced to walk a tightrope while calibrating Japan's policy towards Russia. On the one hand, there is little domestic advocacy for a détente with Moscow as the Foreign Ministry espouses a hard line on the issue, demanding that Russia transfer all four disputed islands back to Japan. Moreover, Abe risks losing the right-wing nationalist segment of his voters by publicly accepting the 1956

agreement and the “2+2” formula of dispute resolution. On the other hand, Russo-Japanese relations do not constitute a significant issue for the majority of Japanese citizens, and Japan does not spend enough money on improving the ties for the voters to take up interest in the matter.

Furthermore, any scenario that involves Japan receiving any number of the disputed islands creates a clear security issue of whether Japan’s newly acquired territories would be subject to the US-Japan Security Treaty. And while Tokyo was quick to offer to Moscow guarantees of the Northern Territories being exempt from the treaty, such unwritten guarantees hardly satisfied the Kremlin which entire rationale for its aggressive foreign policy hinges on the narrative of military encirclement of Russia.

An argument has even been presented (Streltsov, 2016) that it could be more beneficial for both Russia and Japan to leave the dispute lingering rather than put an end to it. Ceding even a single contested island to Tokyo would take a significant toll on Putin’s domestic support as for most Russians, the South Kurils are intrinsically connected to the history of World War II, a sacrosanct event in Russia. Meanwhile, a definitive resolution of the dispute might not be particularly advantageous for Japan either, since the Abe administration can exploit the persisting impasse for political purposes and maintain public support by laying claim to all the islands.

Overall, the results of Japan’s cordial approach towards Russia were largely negative. Despite signing a multitude of economic agreements, the two sides never came to see eye to eye regarding the contested islands, with the Kremlin remaining in a comfortable position to dictate the terms of any potential arrangement. The possibility of meaningfully enhancing energy cooperation was murky as well, with Russia lacking the necessary infrastructure to considerably ramp up LNG or oil exports to Japan. Finally, while Russia’s pivot to China of sorts stagnated and Sino-Russia ties were beset by economic issues in both countries, there were virtually no

signs that Moscow might be even mulling a rebalancing from Beijing to Tokyo. Thus, despite wishing to make the territorial dispute resolution his lasting legacy, Abe failed during his four years as prime minister to either gain any concession from Russia on the issue or persuaded it to pivot from China to Japan.

Abe's outreach to Russia did not come without a cost for the Prime Minister himself, either. His willingness to negotiate the status of the disputed territories based on the 1956 Declaration, despite receiving support from the cabinet, came under criticism from Foreign Ministry officials, who espouse a much harder line on the issue. The friction between the government and MOFA was so considerable that the latter allegedly tried to sabotage Putin's trip to Japan in December 2016. Despite the Japanese citizens' general apathy towards the Northern Territories dispute, they expressed negative reaction to Putin's visit (Akopov, 2016). Finally, both members of the Japanese media and academia have pointed out the potential hit to Japan's international image if Abe were to continue his cordial approach towards Russia. These pushback exemplifies the risks of a prime minister who abandons mainstream, traditional foreign policy positions to pursue his own vision. As Hatoyama was brought down by his idiosyncratic stances on the US-Japan alliance and China, so did Abe pay the price for maintaining his highly pragmatic, conciliatory strategy *vis-à-vis* Russia, despite the popularity of and support for most of his other foreign policy measures. While the MOFA backlash against Abe's Russia policy was hardly crippling and his grip on the foreign-policy making process remains strong, the fact the Foreign Ministry deliberately attempted to subvert the Prime Minister's actions illustrates just how important succession and continuity are to the smoothness and efficacy of decision-making process in Japan.

5.4.5. Domestic national security reforms

As argued in 5.2.3, Abe's return to the premiership in 2012 demonstrated that he had learned the lessons of his failed first term, namely that it a swift implementation of sweeping reforms is

impossible without a strategic, consistent approach to policy-making, and that economic concerns dictate the Japanese voters' preferences and take priority over foreign and security areas.

Indeed, throughout 2013, economic issues took precedence over national security reforms for the Abe administration, with Abe himself adopting a more pragmatic approach to policies, which arguably reflected a strategic, result-oriented calculation. However, starting from late 2013, the Abe government embarked on a series of major national security reforms that had far-reaching consequence for Japan's security posture.

Abe also presided over the revision of the National Defence Program Guidelines in December 2013. While their previous iteration adopted under the Kan administration in 2010 already presented a shift from the basic defence capabilities of the Yoshida doctrine to the dynamic defence force better suited to Japan's new security environment, the Abe government took further steps to modernise Japan's defence posture. The 2013 edition of the Guidelines reflected a qualitative change from the post-war reactive strategy to a more proactive approach. The document gives priority to enhancing the SDF's mobility and flexibility in addressing a wide range of threats, both traditional (on land and sea) and non-traditional ones (in space and cyberspace). To that end, Japan would build a "Dynamic Joint Defence Force", emphasising the development of advanced technology and information and achieving "readiness, mobility, flexibility, sustainability, robustness and connectivity in terms of both tangible and intangible resources" (Ministry of Defense, 2014).

Additionally, the NDPG established the formation of a marine corps within the SDF that would be located in Sasebo town in the Nagasaki prefecture, a proposal supported by the LDP during the document's development. This move was important from the perspective of the US-Japan alliance as both countries were looking for a substitute to the nine thousand US marines

The Guidelines also highlighted the issue of "grey-zone" incidents over territory, sovereignty, and maritime economic interests, another point first raised by the Kan government

in 2010. While the previous iteration of the Guidelines already prioritised cooperation with the Republic of Korea, Australia, India, and the ASEAN states, the 2013 document elevated “stabilisation in the Asia-Pacific and improving the conditions of global security” to the position of the SDF’s secondary function. This reflected Japan’s search for closer security ties with Asia-Pacific countries as a new tool for shaping the regional security environment, in addition to the traditional US-Japan alliance.

Japan’s first national security strategy guiding the security policy over a decade was also adopted in December 2013. Before that, the only document regulating Japan’s national security stance was the 1957 “Basic national defence policy”, which contained only the most general principles and was not suitable for the post-Cold war strategic environment. Meanwhile, the 2013 strategy referred to itself as “the first comprehensive and strategic policy document to be compiled by the Government of Japan”. A major significance of the 2013 strategy lay in its rejection of a narrow, military definition of security and adoption of a more comprehensive view stipulating that Japan’s national security should be ensured in the diplomatic, economic, and technological areas as well.

The strategy affirms Japan’s intention to both cooperate with other countries with shared values such as human rights, democracy, and rule of law, and enhance its own foundations to promote these policies. The document identifies Japan’s national interests as maintaining sovereignty and independence; defending its territorial integrity; ensure the safety of its citizens; ensuring its survival while maintaining its peace and security based on freedom and democracy; achieving the prosperity of itself and its nationals; and protecting international order based on universal values.

Of interest is the sub-section entitled “Strengthening Diplomacy for Creating a Stable International Environment”. It asserts that Japan “must have the power to take the lead in setting the international agenda and to proactively advance its national interests, without being confined

to a reactionary position to events and incidents after they have already occurred”. It positions Japan as a “proactive contributor to peace” based on the principle of international cooperation and calls for strengthening the diplomacy at the UN by actively participating in PKOs and collective security measures. Thus, the document both promotes Japan’s more proactive, robust approach to global affairs and highlights the traditional UN-centric principle of Japanese diplomacy.

Like in the 2010 and 2013 National Defence Program Guidelines, China is featured as an issue of concern. The document posits that, while “these is an expectation for China to share and comply with international norms, and play a more active role for regional and global issues”, it has been “rapidly advancing its military capabilities in a wide range of areas through its increased military budget without sufficient transparency”, and has “also made attempts to change the *status quo* by coercion in the maritime and aerial domains including the East China Sea and the South China Sea”. To address that issue, the strategy calls for constructing and enhancing a “mutually beneficial relationship based on common strategic interests” (harkening back to the first Abe administration, which coined the phrase), encouraging China to play a responsible and constructive role, as well as encouraging more responsible behaviour from China and urging it to exercise self-restraint. With regards to the US-Japan alliance, the documents promotes further strengthening security ties and cooperation in a wide range of areas. A special sub-section is devoted to improving relations with countries that share common values and strategic interests with Japan: South Korea, Australia, ASEAN states, and India.

Finally, the strategy features a UN-centric streak based on proactive pacifism. It emphasises active contribution to UN efforts including PKOs, participating in international rule-making, and leading efforts towards nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

In April 2014, the Abe government revised the weapons exports principles. The first changes to the rules were implemented by the Noda administration in 2011 and allowed Japan to

take part in joint development of military technology and equipment. Under Abe, the law was further relaxed, and while weapons exports to communist regimes and UN-sanctioned states were still banned, they were allowed under the conditions that they contribute to international security and Japan's national interests. The updated version of the ban, which was renamed to the Three Principles on Defence Equipment Transfer, prohibited the transfer of defence equipment when said transfer violated obligations under treaties and international agreements that Japan had concluded; break obligations under UN Security Council resolutions; and if the recipient of the equipment was involved in a conflict (*Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan*, 2014).

Revising the weapons exports ban was crucial for maximising Japan's contribution to UN PKOs (Streltsov, 2015, 61-62). While Japan could export weapons on a bilateral basis, it had been prohibited from providing equipment and technology to international organisations such as the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. However, the Abe government had managed to circumvent the restrictions when it provided ammunition for the South Korean peacekeepers in South Sudan through UN channels before the revision of the original three principles.

The next landmark reform came in July 2014 in the form of a constitutional reinterpretation granting Japan the right to collective self-defence. Japan's official position on the issue between 1954 and 2014 was that, while it had the legal right to collective self-defence as a sovereign nation under the UN Charter, the exercise of that right was prohibited by Article 9 of the constitution as exceeding the necessary use of force in self-defence, and instead only individual self-defence was allowed. As such, Japan could not use the SDF to assist the US or another country outside of Japan's own territory.

The process of passing the legislation, however, did not come easy for Abe and he had to fight on multiple fronts in order to push the reinterpretation. The biggest challenge was presented

by the Kōmeitō party, a long-time LDP coalition partner. As the party shares close connections to the Nichiren Buddhist organisation Sōka Gakkai and is funded by it, Kōmeitō espouses pacifism and traditionally served as a brake of sorts on Abe's remilitarisation policies (Stockwin, 2007, 228). Naturally Kōmeitō initially reacted to the constitutional reinterpretation with opposition. Even though growing tensions with China led the party to admit the need of Japan's security upgrade, Kōmeitō argued that a constitutional reinterpretation was not necessary for broadening the SDF's range of activities, and that the SDF's mandate could be extended in some other way. Kōmeitō and the LDP also had differing approach to how the reinterpretation should be addressed: while the former wished to treat "grey-zone incidents" (security threats to Japan short of a full-scale military conflict) separately, the latter insisted on tackling them together with the SDF's scope in collective self-defence (Richards, 2014).

Abe also faced hurdles in passing the reinterpretation from other Liberal Democrats, a move which Hirose (2014) called a surprising display of disunity. Reservations were voiced that Abe was being authoritarian in pushing constitutional changes while disregarding the opinions of his colleagues. In February 2014, the LDP faction in the Diet explicitly questioned if Abe intended to seek their advice while working on the reinterpretation. Eventually, Abe had to cave in under pressure from both his own party members and Kōmeitō, highlighting the remit of his executive power in policy-making. Following criticism from other LDP politicians, he ordered to establish a forum for deliberating the details of the reinterpretation within the LDP so as to reach consensus before discussing the issue with Kōmeitō. The coalition partner eventually came to support Abe's reform as well through reaching a compromise and Abe demonstrating enough flexibility to both gain Kōmeitō's support and simultaneously change the nature of the reinterpretation as little as possible. To do that, he agreed to revise the conditions under which the SDF would be able to offer logistical support to other countries. Abe also acquiesced on addressing the "grey-zone incidents" as a separate issue.

With Kōmeitō on board, on 1 July 2014, the Abe cabinet reinterpreted the constitution to enable Japan to exercise the right to collective self-defence, allowing Tokyo to come to the aid of the countries with which it shares a “closer relationship”, and enabling the SDF to repel naval attacks together with Japan’s allies (Tanaka, 2015). As a result of Abe ceding ground to Kōmeitō, the scale of SDF capabilities was not broadened quite to the extent that the prime minister envisioned (Wallace, 2014), with the SDF only being able to come to the rescue of Japan’s allies under the three following conditions: if the attack constituted a clear and present danger to Japan’s survival or the Japanese people’s constitutional rights to life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness; if there was no alternative means of repelling the attack and protecting Japan; and if the use of force was limited to the minimum extent necessary (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2016). As Akiyama points out (2015, 62), the expansion of the boundaries of self-defence was “extremely limited” and “much narrower than the right most other countries enjoy”. Similarly, Mori (2015, 42) emphasises that the reinterpretation preserved Japan’s exclusively defensive posture, and any SDF participation should be approved by the Diet. As Streltsov notes (2015, 58), the new interpretation became a significant step in the efforts of enhancing Japan’s role in UN PKOs, which has been one of Tokyo’s key objectives for two decades.

Finally, in September 2015, the Diet adopted legislation – the Security Laws Amendment Law and the International Peace Support Law – which moderately extended the SDF’s mandate in operations abroad. The International Peace Support Law removed temporal and geographical scope from the SDF’s logistic support to US troops, as well as granted the SDF the right to use military force to defend third parties. At the same time, the self-constraint traditionally characterising Japan’s security posture persisted, as even the SDF’s logistic activities should be sanctioned by the UN Security Council or General Assembly, while its direct involvement in an armed conflict would be prohibited. Meanwhile, the Security Laws Amendment Law represented a series of partial amendments to ten existing laws, in particular:

- The Grave Circumstances Law, which allowed Japan to use military force to assist another country under the aforementioned three conditions, even if Japan itself is not under direct attack;
- The PKO Law, removing the need for Japan to pass separate legislation every time it dispatches the SDF abroad to participate in PKOs;
- The SDF Law, enabling the SDF to protect other countries' troops and take part in rescue operations of Japan nationals abroad.

The new laws had three major implications for Japan's security strategy. Firstly, the SDF could now come to the aid of the US or other allies in event of an attack, even if Japan's territorial integrity was not directly threatened. They also strengthened the legal basis for the SDF's participation in international PKOs under UN auspices. Secondly, Japan took on more responsibilities within the US-Japan alliance framework. According to the 1960 US-Japan Security Treaty, the US was under obligation to defend Japan if it came under attack, but the alliance had never worked in the reverse direction, with Japan being legally prohibited from militarily assisting the US. Finally, the new legislation represented another step in the independent development and implementation of a comprehensive national strategy, creating the conditions for Japan to play a more proactive role in regional and global security, both in the bilateral alliance framework and beyond.

At the same time, Japan's exercise of collective self-defence creates some unpredictability. The prior limitation of the use of force to an attack on Japan was clear, unambiguous and easy to justify. While the SDF's role was broadened in 1978 to include providing assistance to the US forces in defending Japanese territory, the change was still based on the original interpretation of Article 9. In contrast, Japan providing assistance to the US or other allies when it is not itself under attack could create confusion as to where and in what capacity the SDF would support other countries. The Yoshida doctrine allayed regional concerns

about Japan not only because it was based on pacifism, but also because it clearly delineated the conditions for Japanese military involvement in the region, which was limited to defending its territories. Despite being justified by the changing security environment and Japan's bigger alliance responsibilities, the new interpretation of Article 9 and the following security legislation complicate the predictability of Japan's military role.

However, while the 2014 reinterpretation and the 2015 legislation potentially challenge the anti-militarist core of Japan's security posture, the Japanese pacifism persists, expressing itself through political parties in the Diet, whose votes are required for any constitutional changes. There is no mechanism which compels Japan to automatically take part in conflicts and crises, and all defensive and international operations require a prior or subsequent approval by the Diet. The fact that any conflict engagement by Japan, from defensive operations to international assistance, is placed completely under democratic control means that there is no militarist elements in the recent security legislation.

While the passing of the new laws was marked by large-scale protests and criticised for potentially embroiling Japan in a war, the vague phrasing of the documents was thought to leave Japan enough space for manoeuvre if the SDF were to engage abroad (Hornung and Mochizuki, 2016, 95).

5.5. Summary

Overall, under Prime Minister Abe, Japan shifted towards a more proactive, robust foreign policy in the Asia Pacific region, undergirded by a desire to create security linkages with neighbouring countries aimed at balancing the rising China. Combining a strong personal leadership and the support of the bureaucracy, Abe effectively seized the initiative in decision-making from the officials and instead made them follow his lead. By hand-picking likeminded politicians to lead ministries and empowering Kantei, he managed to implement the sort of

political leadership that the DPJ promoted in their manifestos but failed to actualise during the Hatoyama government.

The Abe administration's reforms were strategic in nature, all-encompassing in scope, and effectively transformed the basis for Japan's security. The collective self-defence prohibition and the weapons exports ban had determined Japan's strategic posture for decades before overturned by Abe. The first ever national security strategy outlined Japan's national interests, foreign policy priorities, as well as the primary threats and challenges facing the country. The NSC was finally established after years of recommendations, and the Kantei empowered to streamline decision-making and cut bureaucratic red tape. Pyle notes (2018) that despite Abe being the primary driving force behind Japan's strategic shift, his policies gained a momentum which would be difficult to stop. Abe's policies garnered broad support from various factions within the LDP, including all likely candidates to succeed him.

Despite Abe's bold approach at reinforcing Japan's national security, some of his key policies in that area share continuity with proposals by previous administrations, including the DPJ, which laid much of the groundwork for Abe's policies. As demonstrated in Chapter 3, incremental modifications in Japan's strategy were being made by various administrations since the 1990s, starting with the International Peace Cooperation act of 1992, with each new document or law deepening, broadening, and generally elucidating Japan's stance on national security issues. It was Abe's direct predecessor Noda who initially suggested repealing the weapons exports ban and examined the possibility of passing the collective self-defence legislation. More importantly, the 2010 National Defence Program Guidelines released under Kan arguably represented the most significant change in Japan's strategic posture up to that point. The document widened the geographical and situational scope of the SDF, changed Japan's traditionally reactive stance to that of active response and deterrence, and introduced the concept of a dynamic defence force, capable of rapidly responding to threats in any part of

Japan. The 2010 NDPG was also the first major document to highlight the “grey-zone” incidents, which play an important role in the 2013 NDPG passed under Abe. Similarly, even though the notion of “proactive pacifism” at the core of Japan’s first national security strategy can be seen as a clear departure from the Yoshida doctrine, Abe was not the one who invented or even popularised it, with the concept being advocated by Ozawa and even Hatoyama (under the different name of “outward-looking pacifism”).

While the DPJ never emphasised foreign policy in their manifestos, Abe made diplomacy and national security policy a major part of his agenda and pursued its implementation more vigorously. Nevertheless, the DPJ’s political and institutional legacy points to the formation of a new consensus with regards to the priorities of Japan’s strategy. Such consensus is strongly bipartisan and potentially resilient, based on adapting Japan to the new security environment and largely devoid of ideological differences between the parties and their leaders. Hosoya (2012) called it a “momentous change” as the emergence of such consensus signifies that Japan’s strategic thinking is approaching maturity. This fact also underscores the continuity and evolutionary development at the centre of the Abe doctrine.

Additionally, while acknowledging the significant changes in Japan’s grand strategy as a result of Abe’s reforms, Dobrinskaya states (2018, 93) that pacifism still remained the foundation of Japan’s foreign and security policies. At the same time, the underlying logic of pacifism was altered, with Abe’s “proactive pacifism” aimed at promoting SDF activities abroad rather than eschewing them, and based on employing military force for the purpose of upholding peace and stability. Liff argues (2015, 81) along similar lines, saying that despite the historic nature of Abe’s reforms by Japanese standards, they did not remove the basic, self-imposed principle of restraint undergirding Japan’s security stance. He points out that the SDF is still prohibited from using military force “outside a singular, narrow interpretation” of self-defence, let alone “developing – much less employing – offensive power projection or nuclear weapons”,

thus concluding that the changes introduced by Abe are moderate. Finally, continuity can also be found between the 2015 US-Japan Defence Cooperation Guidelines and the DPJ's 2010 NDPG, which both emphasise the fundamental nature of Japan's exclusive defence doctrine, which characterised Japanese security policy during the Cold War.

Thus, while the Abe administration's reforms were more comprehensive and went further than the policy of previous governments in transforming Japan's grand strategy, they also represented a continuing trend of loosening the institutional and geographical constraints on Japan's security policies, which was being implemented by Japan's political elites from both the LDP and the DPJ.

On the foreign policy front, Japan's relations with the US developed amidst America's pivot to Asia which by 2013 showed signs of falling short of heralded outcomes. Nevertheless, despite (or perhaps thanks to) its shortcomings, the pivot had a largely positive effect on Japanese diplomacy. The great importance that the US assigned to the region provided Abe further incentive to transform Japan's national and foreign security policies by taking on a bigger burden within the alliance. Meanwhile, doubts regarding US commitment to safeguarding regional status quo provided an opportunity for Japan to build stronger defence ties with littoral states in the South China Sea, particularly the Philippines and Vietnam. This reflected Japan's growing reluctance to solely rely on America to balance against China and its desire to broaden its network of partnerships in order to create an anti-Beijing coalition of sorts. Despite failing so far to realise the latter intention, Abe managed to reinforce security ties with Vietnam and the Philippines by providing them defence assistance through the revised ODA charter. At the same time, the US-Japan alliance was transformed as a result of Abe's reforms as well, with Japan become a more proactive part of the alliance and took initiative in finally achieving the revision of the US-Japan Defence Cooperation Guidelines. The newly created coordination mechanism helped improve political dialogue and overall cohesion of the bilateral relationship.

For the first time in Japan's diplomatic history, Russia became part of Japan's grand strategy under Abe. Apart from the obvious desire to resolve the decades-old territorial dispute over the Northern Territories, or South Kuril islands, Abe strived to cultivate a warmer relationship with Russia in an effort to offset China's rise and use Russia as an extra balancing option against China. However, while Abe tried to present the Russian front of his foreign policy as a great achievement, in reality it arguably turned out to be the least successful vector of his diplomacy. There was no resolution in sight for the territorial dispute, with the Kremlin showing no signs of intending to part with the contested islands, and the enhanced economic cooperation between the two countries would likely most benefit Russia, not Japan. Additionally, Russia launched in 2014 its own pivot of sorts, generating closer political and economic ties with China and continuing to view it as the most valuable partner in the region. Thus, with Russia consistently gravitating towards China instead of Japan, it is highly questionable whether Abe ever succeeds in drawing it closer to Japan.

While Japan's relations with South East Asian states, the US, and – to a smaller extent – Russia improved during Abe's premiership, Sino-Japanese ties went from bad to worse. Heightened tensions around the Senkaku islands, militarisation of the territorial dispute, and a two-year lack of high-level bilateral diplomatic channels all marked Abe's second term. Abe's hopes of repairing the relationship did not come to pass, and Japan shifted to a more explicit balancing behaviour towards China. Moreover, the popularity of the prime minister and a current lack of viable competition for the position of Japan's leader in 2018 essentially means that the China-friendly politicians favouring engagement rather than balancing would not raise their voices as that would likely risk their future career prospects.

Conclusion

6.1. Research parameters and main findings

For Japan, the changing system of international relations brought about by the end of the Cold War highlighted the deficiency of the Yoshida doctrine, which it followed since World War II. Under the Yoshida doctrine, the US served as the custodian of Japan's national security, while Japan itself maintained a low posture in international affairs and kept its defensive capabilities to a minimum level. However, while such strategy worked well during the Cold War and helped Japan achieve great affluence, it was ill-suited to the new regional and global security environment which was becoming increasingly fraught. However, the collapse of the bipolar international system also gave Japan the opportunity to broaden its diplomatic outlook, become more proactive in global political and security matters, and elevate its status as not just an economic, but also a political power.

The question of how Japan can increase its international influence faced a fundamental dilemma (Funabashi, 2017). On the one hand, the First Gulf War demonstrated that the “cheque-book diplomacy”, which Japan had hitherto followed, was no longer sufficient under the new geopolitical realities, and more was expected of Japan, specifically contributing military personnel. On the other hand, Japan's attempts at even modest expansion of the SDF's functionality and security “normalisation” have often resulted in criticism and suspicions of a rising militarism on part of Japan's East Asian neighbours.

Since Japan's response to the First Gulf War, which was criticised by the international community, Japanese political elites have been searching for an alternative grand strategy that could fill the place of the Yoshida doctrine. Most contemporary Japanese prime ministers attempted to implement a strategy or doctrine of their own, either regional or global. While these initiatives prioritised different geographical regions or approaches, they were nevertheless based on the three key elements of Japanese foreign policy outlined in the 1950s: UN diplomacy, the

US-Japan alliance, and East Asianism. All three elements had to be updated and developed given the recent geopolitical changes. Samuels (2007, 9) has referred to this new debate as the “Goldilocks consensus”, which would ensure Japan’s national security without being either too dependent on the US or too vulnerable to China.

The search for a new international strategy was accompanied in Japan by an incremental but steady trend aimed at contributing more proactively to international security, expanding the geographical and substantive scope of the US-Japan alliance, and gradual broadening of the SDF mandate, all in attempt to the new threats and challenges. As a result, while Japan’s Cold War era foreign policy was oriented towards defending its economic interests, it has come to show more initiative in upholding global security, not just financially, but diplomatically and even militarily, through UN PKOs. As Hosoya states (2011), Japan’s diplomacy, which had focused on economic affairs before, started to deliberately encompass geopolitical and strategic thinking.

Despite Japan’s political leadership being preoccupied with formulating an alternative to the Yoshida doctrine since the 1990s, it is in the last ten years that Japan’s grand strategy experienced the biggest shifts, under the DPJ governance and the second Abe administration. Over the course of just a few years, Japan attempted to implement two distinct strategic visions. While both represented a departure from the Yoshida doctrine, one was ultimately discarded and the other generally succeeded; one was the first of its kind to be adopted on the government level, while the other was rather a big step in an already mapped out trajectory; one was based on Japan conducting an independent foreign policy based on an equal relationship with the US and closer ties with East Asia, while the other sought to further strengthen the US-Japan alliance to hedge against China and modernise Japan’s military capabilities. What is perhaps paradoxical is that these two strategies were delineated not by party lines, with two of the three DPJ prime ministers accelerating the same trend towards Japan’s “normalisation” continued by Abe, and

only Hatoyama deviating from the dominant foreign policy direction and attempting to implement his neo-autonomist strategy.

This research analysed Japan's foreign and security policies under the DPJ and Abe administrations in order to discern their transformative influence on Japan's grand strategy. To answer the general question of the extent to which the Hatoyama, Kan, Noda, and Abe governments transformed Japan's grand strategy, with the Yoshida doctrine taken as a benchmark, this work addressed the more specific points, such as the nature of these administrations' security reforms; the personal views and leadership styles of the prime ministers presiding over this period; the foreign-policy making process; and the changing security environment around Japan and its effect on the development of Japan's grand strategy.

Methodologically, using the concept of grand strategy as an analytical framework allowed to comprehensively examine Japan's security posture and the direction of the evolution of its diplomatic and defence strategy. By using the Yoshida doctrine as a baseline, this research juxtaposes the recent trends and developments in Japan's foreign and security policies with the foundational principles of the Yoshida doctrine (low international profile and outsourcing national security to the US while only maintaining minimal defensive capabilities), viewing these developments as attempts of formulating an alternative grand strategy for Japan rather than just a set of policies. Employing a three-level analysis consisting of the prime ministers' views, personal qualities, and decisions; foreign-policy making process; and the changing international environment, allowed to systematically examine the DPJ and Abe's policies and reforms with due regard to their formulation and implementation. Meanwhile, introducing a background chapter (Chapter 3), which examines the debates around and competing visions for Japan's grand strategy in the new security environment throughout the 1990s and most of 2000s, made it possible to view the recent evolution of grand strategy in a more dynamic perspective, to add historical and strategic context, and to connect the global and regional alternatives to the Yoshida

doctrine proposed and implemented after the end of the Cold War with the strategic shifts under the DPJ and Abe.

The main argument can be summarised as follows: Hatoyama was the first prime minister to propose a unique strategic alternative to both the Yoshida doctrine and the crystallising trajectory towards Japan's "normalisation" in a form of an autonomous model less dependent on the US and oriented more towards East Asia and China in particular. However, after his foreign policy failed, his successors Kan and Noda not only returned to the pre-Hatoyama strategic direction but accelerated it, conducting landmark reforms in adapting Japan's to the current security environment, which were later developed and expanded by Abe and constituted a departure from the principles of the Yoshida doctrine. At the same time, the reforms passed by Kan, Noda, and Abe are characterised by fundamental continuity, building on an already existing trajectory aimed at gradually increasing Japan's international influence and upgrading its security posture, while also maintaining the defensive, restrained stance undergirding Japan's defence policy. However, it was the Kan and Noda administrations which presided over the most significant evolution of this trajectory and can thus be viewed as the direct precursors of the Abe doctrine.

More specifically, the analysis conducted to address the main question and objectives of this research leads to a number of findings.

Overall, the policies and reforms of the consecutive Kan, Noda, and Abe administrations all had a transformative impact on Japan's grand strategy, moving it away from the Cold War era Yoshida doctrine based on a low-profile diplomacy and complete military reliance on the US, towards a more proactive stance with greater defensive capabilities. While incremental efforts aimed towards Japan's "normalisation", i.e. increasing its contribution to global security, broadening the scope of the US-Japan alliance, and modest modernisation of the SDF go back to the 1990s, Kan, Noda, and Abe undeniably accelerated the evolution of Japan's strategic posture

after Hatoyama's unsuccessful attempts at steering Japan away from the US. Kan presided (4.4.4) over the adoption of a new iteration of the National Defence Program Guidelines, which introduced a fundamental shift from the basic defence strategy underpinning the Yoshida doctrine, to the dynamic defence strategy, better suited to respond to the contemporary security environment, characterised by China's increasingly muscular approach to foreign policy, North Korea's missile and nuclear tests, and a range of new, non-traditional threats. Noda approved the relaxation of the 1967 weapons exports ban, enabling Japan to sell and jointly develop military grade technology with its partners and allies. The sharp turn towards Japan's security "normalisation" post-Hatoyama was triggered by a new cycle of conflict with China that started in September 2010 after a collision between a Chinese trawler and a Japanese coast guard vessel and further flared up in 2012 after the Japanese government nationalised the disputed Senkaku islands (4.4.3.2). The following anti-Japanese protests, in which China mixed economic and political measures for the first time, convinced Japan's leadership of the need upgrade their defensive capabilities and further strengthen the US-Japan alliance, resulting in a revision of the Defence Cooperation Guidelines, which was about to be concluded under Noda before he lost the 2012 election.

Abe's reforms (5.4.5) proved the most sweeping and were articulated so coherently and implemented so strategically that they came to be referred to as the Abe doctrine. They included the adoption of the first ever National Security Strategy based on Japan's new, more proactive approach to international affairs under the banner of "proactive pacifism". The decision-making mechanism was enhanced by finally instituting a National Security Council after several years of inaction. The National Defence Program Guidelines were revised again, further modernising the SDF and prioritising cooperation with the Asia-Pacific states to uphold stability in the region. Finally, the constitution was reinterpreted so as to grant Japan the right to collective self-defence, allowing it to come to the aid of its allies under strict conditions, followed next year by a series of security laws which more clearly delineated the SDF's mandate. On the foreign policy front,

Abe further enhanced security cooperation with the US, but also moved from a unilateral orientation on America and moved to diversify Japan's security linkages in South-East Asia, where he strengthened defence ties with countries such as Vietnam and the Philippines, which, like Japan, share territorial disputes with China. Abe even attempted, largely unsuccessfully, to generate a *détente* with Russia, which he viewed as a potential secondary balancing option against China. All these developments signify a clear departure from the Yoshida doctrine and all its elements. Its low international posture gave way to Abe's proactive pacifism and a desire to play a bigger role in contributing to global security through both non-military and military means. The very limited military capabilities that Japan used to keep throughout the Cold War were modernised, including the basic defence strategy being upgraded to a dynamic defence strategy and adapted to the new security environment. Finally, even the complete reliance of the US-Japan alliance for protection was challenged by Abe's territorial diplomacy, which was aimed at creating additional options for Japan to fall back on when dealing with China.

Secondly, Hatoyama's tenure represented an exception to the trend of Japan's "normalisation" as mentioned above, but his strategic vision did not conform to the Yoshida doctrine, either. Instead, he proposed an alternative grand strategy situated somewhere between Ozawa's "normal nations" and Funabashi's "global civilian power" (see 3.4) and based on lesser reliance on the US, closer cooperation with East Asian neighbours, and a cordial relationship with China. Despite downplaying the military aspect of Japan's contribution to international security, he, too, advocated "outward-looking", proactive pacifism and a more robust foreign policy, principles which have come to be associated with Abe's agenda. And while the articulation of his strategic vision was nebulous and its execution lacked competence, he operated within the same broad strategic parameters as other prime ministers, just giving priority to different elements of Japanese diplomacy. His promotion of East Asian regionalism was rationally derived from the fallout of the 1997 and especially 2008 economic crises, and his desire to distance Japan from the US stemmed from some of the debates around the future of the

alliance that started in the 1990s and advocated Japan stepping out of America's shadow and conducting a more independent foreign policy.

Thirdly, despite Kan, Noda, and Abe all pursuing the same trajectory of Japan's foreign and security policies, the first two prime ministers's approach to reforms was not systematic, hobbled by domestic factors from political opposition to the East Japan earthquake, and was thus more ad hoc than strategic. Additionally, the direction of their security policy was motivated more by the 2010 trawler crisis with China rather than a coherent strategy of their own, at least in the case of Kan, who had by all accounts little interest in foreign policy. At the same time, there were also signs of proactivity as seen with Noda, a hawkish conservative politician, who advocated many of the same reforms that Abe would later develop or implement, including the revision of Article 9 of the constitution to grant Japan the right to collective self-defence. Noda, however, failed to show strong political leadership and had to rely on the bureaucracy in policy-making, so it is unclear to what extent his reforms reflected his own vision. The Abe doctrine, by contrast, was characterised by a strategic, comprehensive approach to reforming the priorities of Japan's national security and diplomacy, as well as policy-making mechanisms. While these issues were one of many on the DPJ's agenda, they represented the centre of Abe's political programme and generally continue his attempted reforms during his first premiership.

Fourthly, while the Abe doctrine introduced historic changes to the basics of Japan's security posture and went further in transforming Japan's grand strategy, it nevertheless represented evolutionary change rather than a radical shift when viewed in a mid-term historical context, and developed, albeit significantly, the existing trends that had started in the early 1990s (5.5).

Despite the all-encompassing scope of Abe's reforms, the core pillars underpinning Japan's strategy, such as its exclusively defensive nature, its inherent pacifism, and constraints on the use of force, remain in place. The notion of "proactive pacifism" serving as the bedrock of Japan's new national strategy in fact goes back decades and was promoted by both Ozawa and Hatoyama

(as “outward-looking pacifism”). Thus, while the Abe administration is responsible for a number of landmark decisions in the national security area, its policies were also characterised by a great deal of continuity, both in historical perspective and substantively. In particular, direct succession can be established between Abe and the post-Hatoyama DPJ, which not only returned to the previous direction of Japan’s foreign and security policies, but accelerated the development of this direction. Clear continuity can be established between both the general substance of the reforms and specific initiatives which were launched or proposed by Kan and Noda, and realised by Abe. Thus it is in the DPJ’s reforms that the more direct roots of the Abe doctrine lie. This fact underscores the consensual nature of the current trajectory of Japanese foreign and security policies.

Fifthly, despite the Abe doctrine often viewed as ideologically-charged due to Abe’s own nationalistic leanings, his empirical record shows the need to separate his personal views from his policies as prime minister, the latter having been predominantly pragmatic and even alienating much of his core right-wing voter base. While focusing on initiatives that reflect his own ideology cost Abe his first term in 2007, he is currently preoccupied with his political longevity and the stability of his administration, which means conducting policies which are based on Japan’s economic interest. Abe’s appointments of his former political opponents and moderates to high-ranking positions also point towards him opting for a more pragmatic approach as prime minister, and so does the broad support he enjoys from all factions within the LDP. Moreover, while the ideologically-driven concepts characterising his first tenure, such as values-oriented diplomacy or the Arc of Freedom and Prosperity, used to make an appearance in the Abe administration’s official rhetoric, they were more recently toned down, which may also signify Abe’s shift to a more practical agenda.

Lastly, despite the conventional notion of the Japanese bureaucracy playing the dominant role in foreign-policy making, its influence was severely curtailed during the Hatoyama and Abe

administrations, though the respective prime ministers approached the issue differently.

Hatoyama's reforms made the bureaucracy weaker rather than strengthened the politicians, and freezing the officials out of the decision-making process only added to the incoherent, confusing implementation of the DPJ's foreign policy. By contrast, Abe introduced measures to ensure the smooth realisation of his agenda by the bureaucracy, making it follow his lead. Under Abe, foreign-policy making was characterised by growing centrality and effectively controlled by himself and his advisors. On the one hand, it dealt with the red tape that had usually characterised the policy-making process under previous prime ministers and resulted in a swifter, seamless policy implementation. On the other hand, the control that Abe exerted over the bureaucracy made it less likely to question or oppose some of his more controversial proposals and risked turning it into a rubber-stamp for the cabinet's decisions, spelling a radical decrease in its authority.

6.2. Contribution to knowledge

The literature review positioned this research in the area of Japanese studies, among other analyses of Japan's politics and foreign policy, and identified the debates with which it is engaging. By analysing the shifts in Japan's grand strategy under the DPJ and Abe, it makes a contribution to Japanese studies by developing or modifying the understanding of the direction of Japan's grand strategy in the last decade, the nature and significance of its shifts in relation to the Yoshida doctrine, as well as the changes and continuities characterising the Japanese grand strategy at this stage, as represented by the Abe doctrine. More specifically, the contribution can be broken down into several specific areas based on the existing academic debates which were explored in the literature review (1.1.2).

Firstly, highlighting both change and continuity of the Abe administration's reforms, this research argues that, while they are all-encompassing and strategic in formulation and implementation, they nevertheless fundamentally represent evolution rather than revolution.

Despite the sweeping, strategic essence of their formulation and implementation, they are merely an admittedly big step forward in an already existing trend of Japan's strategy, based on incrementally increasing its contribution to global security and ramping up national defensive capabilities. Despite the developments under the Abe government, Japan's strategic posture is still characterised by self-imposed restraint and its exclusively defensive nature. Additionally, this research draws a more direct comparison between the Abe administration and the post-Hatoyama DPJ governments, rather than simply noting similarities between the Abe and his fellow LDP prime ministers. As a result, it underscores the often overlooked continuity between Kan, Noda, and Abe, the latter not only recognising the DPJ's reforms but building on them and further broadening their scope, which highlights the bipartisan support of the direction of the Japanese grand strategy. It also reassesses the role of the DPJ in developing Japan's grand strategy, as the post-Hatoyama DPJ made strides in moving forward the aforementioned trajectory towards Japan's "normalisation" and away from the Yoshida doctrine, and effectively set the stage for Abe's more comprehensive reforms.

Secondly, by engaging with the debates around the ideological basis of the Abe doctrine, it asserts that Abe's foreign policy throughout his second term as prime minister should be analysed separately from the exploration of his private political views. While most existing work on Abe's diplomatic agenda underscores his nationalistic leanings and credentials, this research presents a gap between, on the one hand, his own views and some of his government's ideologically-driven rhetoric, and, on the other, his actual foreign policy which is for the most part pragmatic, primarily dictated by Japan's economic interests and his own political longevity.

Thirdly, it posits that, despite Hatoyama's views on Japan's foreign policy usually portrayed as wishful thinking and a deviation from the mainstream strategic thinking, even he largely operated within the same parameters. Moreover, Hatoyama proposed a potentially valid, alternative grand strategy for Japan, based on Sino-Japanese friendship, greater independence

from the US, and “outward-looking” pacifism. Despite being incompatible with the contemporary security realities, his vision was based on existing sentiments among Japan’s political elite, originating from the period of uncertainty in the US-Japan alliance throughout the 1990s, as well as the 1997 and 2008 financial crises. Notably, Hatoyama’s proposed grand strategy deviated from both the traditional Yoshida doctrine and the more recent direction of foreign policy that was accelerated by Kan and Noda, and culminated in the Abe doctrine.

Finally, by scrutinising the virtually unexamined foreign-policy making process of the Abe administration, this research posits a massive transfer of authority from the bureaucracy to the executive branch, resulting in greater political leadership and smoother decision-making. This is ensured by Abe tightening his control of the officials through the use of staffing policy.

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