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Попытки Японии усилить напряжённость, вызванную территориальными спорами

Бэ Бумки

Аннотация. Территориальные споры вокруг островов Сенкаку/Дяоюйдао и Курильской гряды обусловлены историческими, правовыми и политическими обстоятельствами. Претензии на владение названными территориями выдвигает Япония, в то время как США занимают в спорах позицию третьей стороны. Россия утверждает, что Курильская цепь – часть её территории, Китай заявляет то же о Сенкаку/Дяоюйдао. На глобальном уровне оба государства прилагают усилия, чтобы бросить вызов американо-японскому союзу и тем самым сохранить стратегический баланс. Япония, которая не сохраняет статус-кво, стремится усилить напряжённость в Северо-Восточной Азии в контексте своего альянса с Вашингтоном. США, участвуя в китайско-японских и российско-японских территориальных спорах в качестве третьей стороны, навязывают Токио собственную инициативную политику, отвечающую их интересам. Эти межправительственные отношения кроме всего прочего накаляют конфронтационную обстановку в Южно-Китайском море. В этой ситуации мирное урегулирование должно осуществляться в рамках многосторонних стратегических переговоров, примером чего являются институты, ориентированные на АСЕАН.

Ключевые слова: Россия, Китай, Япония, США, АСЕАН, Северо-Восточная Азия, Курильская гряда, Сенкаку/Дяоюйдао, Южно-Китайское море.

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Japan's trial to strengthen tension evoked by the territorial disputes

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Abstract. The territorial disputes over Senkaku/Diaoyudao and the Kuril Chain are interrelated from historic, legal and political points of view. Both groups of islands are claimed by Japan, and the US participates in the territorial disputes over them as the 3rd party. Russia and China assert that the Kuril Chain and Senkaku/Diaoyudao are the territories controlled by them. At the global level both states take effort in defying US-Japan alliance and thereby maintaining strategic balances. Japan, which doesn't preserve status-quo, pursues to strengthen tension in North-East Asia in the framework of US – Japan alliance. The US,

participating in Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese territorial disputes as the 3rd party, enforces its own initiative policies conducive to its interests to Japan. By the way, based on these intergovernmental relations, territorial disputes in North-East Asia are mutually linked to confrontational aspects of the South China Sea. In this situation of intergovernmental contradiction, the peaceful settlement of territorial disputes should be posed in the framework of multilateral strategic talks, as exemplified by ASEAN-centered institutions.

Keywords: Russia, China, Japan, USA, ASEAN, North-East Asia, Kuril Chain, Senkaku/Diaoyudao, South China Sea.

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Introduction

The San Francisco Peace Treaty concluded in 1951 determined the border demarcation of East Asian countries. The countries directly involved in the territorial disputes over the Kuril Chain and Senkaku/Diaoyudao had to assume an ambiguous attitude as the international relations were deteriorating due to the difference of stances among the countries in interpreting the treaty and claiming sovereignty over the islands.

The territorial disputes over the Kuril Chain and Senkaku/Diaoyudao are interrelated from both political and historical perspectives. China and Russia, which share strategic interests, are maintaining confrontational relationships with Japan through the territorial disputes over the Kuril Chain and Senkaku/Diaoyudao in East Asia. However, due to the US' involvement in these disputes as a 3rd party, bilateral confrontational aspect can escalate into global conflict. Meanwhile, China and Russia pursue anti-Americanism to curb the influence of US-led NATO and maintain strategic stability in the framework of the SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organization)^{1,2}.

After the dissolution of the USSR, intergovernmental contradictions between leading countries brought about so-called 'the New Cold War'. Today the political conflicts of the regional level can escalate into the armed conflicts of the global level like the proxy war of the Cold War period due to involvement of Great Powers in it as a 3rd party, which political behavior is conducive to its own interests.

Many researches about the territorial disputes are restricted to analyzing the differences and legitimacies of constructions on history and international law. On the other hand, the author is trying to analyze the stances of the countries directly involved and show the strategic interests of the 3rd party, as well as the solution plan.

¹ SCO: Shanghai Cooperation Organization. In spite of the SCO's non-military appearance, it is well-known that the organization is considered as an anti-American alliance against NATO.

² About SCO (The Shanghai Cooperation Organization). URL: http://eng.sectsc.org/about_sco/ (accessed: 30.08.2022).

The characteristic of Japanese political culture

Japanese domestic policies can maintain directionality, despite government changes, since government change is not accompanied by a personnel replacement. Suppose Japan is the “Challenger-state” [Wiegand, Powell, McDowell 2021], which no longer works to preserve the status-quo in the territorial problems of North-East Asia. In order to analyze Challenger-state's foreign policy related to territorial disputes, one must comprehend its internal political culture and system, which influences the way of interpreting international law and history.

The Japanese central government pursues a consensus of government bureaucracy for decision making. Therefore any issues related to public interests are decided in the framework of groupism and conservatism based on consensus. This tradition became the basis of Japanese politics and continued on even in the chaotic times after World War II. Thus Japanese conservatism never disappeared and Japanese policy still remains throughout the cooperation and rally of ‘left & right’ and ‘present & past’.

Referring to Japanese expansionism, which its politicians, called ‘Guardians of freedom and public welfare’, pursue, Russo-Japanese territorial disputes were conceived in militaristic expansionism and are preserved through conservative decision making to this day. Therefore it might be difficult to anticipate Japanese forward-looking policy in the middle of settlement talks at the moment [Территориальный вопрос..., 2013].

The Essence of Ideologies for Leading Countries in the Cold War

A Russian political scientist M.A. Khrustalev noted that the USSR and the US, which were reinforced as a result of military expansions with using the threat of the nuclear weapon, occupied the status of the “empires in the Cold War” [Хрусталёв 2018]. Both of them tried to expand their ‘empire’ territories in the framework of the ideological contradiction through economic and proxy wars at the regional level to avoid the direct armed conflicts that could escalate to a full-scale war at the global level.

Foreign policies of great powers were established not based on the ideological directionality, but on their own political and economic interests. Historically, democratic states did not destabilize other states of its own camp unless the latter infringes on the core political (or economic) interests of the former [Цыганков 2008]. From the political point of view, there is no ideological justification of the US and the USSR during the Cold War, and their foreign policies were based on ‘imaginary interests’ [Хрусталёв 2018]. As such, ideology did not carry out the noble messianic duties in the realm of national security; rather it played the role as an act of hiding their real political and economic interests throughout the assertive foreign policies. In Khrustalev’s words, “if state’s ideology seeks the ‘quasi’ utopian directing point, its political interests would be ‘imaginary’ or ‘pretended’”.

Since the protection of ideologies was not the real purpose of the confrontation, relations between the empires should be discussed to comprehend their true intentions. The ‘Long Telegram’ [Torkunov, Wohlforth 2021] explains how the bipolar system was established. Western countries under the liberal democratic system were concerned about the spread of communism and to confront this, the US initiated the pan-Western solidarity throughout the implementation of the Marshall Plan and the creation of NATO.

The territorial disputes and 3rd party intervention in them during the Cold War period

We're now going to analyze the stances of countries directly involved in the disputes. From the Japanese point of view, the Kuril Islands, Sakhalin and the other annexed islands according to the Portsmouth Peace Treaty, all territories Japan had ceded were no longer becoming the Japanese territory according to the 2nd chapter of the San Francisco Peace Treaty. However, asserting there is no notion to which Japan should cede the Kuril Islands and Sakhalin to, Japan presents the basis of its argument in the following statements.

1. The definition of the 'Kuril Islands' is not apparent in the preamble of the treaty.
2. The USSR was not the country directly involved as it didn't sign the San Francisco Treaty.
3. Therefore, the USSR didn't have any rights to annex the Kuril Islands and Sakhalin.

Moreover, Japan asserts that its islands are affiliated to Japan, on the grounds of the USSR's infringing 'Neutrality Obligation', concluded in World War II. In accordance with the 2nd chapter of 'Neutrality Obligation' Agreement for the period of 5 years, concluded on 13th of April, 1941, both sides should abide by the agreement in every military collision. If one side wanted to nullify this agreement, it was obliged to notify the other side one year before cancellation.

From the Russian point of view, Japan has not presented a developmental policy for settlement since the time of problem posing and only repeats its own version of interpreting history and international law. In accordance with 'the obligation of the Allies' concluded by the US, UK and USSR in April 1945, the USSR notified Japan not to extend the valid time of the 'Neutrality obligation', declaring war on Japan on 8th of August. The legal basis of the USSR's entry of the Pacific War is explicitly stated in the UN Charter (1945.6), which the USSR signed and ratified. It is stated that any actions taken to a defeated nation by the victorious nation in the midst of World War II are not invalidated by any cases in 107th chapter of the UN Charter. According to the UN Charter, the obligation of the USSR to the Ally is prior to the 'Neutrality Obligation' concluded between Japan and the USSR.

The US' trial to interfere in the territorial dispute over the Kuril Chain

The US interfered in the Russo-Japanese negotiation process as a 3rd party, and the territorial disputes were faced with a 'New Aspect'. In this process Russia perceives that the US had enforced initiative policies to Japan, conducive to its own interests³. Generally, the 3rd party arbitrates the countries directly involved for peaceful settlement in the territorial disputes with non-binding methods [Wiegand, Powell, McDowell 2021]. At that time, the US Armed Forces were deployed in Japan in accordance with 'The Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security', signed in 1960.

There is necessity to recognize what Japan-US' intention is in the realm of territorial disputes. Russia's stance on Japan-US' strategic considering the territorial disputes over the Kuril Chain is as mentioned below.

³ After the Korean war, which was the first proxy war, the US had to fulfill a role as the world guardian of democracy in order to impede the spread of the ideologies of socialism and communism of the USSR. America's role was also known as 'messianism'. During territorial disputes between the Soviet Union and Japan, strategic interests of the US and USSR were also considered.

Japan, seeking the foreign policy at the global level.	Japan tried to raise the issue of the Kuril Islands continuously, while maintaining a close relationship with the US. This allowed Japan to pursue its own political interests [Хрусталёв: 54, 57, 94–99, 274, 311–314, 156] at the global level [Брэндс, Гэддис 2022] by sustaining the US foreign policies.
US, which tries to strengthen its strategic status in Asia.	The US tried to strengthen tensions taking the ‘opportunity’ [Хрусталёв: 54, 57, 94–99, 274, 311–314, 156] of Russo-Japanese territorial disputes, further to increase Japan’s dependence on itself [Стрельцов: 58]. The US’ intension ⁴ in enforcing relations with Japan aims to prevent Russia’s advance in the Pacific Ocean.

Consequently, the USSR couldn’t fulfill its promise to transfer Habomai and Shikotan to Japan after the conclusion of the Peace Treaty as decided in Moscow USSR-Japan Declaration in 1956. The USSR was concerned of maintaining status-quo and prepared countermeasures for the situation of rising security problems not only in the Cold War [Torkunov, Wohlforth 2021: 8–18], but also now when the Cold War is becoming reality again. In the light of this, Russia adheres to its skeptical position that the US doesn’t fulfill a positive role as a 3rd party⁵.

International relations among the countries directly/indirectly involved Japan – US alliance against China

The Security Treaty between the United States of America and Japan was concluded in 1951, afterward in return for it, the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between the US and Japan was signed in 1960. In terms of the confrontational aspect between Japan-US and China, there is necessity to take special note of Article V, referred to the case of an emergency⁶. In these clauses, both parties – Japan and the US, recognize that an armed conflict against either party in territories is considered as common danger and established joint response system for resolution.

An American political scientist, Brzezinski Z.K. noted that Japan doesn’t have the self-defense power, thus the US armed forces are stationed in Japan [Бжезинский]. Meanwhile, the US government asserts that the US should be stationed in Japan for the neutralization of the Chinese Nuke, considering the role of China as a nuclear power [Китай. Что следует знать...]⁷. As a result, the US armed forces deployed in Japan is the symbol that Japan is inevitable to be the instrument to gain the political interests conducive to US foreign policy in North-East Asia [Рубан 2006: 9].

On the other hand, Japan was concerned about the possibility of the US – China’s intimate relationship under any circumstances, referring to the possibility of relaxation of the US – Chinese

⁴ Remarks by President Biden and Prime Minister Kishida Fumio of Japan in Joint Press Conference. The White House. 23.05.2022. URL: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2022/05/23/remarks-by-president-biden-and-prime-minister-fumio-kishida-of-japan-in-joint-press-conference/> (accessed: 30.08.2022).

⁵ Ashley R. The Northern Territories: Russia’s Front Line in the East? Tokyo Review. 2.04.2022. URL: <https://www.tokyoreview.net/2022/04/the-northern-territories-russias-front-line-in-the-east/> (accessed: 30.08.2022).

⁶ Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between the United States of America and Japan, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. URL: <https://www.mofa.go.jp/region/n-america/us/q&a/ref/1.html> (accessed: 30.08.2022).

⁷ Smith Sh. US–Japan–ROK Trilateral: Rebuilding Confidence, Deepening Cooperation. Wilson Center. 23.05.2022. URL: <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/us-japan-rok-trilateral-rebuilding-confidence-deepening-cooperation> (accessed: 30.08.2022).

confrontational relations and further emergence of its safety-dilemma problem. Indeed, the Japanese doubt that the US turns into cooperative aspect with China in economic question in the North-East Asia [Торкунов 2005: 610].

China has only limited options concerning the bilateral confrontational relations between Taiwan and China, which may escalate into the full scale war. The US is participating as the 3rd party in it, receiving Japan's support. Today Japan – US alliance has transformed to the strategic instrument to curb China [Kim do Hyi 2020].

Sino-Russian benefit sharing

After the dissolution of the USSR, Russia had to expand international relations with the North-East Asian states to gain political interests. Russian government fulfilled systematically political and selectively economic return to Asian-Pacific region (North-East Asia, South-East Asia), referring to geopolitical interests. However, Russia had to overcome the state of lagging behind in fields such as economy and technology, as well as improve low-efficiency structure of economy in Siberia and Far Eastern region throughout the cooperation with China.

China sought to gain profit on energy cooperation with Russia [Лузянин 2007: 315–330]. As a result, Russo-Chinese relationship might be reinforced as an interested group. Today China tries to entice Japan, the Republic of Korea and Central Asian states to its own economic integration structure related to a few strategic economic plans. One of them is the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), which may curb the US' trial to reinforce the power of influence in Russo-Chinese linked strategic frame.

Obviously, on top of the task of both sides Beijing strengthened intergovernmental relations with Russia throughout the Russo-Chinese Treaty of Good-Neighborliness and Friendly Cooperation signed on 16 of July, 2000. Meanwhile, for the equilibrium of power in the relations with the US, which doesn't turn down the quantity of nuclear warhead, Russia should consolidate its position as strengthening the relationship with China, thereby asserting the skeptical stance on US-led NATO's extension to the East⁸.

Unfolding 'New Cold War'

Today the world order is defined mainly as an antagonistic relationship of the leading countries, namely the US, China and Russia in the framework of realism. "More generally, the doctrine dismisses international law and institutions as of 'little value'.(space) Ikenberry continues: 'The new imperial grand strategy presents the United States (as) a revisionist state seeking to parlay its momentary advantages into a world order in which it runs the show', prompting others to find ways to 'work around, undermine, contain and retaliate against U.S. power'. The strategy threatens to leave the world more dangerous and divided and the United States less secure, a view widely shared within the foreign policy elite" [Chomsky 2004]. The reason, why we can note that the current era is deemed as 'the New Cold War', is noted below [Хрусталёв: 12].

1. John Mearsheimer asserts that the international relations are in anarchy. The point is that the main purpose of 'rational' countries becomes their own survival and maintenance of the status-quo. In this realm the leading countries pursue aggressive and offensive foreign policies.

⁸ New START Treaty. URL: <https://www.state.gov/new-start/> (accessed: 30.08.2022).

2. The worst problem is that even though the aggressive foreign policies of great powers have not changed from the 20th to 21st century for the reason of seeking military and economic interests while urging the justice of state-ideology.

3. Great Powers can enforce the rules and institutional frameworks of world order to pursue their interests and security.

In accordance with John Mearsheimer's notion, under the Clinton administration the US government enforced the principle to reorganize the new world order, which is so-called 'extension of democracy' conducive to its interests in the form of "forced democratization" [ФЕНЕНКО 2009: 73–78].

The US neoconservative politicians have created the doctrine of 'democratic empire' from the concept of 'global civil society', which is based on the principle of 'the liberal-democratic values first' of the national government. However, the distribution of its principle was controlled by the US and only in line with the US' national interests.

Generally, the US foreign policy is deeply related to the weapon industry or so-called 'Iron triangle', and this line can trigger the confrontational relations with China and Russia [Khanna 2010]. The system 'Iron triangle' was established based on 'coziness' among the congressional committees (and subcommittees), bureaucratic agency and interest group. In this political circumstances, some groups have taken lead since the 1970s [Kollman 2015].

The US is the unique state to curb the expansion of China and Russia [Боратыпов 2009: 364]. In Russia-US and China-US antagonistic relationship, the US foreign policy 'forced democratization' can escalate into the armed contradiction, and the concept of response to it is mirrored in the Russian-Chinese communiqué (1997) and the "big agreement" between Russia and China (2001) [ФЕНЕНКО: 76].

The current relationship, based on 'New Cold War', between great powers, mainly China and the United States, consists of collisions of military and political interests. Thus the military-strategic, political and economic rivalry between the resurgent Russia, the rising China and the US as the 'global hegemon' replaced the past ideological contradiction between socio-communist and liberal-democratic camps [Kanaev, Bae 2016].

The vertical (geographic) escalation of the territorial disputes over Diaoyudao

Suppose Japan pursues to make a deliberate "Escalation" as a "Challenger-State" in the territorial disputes. The Sino-American and Russo-American antagonistic relations commonly deteriorated through the South China Sea and North-East Asia problems which were aggravated by Japan. It is difficult to differentiate which the prior factor is, while addressing the problems on escalation between the South China Sea issue and the territorial disputes in North-East Asia. However, the correlation of confrontational factors in the two regions can be analyzed by the intensity and geographic scope of "Escalation", which appears in many forms as the following [Forrest, Mueller, Medeiros, Pollpeter, Tang 2008: 8–11].

1. Use new types of weapons referring to intensity of conflict.
2. Referring to scope of contradiction, expand the geographic scope.

Japan, sustaining the US foreign policy, deliberately strengthens tension in the territorial disputes over Senkaku/Diaoyudao. Referring to Japanese provocation in the territorial disputes,

there is necessity to pose the correlation between the Kuril Chain and Senkaku/Diaoyudao at the Northeastern regional level, North-East Asia issue and the South China Sea issue at the global level, where Japan is actively participating as a “Challenger-State”.

The point is that the territorial disputes in North-East Asia are intimately related with the South China Sea issue [Kanaev 2014]. Japan reinforces its status regarding the territorial dispute over Senkaku/Diaoyudao throughout cooperation with neighboring countries, as exemplified by the Philippines. Japan’s economic cooperation with the Philippines weakens China’s status, simultaneously stimulating Chinese thresholds referring to the territorial dispute over the Spratly Islands. In ASEAN-led strategic policies, China is actively participating in the waterway improvement of Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam [Shin Chzhon Ho... 2022] and the assumption on freedom of navigation for Indonesia and other projects with Singapore, Malaysia.

Japanese pro-American attitude collides with Russian animosity regarding the West’s expansionism. Japan doesn’t seek a solution plan which the Russian side can accept. Furthermore, the US’ missile defense system in cooperation with Japan caused a Russian security dilemma. While the contradiction was maintained, the Japanese government had bought Senkaku/Diaoyudao as privately-owned lands, and thereby Sino-Japanese relations deteriorated. Although, Japan assumed that the action was taken to prevent a collision on sovereignty, and China considered the “purchasing procedure” as a provocative action for deliberate escalation. As stated above, the confrontational aspects are mutually related. Japan is playing the core role, which makes the issue of territorial disputes over the Kuril Chain and Senkaku/Diaoyudao, thereby enticing the US to regional conflict and making it result in escalation at global level where the US is participating as the main player. Suppose the main reason of escalation in Asian intergovernmental situation is the North-East Asian territorial disputes, the main actors, as the result of escalation, have become the US and China.

After the dissolution of the USSR, rising China emerged as the US’ main threat at the regional level in the realm of military-strategic interests. Under the Obama administration, the US has changed the concept to handle the South China Sea issue and turned into proactive interference in the issue while dealing with the three main lines as written below [Kanaev, Bae 2016: 44].

The first point refers to the interpretation of DOC⁹ provisions. Article 4, which codifies that all maritime conflicts over the South China Sea should be resolved by states directly involved, is the very core of a matter. However, the US maintains the stance that DOC is a tentative document in accordance with DOC Article 10, and further the parties finally should reach the Code on Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea [Канаев, Бэ 2016: 11–23].

The second origin of parties’ contradictions is what the freedom of navigation signifies. In the stance of China, this stands for freedom of trade navigation, while the US asserts that freedom of navigation involves the military maneuver and operations, including the clandestine operations, being intelligence gathering in the waters outlined by China’s Law on the Territorial Sea and Contiguous Zone adopted in 1992 as Chinese territorial seas. This geographical conflict resulted in establishing the new military-strategic concept between the US Air-Sea Battle concept and China’s

⁹ Declaration on the conduct of parties in the South China Sea. URL: https://asean.org/?static_post=declaration-on-the-conduct-of-parties-in-the-south-china-sea-2 (accessed: 30.08.2022).

Anti-Access/Area Denial concept, thereby estimating how the warfare in the South China Sea in case of emergency will unfold¹⁰.

The third problem is based on the disagreement over maritime resources explored and shared in the South China Sea. From the Chinese point of view, all permission to develop the maritime resources of the South China Sea belongs to the Chinese government. However, the US asserts that all resources developed in the South China Sea are the commons of world society, and therefore China cannot consider the resources as its own property¹¹.

The South China Sea issue can be defined as Japan-US trial to break the ongoing strategic balance in the area. For the US, the South China Sea issue is a political instrument to provide pressure on Beijing, which along with the Trans-Pacific Partnership project is aimed to contain China [Канаев, Бэ 2018].

The political escalation of the territorial disputes

The rising China has the power to disrupt the equilibrium of the world balance by changing its political stance. If China lays emphasis on the Asia-Pacific regional issue while conducting its foreign policy, it may reorganize the international circumstance in favor of its political interests in terms of economy, politics and security.

China seeks the way to rebuild world order by changing the international rules and institutions to sustain their own economic and political interests [Mitter, Johnson 2021]. The rising China destabilized the unilateral world order, established by the US, and made the US enforce the foreign policy 'Pivot to Asia'.

An American diplomat, Kurt Campbell states that the US pursues to recover the global strategic balance premised upon the US-China axis through the foreign policy 'Pivot to Asia' [Campbell, Rush 2021]. However, in his opinion, the US should avoid interfering in the Sino-Japanese territorial disputes over the Senkaku/Diaoyudao to minimize the ongoing contradiction between the US and China [2020–2021 Donasia...]. Japan justified its sovereignty of Senkaku/Diaoyudao, while China ignored the US' stance that Japan has the priority to claim the sovereignty of the disputed islands [Pedrozo 2021]. The territorial disputes over Senkaku/Diaoyudao have turned into a military-political conflict between China and the US as the latter had basically participated in the disputes as a 3rd party. Both parties are not trying to seek the ways of peaceful settlement of contradiction and maintain the tense situation. Today the world society sees that the current political scene is similar to the time of the Cold War as the US and China are carrying out a Japan-based 'proxy war' to achieve their strategic superiority.

The US' foreign policy 'extension of democracy' was considered as a strategic threat to Russia. The US-led NATO's intervention in the regions of Europe and the Middle East was taken because the US disregarded Russia's strategic interests [Богатуров, Лебедева, Бобров 2022]¹². Meanwhile, China tries to reorganize the world order against the US' unilateralism [Фененко: 73–78]

¹⁰ China Naval Modernization: Implications for U.S. Navy Capabilities—Background and Issues for Congress, Congressional Research Service. URL: <https://sgp.fas.org/crs/row/RL33153.pdf> (accessed: 30.08.2022).

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² NATO's response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. URL: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_192648.htm (accessed: 30.08.2022).

using its growing power. Russia and China, which share strategic interests¹³, make much effort to impede the US' extension in the framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). In spite of SCO's non-military appearance¹⁴, the organization is considered as an anti-American alliance against NATO [Torkunov, Wohlforth 2021: 66–75]. Sino-Russian strategic ambition – SCO collides with the US foreign policy “pivot to Asia” [Greenberg 2021] enhancing its status.

Current states of political escalation

Japan is trying to intervene in a ASEAN-led regional economic plan to impede China's expansion by enticing the US [Ramezani, Kamali 2021]. The US perceives that China is becoming the opponent in the framework of the US-China axis [Глобальная система на переломе...; Greenberg 2021]. In the light of this, the US should avoid taking responsibility for Sino-Japanese contradictions over the Senkaku/Diaoyudao issue, and thereby preventing the deterioration of Sino-US relations [Ramezani, Kamali 2021; Greenberg 2021]. However, the territorial disputes over Senkaku/Diaoyudao have been moved on to the Sino-American military-political contradiction.

The cozy relationship between Japan and the Philippines is based on reinforcing Japan's status in the territorial dispute over Senkaku/Diaoyudao. The economic cooperation between the two countries aims to weaken China's status and gain political interests referred to the Spratly Islands. Furthermore, Japan assumed the necessity to reinforce its relationship with Australia, New Zealand and India against China-led regional security institute such as EAS (East Asia Summit).

While the intergovernmental relations of countries directly and indirectly involved in the territorial disputes were getting worse, the US had tried to enforce its own initiative policies conducive to its interests to a country in West Asia – India. The US has strengthened relations with India to impede rising China [Roland 2021], and thereby seek its own strategic interests in the Western Pacific. However, the US' trial to reinforce its relationship with India for isolating China wasn't accomplished.

In contrast, China-ASEAN intimate trade relations have led to the increase of China's status since 2009¹⁵. In addition, China had wanted to strengthen China-ASEAN relations through intergovernmental institutions, such as the EAS (East Asia Summit), but Japan presented an opposing stance against the Chinese proposal and assumed the necessity to reinforce its relationship with Australia, New Zealand and India. As stated above, the argument among countries directly and indirectly involved in territorial disputes is gradually becoming worse with exceeding the aspects of geographic scope. The most important basis of the Sino-American contradiction comes from Taiwan. From the US' perspective, it should be taken to a global level while China assumes it as an internal problem. Further, China-led Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) might be a means of confrontation with the US-led monetary system¹⁶. These current states show that the

¹³ Jochheim U. China-Russia relations: A quantum leap? European Parliament. URL: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2022/729349/EPRS_BRI\(2022\)729349_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2022/729349/EPRS_BRI(2022)729349_EN.pdf) (accessed: 30.08.2022).

¹⁴ The Moscow Declaration of the Council of Heads of States of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. URL: http://eng.sectsc.org/about_sco/ (accessed: 30.08.2022).

¹⁵ Gurjit Singh (2021). China and ASEAN: Flourishing at 30, Observer Research Foundation. 4.12.2021. URL: <https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/china-and-asean-flourishing-at-30/> (accessed: 30.08.2022).

¹⁶ Yoon's pledge to boost THAAD missile system risks China reprisal. Nikkei Asia. 16.03.2022. URL: <https://asia.nikkei.com/Spotlight/South-Korea-election/Yoon-s-pledge-to-boost-THAAD-missile-system-risks-China-reprisal> (accessed: 30.08.2022).

contradiction scope can be escalated to a “political dimension” [Forrest, Mueller, Medeiros, Pollpeter, Tang 2008: 8–11].

Conclusion

The San Francisco Peace Treaty concluded after the end of World War II for the determination of border demarcation stimulated the territorial disputes due to the difference of stances among the countries in interpreting the treaty. In order to peacefully solve the territorial disputes, the international society cannot but demand that Japan should strictly obey the Article 9¹⁷ of the Constitution of Japan. If the countries directly involved in the territorial disputes cannot obtain above commitment from Japan, international society will lose a control over Japan.

As mentioned above, the intergovernmental contradiction in the territorial disputes over the Kuril Chain shows that it can be expanded into Senkaku/Diaoyudao issue. In the process of conflict escalation, it happens to be that the great power fulfills the important role as the 3rd party, even though it doesn't bring about positive result. Furthermore, the countries staying in the confrontational state try to expand the sphere of their influence to the other region and the contradiction is escalated to the global level. The territorial disputes in North-East Asia include not only the countries directly involved, but also the great power as the 3rd party and other regional countries through escalations.

Russia and China are seeking to maintain strategic balance and stability through the consolidation in the frame of the SCO against US-led NATO at the global level. In this situation, the US tried to strengthen tension taking the ‘opportunity’ of Russo-Japanese territorial disputes, further to increase Japan's dependence on itself and prevent Russia from expanding to the Pacific Ocean. Today the missile defense system of Japan-US alliance caused the Russian security dilemma. The territorial disputes over Senkaku/Diaoyudao have aggravated the Sino-American military-political contradiction. Meanwhile, Japan's provocative action, being the purchasing procedure of Senkaku/Diaoyudao, has evoked the strong opposition among ‘Great China regions’.

In fact, Japan's trial of deliberate escalation appears repeatedly not only in North-East Asia, but also in the South China Sea, and thereby the main actors of conflicts have shifted to Great Powers being the US and China. Hence the political and economic cooperation among the countries will not be arranged and this will lead to deepened conflict situation. Eventually, this shows that the intergovernmental conflict at the regional level can escalate into full-scale war.

Furthermore, there is a necessity to focus on the expandability of geographic scope of the territorial disputes. In other words, the ‘political’ escalation of territorial disputes can be observed at the global level. The countries directly and indirectly involved in territorial disputes are seeking to strengthen relations with the countries of ASEAN region, West Asia and Oceania.

In accordance with W. Etzioni's notion [Etzioni 1965], the measure for peaceful settlement should be considered in the framework of the intergovernmental institutes exemplified by ASEAN, the six-party talks, due to its complexity. Therefore, the solvability of the territorial disputes over

¹⁷ 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. In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized.. URL: https://japan.kantei.go.jp/constitution_and_government_of_japan/constitution_e.html (accessed: 30.08.2022).

North-East Asia and the South China Sea should be researched in the platform based on the multilateral strategies.

But some issues, such as Japan's claims to the Kuril Islands of Russia or the Tokdo Islands of South Korea, cannot be resolved in this way, because their issue was resolved following the results of World War II and the UN Charter.

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