# Andalas Journal of International Studies



Isu Bencana dan Prinsip-Prinsip Humanitarian Dalam Studi Ilmu **Hubungan Internasional** 

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#### Noraini bt Zulkifli & Vivian Louise Forbes

Japan and The South China Sea

#### **Loade Muhamad Fathun**

Bencana Hutan dalam Hubungan Internasional

Andalas Journal of International **Studies** 

Volume 5

No 1

Halaman 1-107

**Padang** Mei 2016

ISSN 2301-8208



**Andalas Institute of International Strategic Studies** Program Studi Ilmu Hubungan Internasional Fakultas Ilmu Sosial dan Ilmu Politik **Universitas Andalas** 

#### **Andalas Journal of International Studies**

ISSN: 2301 - 8208

#### Published by

Andalas Institute of International Studies – ASSIST

**International Relations Department** 

Faculty of Social and Political Sciences

Universitas Andalas

Padang

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#### Japan and the South China Sea

Noraini bt Zulkifli\* & Vivian Louise Forbes\*\* ketika kubersujud@yahoo.com

#### Abstract

This article examines and analyses Japan's current interest in the South China Sea, by first alluding to the historical context of that country's involvement from the mid-1930s to the end of the Pacific War, 1945. It then outlines Japan's energy security needs and that country's national policy relating to securing safety for its flagged ships and those vessels assisting in promoting Japan's export and import and the diplomatic role that Japan plays towards regional stability. Japan in their Diplomatic Bluebook stated that the priorityforJapanis to guaranteethe securityandprosperity of the countryand its people. Here, it is clear that the Japanese Government will trytodo everything togive the besttoensure their survival. Japan's interest in South China Sea is because it is deemed critical for the Japanese security.

Keywords: Japan, Energy, Maritime Security, Military, South China Sea

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#### **INTRODUCTION**

The genuine concerns for and interest of Japan in the activities of the South China Sea is evident from a published document by that country's Ministry of Defence in 2013 in which it stated that; "The independent state of a nation must be protected in order for it to maintain the determining of its own direction in politics, economy, and society, as well as its culture, tradition, and sense of values. However, peace, safety and independence cannot be secured by simply wishing for them.<sup>1</sup>

Geopolitical tensions continued to simmer in the South China Sea throughout 2013 as evident in the national and international electronic and print media and the attention given to this regional semi-enclosed sea in the numerous international and regional for annually. After the US President Obama administration's declaration in 2009 of a US 'return to Asia' stirred up regional dynamics non-claimant states, India and Japan, entered into the fray. There are various reasons for these activities: oil and gas exploration and exploitation and ensuring security of important sea routes.

The quotation at the top of the page well illustrates the concerns from all quarters.

First, the South China Sea is home to some of the world's busiest sea lines of communication (SLOCs), which would be disrupted, should an armed conflict erupt. Second, there is the potential for nonclaimant states to get involved in the exploration and exploitation of marine hydrocarbon reserves in the region through joint ventures with claimant states in their perceived exclusive economic zones. Third, having a voice in a major regional issue security confers prestige commensurate with regional power status. Finally, involvement in the South China Sea issue could have implications on other territorial disputes.

This present study will allude to Japan's energy dependence and then analyse national policy of self-sufficiency, energy and maritime security, maritime self-defence and its involvement in the its affairs of southern neighbours, especially the littoral states of the South China Sea.

#### Japan and Its Energy Dependence

During 2010. energy needs requirementsbyJapanwere42per centoil. 22per centcoal,18per 13per centnuclear, fourpercentof and

http://www.mod.go.jp/e/publ/w paper/pdf/2013/01 .pdf [August, 3 2016]

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Ministry of Defense, Defense of Japan 2013. Tokyo. [online version]

resourcesareother sources(EIA Online, 2010). From these, Japan relied on oil imports to meet about 42 percent. It also relied on LNG imports for virtually all of its natural gas demand and it is the world's largest LNG importer. Actually, Japan has 32 of its owned operating terminals where majority terminals are located in Tokyo, Osaka and Nagoya but the terminals are notabletoaccommodate theneedsof LNG. Indonesia became the world largest LNG exporter in the world.<sup>2</sup> Japan has a large volume of imported LNG passes through the Indonesian archipelagic waters. The Japanese government ordered its Maritime Self-Defence Force (MSDF) to consider how it might protect Japanese vessels using these sea-lanes of communications.

The country was the world's third largest producer of nuclear power after the US and France before the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant accident in March 2011. Japan's nuclear regulator stated on Thursday, 4 July 2013, that elevating safety culture to international standards will "take a long time", days before new rules come into effect to avoid a repeat of the Fukushima nuclear disaster in March 2011.<sup>3</sup>

Japan's nuclear regulator expressed growing alarm on Wednesday, 10 July 2013, at increased contamination at the adjacent seafront of the stricken Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power station and urged the plan's operators to take measures.4 protective Fukushima's operator, Tokyo Electric Power Co., has acknowledged problems are mounting at the plant north of Tokyo, the site of the world's worst atomic disaster since 1986. Chernobyl in The company observed that the day earlier radiation in groundwater had levels soared, suggesting highly toxic materials from the plant were getting closer to the Pacific more than two years after three meltdowns triggered by a massive earthquake and tsunami. The NRA strongly suspected radiation was contaminating the Pacific, Kyodo news agency said in an earlier report from a weekly NRA commission meeting.

Japan has limited domestic energy resources and is only about 16 per cent self-sufficient and is the third largest oil

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Raj, A. Japan's Initiatives in Security Cooperation in the Straits of Malacca on maritime security and in Southeast Asia: Piracy and Maritime Terrorism. The Japan Institute for International Affairs (JIIA), (2009)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>www.reuters.com/article/us-japan-nuclearidUSBRE96309M20130704 (July 4, 2014)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Aaron Sheldrick and Kentaro Hamada 'Japan says building nuclear safety culture will take a long time'(05-Jul-13)

consumer in the world after the United States of America (USA) and the Peoples' Republic of China (PRC). It is also the largest importer of liquefied natural gas (LNG) and the second largest importer of coal. The LNG and coal commodities are imported from sources in Southeast Asia and Australia, but are not limited to these geographical areas. The oil is sourced from reserves in the Persian Gulf equating to nearly 75 per cent as depicted in Figure 2.

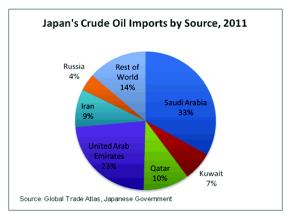


Figure 2: Japan's crude oil imports by source (geographic region), 2011

Japan has very limited domestic oil reserves, amounting to 44 million barrels as of January 2012, according to the Oil and Gas Journal (OGJ), down from the 58 million barrels reported by OGJ in 2007. Japan's domestic oil reserves concentrated primarily along the country's coastline. Offshore western areas surrounding Japan, such as the East China Sea, also contain oil and gas deposits; however, development of these zones is held up by competing territorial claims with China. While a preliminary accord was reached between the two governments May 2008 over two fields in Chunxiao/Shirakaba andLongjing/Asunaro - in September 2010, Japan urged China to implement the agreement as tensions rose over the contested area.

Consequently, Japan relies heavily on imports to meet its consumption needs. Japan maintains government-controlled oil stocks ensure against a supply to interruption. Total strategic oil stocks in Japan were 589 million barrels at the end of December 2011, with 55 per cent being government stocks and 45 per cent commercial stocks.<sup>5</sup>

Japanese oil companies have sought participation in exploration and production with projects overseas government backing because of the country's lack of domestic oil resources. The government's 2006 energy strategy plan encouraged Japanese companies to increase energy exploration and development projects around the world to secure a stable supply of oil and natural gas. The Japan Bank for International Cooperation supports upstream companies by offering loans at

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Energy International Agency. Oil and Gas Emergency Response of EIA Country, (2013). https://www.iea.org/publications/freepublications/p ublication/2013 OSS Japan.pdf(accessed August 18, 2016)

favourable thereby allowing rates, Japanese companies to bid effectively for projects in key producing countries. Such financial support helps Japanese companies to purchase stakes in oil and gas fields around the world, reinforcing security national supply while guaranteeing their own financial stability. The government's goal is to import 40 per cent of the country's total crude oil imports from Japanese-owned concessions by 2030, up from the current estimated 19 per cent.

Japan's overseas oil projects are primarily located in the Middle East and Southeast Asia; however, their geographic scope is much wider. Japanese oil companies involved in exploration and production projects overseas include: Inpex, Cosmo Oil, Idemitsu Kosan Co., Japan Energy Development Corporation, Japex, Mitsubishi, Mitsui, Nippon Oil, and others. Many of these companies are involved in small-scale projects that were originally set up by JNOC.6 However, involved in high-profile many are upstream projects involving major investments in overseas ventures in recent years.

Most of Japan's LNG imports originate from regional suppliers in Southeast Asia, although the country has a fairly balanced portfolio with no one supplier having a market share greater than roughly 20 per cent. Japan's top five gas suppliers make up 73 per cent of the market share. After the March 2011 disaster, several suppliers from Qatar, Russia, Malaysia and Indonesia exported cargoes to Japan through swaps and diverted cargoes. Qatar, the world's largest supplier of flexible LNG, overtook Indonesia as the third largest supplier to Japan in 2011 and provided most of the additional imports needed after earthquake under short-term agreements. Japanese companies utility signed agreements with Qatar Gas at the end of 2011 to secure longer term LNG supply.

The pie-graph in Figure 3 amply illustrates the geographical scope from which Japan sources its import of LNG to supply its domestic energy needs. Nearly 85 per cent of this importation is transported by specially designed ships navigating along the sea lanes of the South China Sea many using the geographic restrictions of straits and channels within the semi-enclosed seas of South East Asia,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>Analysis Report on Japan. 2013. http://www.connaissancedesenergies.org/sites/defa ult/files/pdf-pt-

vue/anlysis\_report\_on\_japan.pdf(accessed August 18, 2016)

and in particular, the Indonesian and Philippine archipelagos.<sup>7</sup>

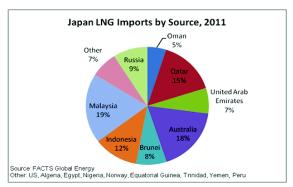


Figure 3: Japan's LNG imports by source (geographic region) 2011

Japan installed hydroelectric generating capacity of 48 GW in 2009, accounting for about 16 per cent of total electricity capacity. About half of this capacity is pumped storage with another 5 GW scheduled to come online by 2020. Like nuclear power, hydropower is a source for base load generation in Japan because of the low generation costs and stable supply. Hydroelectric generation was 73 TWh in 2010, making up about 7 per cent of total net generation. The Japanese government has been promoting small hydropower projects to serve local communities through subsidies and by simplifying procedures.

Wind, solar, and tidal powers are being actively pursued in the country and installed capacity from these sources has

increased in recent years to about 4.6 GW in 2009, up from 0.8 GW in 2004. However, they continue to account for a relatively small share of generation at this time.

As part of the revised energy policy plan, Japan is trying to encourage a greater use of renewable energy, from sources such as sea water, solar, wind, geothermal, hydropower, and biomass, for power generation. Non-nuclear renewable energy made up about 4 per cent of Japan's total energy consumption and about 2 per cent of the country's electricity generation in 2010. The Japanese legislature approved an act, which was enacted in July 2012, compelling electric utilities to purchase electricity generated by renewable fuel sources, except for nuclear, at fixed feedin tariff prices. The costs are to be shared by government subsidies and the end users, though details of the act, particularly the tariff price, are not entirely defined.

We have just alluded to the energy supply and needs of Japan and hence that country's interest in ensuring that the sea lanes of communication in the South China Sea are always free and safe for navigation at the present and in the future. However, it is interesting to discuss briefly, the historical interest from an historical perspective.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup>UNCTAD. *Review of Maritime Transport*, (2011)

#### **Maritime Security**

Southeast Asia is home to important sea-lanes and straits including Straits of Malacca Singapore, Sunda, and Lombok.8 The security of the Straits of Malacca and Singapore became an international concern and the straits have been the core reasons of maritime security cooperation between countries from within and outside Southeast Asia. 9 In Southeast Asia, the multilateral and bilateral agreements or other cooperative efforts to enhance maritime security have been implemented and discussed since 1992 and resulting in the ASEAN Declaration on the South China Sea in the same year. More than half of the world's annual merchant fleet tonnage passes through the Straits of Malacca and Singapore, Sunda, and Lombok, with the majority continuing on into the South China Sea.<sup>10</sup>

Oil tanker traffic through the Strait of Malacca leading into the South China Sea is more than three times greater than

<sup>8</sup>Liss, C. ,The Privatisation of Maritime Security-Maritime Security in Southeast Asia: Between a rock and a hard place?," Asia Research paper Perth: Murdoch University, (2010)

<sup>9</sup>Vavro, C., "Piracy, Terrorism and the Balance of Power in the Malacca Strait," Canadian Naval Reviewvol 4, no 1 (spring,2008)

<sup>10</sup>Sien, C. L. "The Importance of the Straits of Singapore,"Singapore Malacca and Journal of International & Comparative Law (1998)

Suez Canal traffic, and well over five times more than the Panama Canal. According to Malaysia Vessel Traffic System (VTS) in 2001, the ships transiting through Strait of Malacca was 59,314 and that increased to 70,718 ships in 2007. In 2012, the number of ships traversing the Strait of Malacca was 75,477.

Virtually all shipping that passes through the Malacca and Sunda Straits must pass near the Spratly Islands - the Dangerous Grounds as delineated on nautical charts as indicated in Figure 3, above. From about the mid-1990s, the threat at the sea to merchant navy ships was mostly by non-traditional security elements such as piracy, terrorism, smuggling of all types of commodities and especially military armament. According to the Japan Coast Guard (JCG), the number of piracy and armed robbery incidents in South China Sea consists of 242 cases in 2000 and decrease to 83 cases in 2007. In 2012, the cases up to 104.

By mid-2013, this semi-enclosed sea and adjacent waters was relatively free from the scourge of piracy; however, the underlying concern is that of freedom of navigation. Japan continues its concern about anti-piracy efforts by actively canvassing support for the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) so asto obtain a permanent membership within UNSC. The

Multilayered and Cooperative SecurityStrategy will be introduced as a new security framework for Japan. This will also allow the Japanese Self-Defence Forces to address the overall security issues pertaining to Japan as well as elements in the issues to piracy and maritime terrorism.



**Figure 4**: Major crude oil flows in the South China Sea (2011) Source: USA EIA <accessed 25 July 2013>

The large volume of shipping in the South China Sea/Strait of Malacca littoral has created opportunities for attacks on merchant shipping; in 1995, almost half of the world's reported cases of piracy occurred in this area. In 2000, the number of piracy and armed robbery incidents in Straits of Malacca and Singapore amounted to 242 cases, and decreased to 16 cases in 2006. <sup>11</sup>Fortunately, for the

international community and the shipping industry in general the number of cases reported in 2012 was a mere eight. (IMB sole 2013) For this reason, the Government of Japan through the Japan contributedfinancially Foundation offeringtrainingandnavigationfacilities States of Malacca littoral Singapore Straits under the auspices of the Malacca Straits Council to facilitate and regulate the activities ofships. In 2009, the Japan Foundationdonated USD 2.5 million to the Malacca Straits Council. 12

Shipping (by tonnage) in the South China Sea is dominated by raw materials *en route* to the East Asian countries. Tonnage via Malacca and the Spratly Islands is dominated by liquid bulk such as crude oil and liquefied natural gas (LNG), with dry bulk (mostly coal and iron ore) in second place. Nearly 66 per cent of the tonnage passing through the Strait of Malacca, and half of the volume passing the Spratly Islands, is crude oil from the Persian Gulf. The oil tanker traffic through the Straits of Malacca and Singapore rose to 13.8 million barrels per day (bbl/d) during 2007 and the amount increased to

Andalas Journal of International Studies | Vol 5 No 1 Mei Tahun 2016 | 68

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Evers, H.D. & Gerke,S. *The Strategic Importance of the Straits of Malacca for World Trade and Regional Development*, Jerman: University of Bonn (2005)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup>Mohd Hazmi Rusli,. "The Legal Feasibility of the Imposition of a Traffic Limitation Scheme in Straits Used for International Navigation: A Study of the Straits of Malacca and Singapore," *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science* Vol.1 No.6 (2011)

15.2 million bbl/d in 2011. The rising Asian oil demand could result in a doubling of these flows over the next two decades.

LNG shipments through the South China Sea constitute two-thirds of the world's overall LNG trade. Japan is the recipient of the bulk of these shipments; in 1996 Japan was dependent upon LNG for over 11% of its total energy supplies. (Dzurek, 1985) South Korea (over seven per cent of energy consumption) and Taiwan (over four per cent of energy consumption) also import large amounts of LNG via the South China Sea. During 2010, Japan import 3.4 Trillion Cubic Feet (Tcf) LNG and in rose up to 3.8 Tfc in 2011 (EIA).

The other major shipping lane in the region uses the Lombok and Makassar Straits, and continues into the Philippine Sea. Except for north-south traffic from Australia, it is not used as extensively as the Strait of Malacca and the South China Sea, since for most voyages it represents a longer voyage by several hundred miles. By using the Straits of Malacca and Singapore, Japanese shipping companies could potentially save more yen per kilometre and travel time would be shortened (Ever & Gerke 2005). If, however, the shipping companies choose to use the Lombok and Makassar Straits, they would at least add 30 yen for each kilometre or expend USD 1.2 billion annually with additional times to two weeks using tanker. 13

Thus the maritime security within the semi-enclosed seas of South East Asia prime importance to ensure commercial, economic and social security stability for the region and in particular for Japan. Maritime terrorism is another problem that every maritime nation has to devote attention to. In the early-2000s, terrorist organizations executed a number of serious attacks on targets in maritime Southeast Asia. In 2000 and 2001, the Abu Sayyaff Group (ASG), operating by boat, kidnapped local citizens and international holiday makers from resorts on Sipadan and Palawan Islands. The Southeast Asian states that had taken collective positive action towards these activities succeeded in decreasing the number of attacks at sea. 14 In March 2010, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and announced increase security measures in response to a

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup>Wan Siti Adibah, Zinatul Ashiqin, Noor Inayah &Noridayu, "Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) from Shipping Companies in the Straits of Malacca and Singapore," International Journal of Business and Society 13(2), (2012)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Hoadley,S. & Ruland, J, Asian Security Reassessed. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian *Studies* (2006)

warning that terrorists were planning to attack oil tankers in the Malacca Strait.

## **Economic and Military Rise of China:** Concern for Japan

The economic and military rise of China is not a minor issue to Japan. China became one of the biggest competitors in East Asia and currently in South Sea. 15 China joined World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001. This was an opportunity for China to open its economy to the world and become fully integrated with the international trading system. A free market policy has enhanced China's economy and made that country more productive and promote enhanced industrial practices. Competition trading has compelled Chinese companies to improve their technology and management to reach international standards.

In 2011, China boosted its economy and was second after USA. This situation really gave tension to Japan to re-maintain its economy because China offered a vast market and a multitude of workers. Besides, the cheaper goods from China re-

<sup>15</sup>B.J Ahn, "The Rise of China and the Future of East Asian Integration," Asia-Pacific Review 11(2): 22-32 (2004) & G.Christofferson, "Japan and The East Asian Maritime Security order: prospect for trilateral and multilateral cooperation," Asian Perspective 33(3), (2009): 107-149.

aligned the balance of trade between the countries to China rather than Japan. In economic terms, the increase inthe value ofmerchandise gave huge opportunities to China. In a report from United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in 2008. China'strade 2005. valueexceededJapan'sin This situation continueduntil 2007. Japan had only a modest economy in 2001; however, after that country experienced three economic recessions since 2008, a downturn in trade investment and global demand for Japan's exports in late 2008 pushed the country into recession.

China's rapid economic rose threatened Japan. China imported 80 per cent of its energy through the Straits of Malacca and Singapore into South China Sea. <sup>16</sup>Japan's economyis notgrowingata goodratesince 2001. Government stimulus spending helped the economy recover in late-2009 and 2010, but the economy showed contraction again in 2011 as the massive 9.0 magnitude earthquake. Not only that, the tsunami in March once again disrupted manufacturing.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup>H.Yu, "China's Perspectives on the Straits of Malacca. In Nazery Khalid (edt.)," Proceeding of the 6th MIMA International Conference on the Straits of Malacca: Charting the Future, (2009): MIMA &L.Spittena "The Malacca Dilemma" —countering China's "string of pearls" with land-based airpower. Alabama: Air University (USAF), (2006)

Japandoes not wantChinato beits competitor becauseit recognises the power of the Chinesenationina big market, blessed with abundant resourcesandcheaplabourwhich could potentially threaten itspositionin region.<sup>17</sup> In 2009, China's trade increased to USD 5 trillion and the nation's purchasing power approached the stage of 8.7 trillion. 18 Chinaimports vast USD quantities of energy resources makes it reliant on energy resource-rich countries. positionedintoanewworld Chinahas economicpowerwhereChina's economic slowdownwillpresentan adverseimpactontheglobal economy.

The market power transition from Japan to China indirectly brought about a reduction of dependency on the other states toward Japan.<sup>19</sup> The rise of China's image in the South East Asia destabilised Japan's geopolitical stance.<sup>20</sup> Not only that, more multinational companies set up their businesses and factories in China. Vast quantities of manufactured goods are exported to South East Asia countries, for example, Laos, Cambodia, Myanmar and Thailand.<sup>21</sup>

Increasedpolitical influence ofChinainSoutheast Asiaactuallyserves a bitter blow tothe Japanesebecause they realizeasa smallcountrywithfewer natural resources. Ifthis situation continues, there is a potential to causea threat tothe nationalsecurity ofthe countryboth economically and socially. 22 Japan has realisedeven though sometimes China is quiteaggressiveinactingon the issue securingits territories. it is alsotolerantincertaincircumstancessuch aseconomic cooperation. For example China donated USD 1.7 million to ASEAN to fundcollaborative projectsthat will theregionand benefit

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup>Rusdi Omar, "China dan Kuasa Hegemoni Baru Ekonomi," (2006)http:// www.ijms.uum.edu.my/ijms 14(1). [Accessed December, 6 2012]

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup>J.M. Rathus, *Japan response to the rise of China*: Implication to regional Institution. Australia: University of Adelaide

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup>R.J. Samuels, R. Tokyo grand strategy and the future of East Asia securing Japan. (2008)London: Cornell University Press

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> L.Kyung, Move over Japan: China is now No. 2 world economy.

Retrieved from http://money.cnn.com/2011/02/13/news/internation al/china overtakes japan economy.cnnw/index.ht m [July 16, 2013]

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup>N.Mashashi, Japan's Political and Security *Relations with ASEAN*.(2003) Tokyo: Japan Centre for International Exchange

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup>A.L. Oros, "Japan's Security Future," The Routledge Handbook of Asian Security Studies. London(Routledge:2010)

alsogave300,000tons of rice foremergency.<sup>23</sup>

In the security context, China's riseleads tothe existence ofthe securitydilemmabetween thetwocountries. China's military modernisation assets convince many that the country is preparing itself for war. In addition, the aggressiveness of China in South China Sea portrays an impression that China will never compromise about their claimed territory and anything owned by themselves. China is viewed as a threat to Japan in South China Sea.<sup>24</sup>The increase inthe governmentbudgetallocated fordefence spendingin Chinahasmade Japanfeel threatened.<sup>25</sup>

In 2001. China announced an increase in its defence expenditure as being 17.7 per cent higher and larger than the previous over two decades (Hoesslin 2004). By 2004, China once again announced that it would increase the 25 defence budget USD to billion.<sup>26</sup>Chinahas

beenmodernizingandaddednewfacilitiesfor its navy andthe air force. China's actions are perceived by the Government of Japan as encroaching on its market territoryand hence have an impact onstability in the South China Sea. Ifthis situation continues, it is possible thatChinawillcontinueits actionuntil it reachesthe Straits Malacca.

China also has not clarified the status of its military modernisation programme and the transparency of its policies. Does it have to make tis public? By not elaborating on these policies it could be argued that there is a possibility that this could lead to a sense of distrust and misunderstandings by other countries. Furthermore, China has been expanding and intensifying its activities in the East China Sea – waters close to Japan. Together with the lack of transparency in its military and security affairs has become a concern for Japan as a neighbour. The countries have a war history. These are why China is asked to further improve transparency regarding its military and try

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup>P. ELam, & G.Narayanan, "China and East Asia: Mutual Accommodation. In. Lam. P. E & Dürkop, C. East Asia's Relations with a Rising China. (2008) Japan: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup>C.W Pumphrey, (Ed), "The rise of China in Asia: Security Implications,"(2002) U.S. Army War College &J.M Rathus, "Japan response to the rise of China: Implication to regional Institution," (2010) Australia: University of Adelaide

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup>H.Tanaka, "Nationalistic Sentiment in Japan and Their Foreign Policy Implications," East Asia Insights Vol.2, No 1 (2008)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup>Mokhzani Zubir&Mohd Nizam Basiron, The China, Straits of Malacca: the Rise of America's Intentions and the Dilemma of the Littoral States. MIMA(2005)

to strengthening mutual understanding by promoting dialogues in an important issue. China basically only announced the total amount for the three categories consist of personnel, training and maintenance and equipment.

The report for the United Nations Instrument for Reporting Military Expenditures submitted by China in 2009 was not filled out in accordance with the standard format used by other nations, including Japan, which required a detailed breakdown of military expenditure. The information disclosed in the submitted by China was almost as simple as that provided in China's defence white papers. In the report China only provided details of personnel expenses, operation maintenance costs and equipment costs by naval, air force and armies.

The Government of Japan has felt uneasywithChinaas that country modernisingits allegedly nuclear andweapons of mass destruction.<sup>27</sup>Eventhe reliabilityofChinais alsoquestionablebecause ofan increase inadditions ofmilitary hardware onlydemonstrates this countryis that

<sup>27</sup>E. Atanassova- Cornelis, "The US-Japan Alliance and the Rise of China: Implications for the East Asian Security order and the EU's Regional Role,"Brussels: Paper for the International Conference(2010)

tofacea preparing situation. war AlthoughChinahas repeatedly statedthe modernisation of weapons and its nuclear capability is for the use in the country, but it still does notchange the Japan's perceptions

Thedevelopment ofmilitary assetscancauseotherneighbouring countries to feel uneasywiththissituation. Whilst several neighbouring countries had to slash their budget expenditure others had moderate increases.<sup>28</sup> In the future, this situation can cause the competition of defence modernisation. Because of the rise military power of China. the USAdeliveredmore naval shipsto some Asia-Pacificcountries. The Government of Japanbelieves thatinthe nextten years, China's dominance in the military fieldwillbewell advanced. The military cooperation with USA will no longer be able to prevent China's action.

For this precise the reason the Government of Japan believed that if they brought USA in this regional equation, it would be balancing China military might.<sup>29</sup> Not only that, Japan also believed

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> S.S Jatswan, K.S Balakrisnan, Trends in Maritime Security and Geopolitics in Southeast Asia. In. The Seas Divide: Geopolitics and Maritime IssuesinSoutheast Asia. Kuala Lumpur: Institute of Ocean and Earth Sciences. (2008), 1-7

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup>K.V Kesavan, "Japan and ASEAN: Their Changing Security Relations," New Delhi: Observer Research Foundation(2011)

a very good co-operation with USA will make the country stable and safe because geographically Japan is only a tiny country compared to China. China's increasing nuclear deterrence capabilities base in South China Sea would affect Japan's core interest now and in the future.<sup>30</sup>

### Japan's Contemporary Involvement

In responding to the rise of economic and military rise of China in the South China Sea, Japan has commenced its basic international policy through engagement with ASEAN countries to gain mutual reassurance. Japan is using the three pillars of engagement which are Development Assistance (ODA), capacity building and dialogue.<sup>31</sup>

Japan has have close to a relationship with USA so as to balance the rise of China in the East and South China Seas. This is will fine-tune the good influence for Japan terms in strengthening and support when it is faced

<sup>30</sup>M.J Green, Asia in the Debate on American Grand Strategy", Naval War College Review (2009)Retrieved from http://www.usnwc.edu/Publications/Naval- War-College-Review/2009---Winter.aspx 2013]

with a security crisis. The USA and Japan have shared common strategic interests in maritime Southeast Asia. Both allies rely upon the safe and secure sea lines of communication that pass through the region. Therefore, it is natural for the USA and Japan to look for opportunities to increase their cooperation in maritime Southeast Asia. Japan's strategic outlook creates opportunities for such co-operation so long as it is implemented in concert with host nation priorities.

In 2008, the Japanese government announced Japan Maritime Self Defence's (JMSDF) new maritime era (MoD 2012) The objectives of the JMSDF are to prevent any threat from reaching crisis point; to repel it and minimize any damage; to improve the international security environment; and, to reduce the chances that any threat will reach Japan in the first place.<sup>32</sup> The role of the defence force in these initiatives are to be an effective response to the new threats and diverse situations, as preparations to deal with full-scale invasion and lastly as a proactive efforts to improve the international security environment.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup>S.M. Tang, "Japan's Grand Strategic Shift from Yoshida to Koizumi: Reflections on Japan's Strategic Focus in the 21st century," Akademika vol 70. Bil 1 (2007)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup>Japan Ministry of Defense. JMSDF: What is the Japan Maritime Self Defense Force?:Main operations.(2014)http://www.mod.go.jp/msdf/form al/ english/ about/ operation/ index.html [10 Des 2014].

To achieve these objectives, JMSDF needs to constantly conduct patrol and surveillance in their surrounding waters in peace time, and to prevent the emergence of situations, while maintaining a system that enables immediate response once the situation arises. Generally naval forces (including JMSDF) are granted various privileges under the international laws during peace time, enabling them to act freely as the embodiment of nation sovereign, to navigate necessary waters without impairing the rights and interests surrounding countries, demonstrate national wills when the situation calls for.<sup>33</sup>

JMSDF needs to utilize these characteristics to secure the safety and stability of overseas maritime trade and cargo transportation. For this purpose, it needs to promote international cooperation with the US as an ally and other reliable partners for maintaining relevant major international systems and the security of sea lines of communication. For Japan, to secure the safe and stable maritime navigation is the very foundation of its maritime security concern.

Japan treasures its cooperative ventures with ASEAN countries because it realises that if the littoral States of the South China Sea do not cooperate each other, all its efforts are wasted. In 2000, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport and the Japan Coast Guard organized a regional conference on combating piracy and armed robbery supported by the Nippon Foundation. Coast guard agencies, maritime policy makers, ship-owners associations the **IMOand** ASEANmembers were represented the conference.

As a result of the conference a "Model Action Plan" was drawn up in indicating specific guidelines to followed by maritime policy makers and private-sector parties in maritime issues pertaining to piracy and armed robbery from the coast guard efforts to tackle the problem.34

Japan's concerns within the seas and straits and Southeast Asia has resulted in closer cooperation and capacity-building programs with the Straits of Malacca's littoral states as well as its newer initiatives towards Thailand and the other Asiannations in terms of maritime security cooperation. Japan has long cooperated

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> T. Kotani, "Struggle over EZZs: Japan's Interests in South China Sea," MIMA Conference Report.(2012)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup>H.Tanaka, "Japan's Policy Agenda for East Asia," Japan: East Asia Insights. Vol 2. No 4(2007)

with Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia in the area of navigational safety and seabed mapping on joint research. Although issues pertaining to the divergence of interest in institutional settings, Japan is still moving ahead with its initiatives in responding to the needs of the ASEAN nation in term to the threats of piracy and maritime terrorism in the Straits and Southeast Asia.

The potential for acts of piracy and maritime terrorism in the Straits of Malacca and Singapore has resulted in increased Japanese funding through the "Official Development Assistance"program in anti-piracy as well as in maritime threats from terrorism. The Japanese Coast Guard (JCG) has been patrolling through the Southeast Asian waters. JCG also has carried out numerous joint exercise training with maritime counterparts from Philippines, the Thailand. Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia. The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)has been given the task to assist the capacity building programs together with the Japanese Coast Guard. Japan has focused primarily on civilian cooperation rather than military cooperation and has refrained from utilizing its Maritime Self-Defence Force in the region other than disaster relief missions and such as the Tsunami relief efforts in the Straits of Malacca in 2004.

JCG is playing a major role in addressing the threat of piracy and armed robbery, smuggling and terrorism. They have engaged in many capacity-building programmes around the world as well as to provide trainings for major governments. One of the initiative taken for the Straits of Malacca and Singapore in assisting the new-formed Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency (MMEA)in capacity building and training programs MMEApersonnel. JCG is helping MMEA in giving training, offering facilities and joint exercises. The other initiative is the "New Maritime Training Program"that had been introduced by the JCG in April 2009. The program was launched in 2008. Based on this initiative, the first thirty personnel from Malaysia, Thailand and the Philippines had classified as a Maritime Agency organization. This joint- training will free from the military jurisdiction.

The relationship between Japan and India existed more than 50 years ago. For India and Japan, the South China Sea dispute provides additional indicators to gauge the assertiveness of China's foreign policy. India has unresolved borders with China in the Himalayas region and with Japan a territorial dispute in the East China Sea. India also has territorial disputes with Pakistan, who in turn is supported by China. The actual and perceived economic and military rise of China is also bringing India and Japan closer together.

#### **India-Japan Partnership**

The Governments of India and Japan signed the 'Joint Statement Vision for Japan-India Strategic and Global Partnership in the Next Decade' and a 'Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement' in October 2010.35 No doubt India's naval presence in the Indian Ocean, from the Strait of Hormuz to the Straits of Malacca and Singapore, provides an important component for Indo-Japanese maritime cooperation.<sup>36</sup> Security interests that are opposing of the Government of China are also aligning the two countries to more strategic engagement with the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), of which there are ten nation States.

India and Japan see the emergence of China as a challenger to the South East Asia region. They believe that China will rise up and generate their economy, modernise their defence facilities and try to politically re-align the region using their economic capabilities. For this reason, India believes it needs to be involved in this region so as to balance the rise of China together with USA and Japan as a host.<sup>37</sup>India as one of the emergence powerhouse economic in Asia recognised as such by Japan. A survey of Japanese companies noted that they chose India as the third important countries for future world economy after China and United States.

China and India are both robust economic powers and have nuclear capabilities. At the same time, Japan has a presence as the world's third largest economy. As a world watches the rise of India and China, there are growing suspicious over what China's military modernisation and economic buoyancy would translate into. Even though India is also an emerging new power but in comparison, the rise of India does not seem to be as worrisome for most countries in the world.<sup>38</sup> This is because

<sup>35</sup> A.Mathur, "India - Japan Relations Drivers, Trends and prospect,"Singapore: RSIS. MONOGRAPH NO. 23(2012)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> India Press, "India, Japan to 'upgrade' defence cooperation"

http://indianexpress.com/article/india/indiaothers/In diajapantoupgradedefencecooperation [10 Desember 2014].

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> M.Gaur, "India's Look East Policy," FPRC. No.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup>B.Goshal, "Some New Thoughts on India's Look East Policy," Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies. No 54.(2007)

India does not wish to challenge the existing international order.

#### Japan and the Philippines

The Government of Japan held talks in September 2011 with diplomats of the Philippines on resolving the territorial and sovereignty disputes in the South China Sea peacefully in accordance international law. It proposed that the two countries set up a 'permanent working group' to regularly tackle disputes and other Asian maritime issues. Even more importantly, military and security ties were tightened with the elevation of the relationship to a 'strategic partnership'.39 Japan also displayed its willingness to play a greater role in regional security issues when the Japanese Vice-Minister of Defence met with senior military officials from the Philippines, Vietnam, Indonesia and Thailand in late-September 2011.

On 28 June 2013, Japan's Minister of Defence offered assistance to the Government of Philippine when the latter stated that it would seek greater cooperation with Japan and the United States by offering access to its military bases as it seeks to counter any military

<sup>39</sup> J.E Esplanada,"Philippines, Japan to enhance security ties," maritime (2012)http://globalnation.inquirer.net/43508/philippinesja pantoenhancemaritimesecurityties/ [11 April 2014]

threats from China. 40 (NST, 28 June 2013 p.1) The Government of the Philippines was drafting plans whereby the US forces could spend more time on military bases in the Philippines and the same terms could be offered to Japan.<sup>41</sup>

Japan was considered as a strategic partner in accordance with the Philippines' existing diplomatic protocols. The two Governments agreed to further cooperate in terms of the defence of the remote islands, the territorial sea as well as protection of maritime interests.

The Philippines will also be putting forward a proposal for avoiding future conflicts in the Sea at the next ASEAN summit. This would see claimant countries determine which areas are in dispute and which are not so as to allow for the exploration and exploitation of resources, potentially in joint ventures.

But while outside involvement can guarantee some degree of protection for ASEAN states against China, this could be a dangerous game to play — one that risks

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup>M.Fackler, "To Counter China, Japan and Will **Philippines Bolster** Maritime Cooperation."(2013)

http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/11/world/asia/jap anandphilippinestobolstermaritimecooperation.html ? r=0 [November, 11 2014].

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup> Z. Keck, "Made in China: A USA- Japan-Philippenes Axis?," http://thediplomat.com/flashpoints-

blog/2013/06/29/made-inchina-a-us-japan[1 Julai 2013].

a strong reaction from PRC. Indeed, Chinese media are already calling for such a reaction following Philippine President Aquino's recent talks with the US and Japan on the one hand and China on the other. These talks secured US\$60 billion of infrastructure investment from China but also the purchase of two Hamilton class cutters from the US.

It would be easy for China to interpret the events during 2010/11 as tantamount to a strategic encirclement by the US, India and Japan. And this will only make the disputes more complicated than ever. Now that ASEAN claimant states have a more favourable strategic position vis-à-vis China, all the states involved should turn their attention to the negotiating table, adding substantive content to the agreement reached at the July 2011 ASEAN Regional Forum to resolve the dispute peacefully. The 12 October 2011 signing of a six-point agreement between China and Vietnam to contain the South China Sea dispute, including the opening of a hotline to deal with potential conflicts and the promise of holding border negotiations twice a year, is one welcome development toward this.

On 23 July 2013, the Third Japan-Singapore Maritime Security Dialogue was held at Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. The Dialogue covered a wide range of issues. Both countries discussed the safety of navigation in vital shipping lanes such as the Straits of Malacca and Singapore, counter-piracy measures, the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP), maritime security efforts in ASEAN and others.

In 2013, the new Prime Minister, Shinzo Abe introduced new policy. It was democratic security diamond. From this policy, Abe stated that the security of Japan as a national identity. 42 Abe wants to curb China's growing military commercial clout in this region.<sup>43</sup> He develop Japan's maritime wants to competence and combine it with the country's economic strengths.<sup>44</sup> His main idea is to curtail China's strived for hegemony. For that purpose, Japan has cooperation with Australia, India, Japan, and the US state of Hawaii to form a safeguard the maritime diamond to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> Y. Hayashi, "Abe's Diamond Defense Diplomacy," *The World Street Journal*. http://blogs.wsj.com/japanrealtime/2013/0 1/17/abes-diamond-defense-diplomacy [March, 24 2013].

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup> A.P Liff, "Japan's Defense Policy: Abe the Evolutionary," *The Washington Quarterly* 38(2) (2015): 79–99.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>44</sup> T.Sekiguchi, "Abe Defends New Japan Defense Policy: Nation's Pacifist Constitution Continues to Limit Mobilization of Defense Forces," http://www.wsj.com/articles/abedefendsnewdefens epolicy1405317449 [1 Dis 2014].

commons stretching from the Indian Ocean region to the Western Pacific.

#### Conclusion

The South China Sea basin is blessed with potential abundant marine biotic and mineral resources with numerous islets and reefs and extensive coastlines of the littoral States along which there are numerous fishing communities, cities and coastal resorts. It also the key sea routes for maritime shipping and naval mobility. Because of its important location as a strategic shipping and aeronautical route between east and west, it becomes a target of contention among the littoral States and other external actors..

In the Asia-Pacific region, as interdependence widens and deepens, countries are strengthening their cooperation with each other to resolve security challenges, for example, India and Japan and Japan and the Philippines. In particular, specific cooperative measures are being undertaken to resolve challenges in the non-traditional security field. The global shift in the balance of power is apparent in the Asia-Pacific region and the potential stage settings are the East China and South China Seas. Large-scale military forces, including nuclear forces, continue to be concentrated in the areas surrounding Japan, and many countries are modernising their military forces and increasing their military activities. there remain unclear addition. and uncertain elements in the region, such as disputes over territories and the maritime domain.

The Government of Japan believes it must remain a leading promoter of rules for trade, investment, intellectual property, labor, environment and security as the Asia-Pacific or the Indo-Pacific regions become more and more prosperous. It must continue to be a guardian of the global commons, like the maritime commons, open enough to benefit everyone. It must work even more closely with the U.S., Korea, Australia and other like-minded democracies throughout the region.

Despite the concerns of Japan in the South China Sea the Government of Japan is investing more into people to people exchanges between Japan and China. Japan's relations with China stand out as among the most important. The doors are always open on my side for the Chinese leaders. That is the politicians view which does not necessarily translate to the day to day events that take place on the high seas and in particular in the South China Sea

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