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**Nationalism and Power Politics in  
Japan's Relations with China**

**A Neoclassical Realist Interpretation**

**By**

**Yew Meng LAI**

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

University of Warwick, Department of Politics and International Studies

December 2008

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## ABBREVIATIONS

AOAB	Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau
APEC	Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation
ARF	ASEAN Regional Forum
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASEM	Asia-Europe Meeting
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CCS	Chief Cabinet Secretary
DPJ	Democratic Party of Japan
ECS	East China Sea
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zones
EU	European Union
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FM	Foreign Minister
FPA	Foreign Policy Analysis
FTAs	Free Trade Agreements
FY	Fiscal Year
G-7	Group of Seven Industrialised Countries
G-8	Group of Eight Industrialised Countries
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNP	Gross National Product
GSDF	Ground Self-Defence Force
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IR	International Relations
JABF	Japan Association of War-Bereaved Families ( <i>Nihon Izokukai</i> )
JCG	Japan Coast Guards (after April 2000)
JCP	Japan Communist Party
JDA	Japan Defence Agency (before January 2007)
J-MSA	Japan Maritime Safety Agency (before April 2000)
JETRO	Japan External Trade Organisation
JSP	Japan Socialist Party
LDP	Liberal-Democratic Party
LTTA	Long Term Trade Agreement
METI	Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry (from 2001 onwards)
MEXT	Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (from 2001 onwards)
MOD	Ministry of Defence (from January 2007)
MOE	Ministry of Education (before 2001)
MOF	Ministry of Finance
MOFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MSDF	Maritime Self-Defence Force
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NCR	Neoclassical Realism
NDPG	National Defence Programme Guideline
NDPO	National Defence Programme Outline
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
NIDS	National Institute for Defense Studies, Japan
NPOs	Non-Profit Organisations
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

PARC	Policy Affairs Research Council
PFT	Peace and Friendship Treaty
PKO	Peacekeeping Operations
PLA	People's Liberation Army
PM	Prime Minister
PMO	Prime Minister's Office
PRC	People's Republic of China
SDF	Self-Defence Force
SDPJ	Socialist Democratic Party of Japan
SNGs	Sub-national Governments
TMD	Theatre Missile Defence
UN	United Nations
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Laws of the Sea
UNECAFE	United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
US	United States
USD	United States Dollar
WB	World Bank
WTO	World Trade Organisation
WWI	World War One
WWII	World War Two

#### **ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE CITATIONS**

AFP	<i>Agence France-Presse</i>
AP	<i>Associated Press</i>
AS	<i>Asahi Shimbun</i>
BBC	<i>British Broadcasting Cooperation</i>
CD	<i>China Daily</i>
CNN	<i>Cable News Network</i>
DJN	<i>Dow Jones Newswire</i>
FT	<i>Financial Times</i>
IHT	<i>International Herald Tribune</i>
IIPS	<i>Institute of International Policy Studies, Japan</i>
Jiji	<i>Jiji Press</i>
JT	<i>Japan Times</i>
KN	<i>Kyodo News</i>
MDN/MS	<i>Mainichi Daily News/Mainichi Shimbun</i>
NYT	<i>New York Times</i>
Nikkei	<i>Nihon Keizai Shimbun</i>
PD	<i>People's Daily</i>
SCMP	<i>South China Morning Post</i>
SS	<i>Sankei Shimbun</i>
ST	<i>Straits Times</i>
XNA	<i>Xinhua News Agency</i>
YS/DY	<i>Yomiuri Shimbun/Daily Yomiuri</i>

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I owe a debt of gratitude to the following people and institutions for their significant contributions, in one way or another, to the accomplishment of this thesis.

First and foremost, my heartfelt thanks to my supervisors, Professor Christopher W. Hughes, and Professor Shaun Breslin, whose sound guidance, unyielding support and heart-warming encouragement made this research process not only an intellectually stimulating, but also life-enriching experience for me. I am deeply grateful for their professional and dedicated supervision, which they always delivered in a friendly and constructive atmosphere. Besides sharing their in-depth knowledge and astute insights on the finer nuances of the subject area, both Prof. Hughes and Prof. Breslin provided invaluable comments, which were no less crucial in helping draw attention to, and improve on various aspects of my research.

I also gratefully acknowledge support from the following institutions that made this study possible. I am especially thankful to Universiti Malaysia Sabah, for providing scholarship and maintenance under the staff training scheme, which enabled me to pursue my doctoral degree in the United Kingdom. Likewise, my sincere thanks to the Japan Foundation London Office, for the travel grant to Tokyo, during the first phase of my research trip. My appreciation also goes to the Japan Institute of International Affairs, and especially to both the Keio University's Institute of East Asian Studies and Faculty of Law, for their warm hospitality, and credible affiliations that greatly facilitated my research tasks during both phases of the Japan fieldwork.

On a personal level, I am grateful to Prof. Kokubun Ryosei, for his kindness in accepting and hosting me twice, under the Keio institutions mentioned above. Apart from sharing his views on Japan-China issues, his personal introductions helped yield a number of key interviews. I also wish to thank Wake Tashio, Sasaki Rika, Nao Shimoyachi, and Dr. Yuzawa Takeshi for their kind assistance throughout my stay in Japan. My acknowledgement equally goes to fellow colleagues at the Department of Politics and International Studies, notably Lena Rethel, Jeroen De Zeeuw, Tok Sow Keat, Morii Kazunari, and members of the East Asia Study Group, who made my life at Warwick interesting, both intellectually and socially. Meanwhile, Fauzan Khairi, Dr. Farizah Hairi, Mariecella Jamulis, Prof. Ahmat Adam, and other friends/colleagues here in the United Kingdom, and back in Malaysia and Singapore, deserve special mention for their various levels of personal and professional support.

Needless to say, I am indebted to my family for their unconditional love, support and encouragement that gave me the strength to endure the emotional “roller-coaster rides” throughout the demanding research process. My special gratitude goes to my parents and parents-in-law, for their selfless commitment in helping my wife and I cared for our daughter, while we subjected ourselves to our gruelling academic tasks. Most of all, to my wife, Maureen, whose love, understanding and sacrifices made it possible for both of us to concurrently pursue our respective doctoral studies with minimal hassle, and to our little daughter, Nathania, whose loving presence brightened up and put our busy lives into perspective.

Above all, I thank GOD for the blessings, hope, and spiritual guidance and enlightenment, without which, the completion of this thesis would not have been possible.

## DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation is my own work of research. In preparing this dissertation, I followed the guidelines established in the Guide to Examinations for Higher Degrees by Research of the University of Warwick. This dissertation has not been submitted for a degree at another university.

Yew Meng LAI

## ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores the role of nationalism in shaping Japan's relations with China. Although not discounting the significance of external-structural constraints, it aims to explicate "nationalism" as a domestic (power and ideational) variable, and its interactions with other determinants in re-defining Japanese external policy-orientation that affected the bilateral relationship, during the Koizumi administration (2001-2006). Interpreting from a neoclassical realist (NCR) perspective, it offers a theoretically informed examination about why, how, when, and the extent to which nationalism matters in Japan's China policy. This is done by operationalising, and systematically assessing nationalism's salience vis-à-vis other external-domestic dynamics (i.e. alliance commitment/resolve, economic interdependence, domestic political process/actors) that simultaneously affect Japanese state-elites' policy decision-making. It also establishes whether these factors serve to exacerbate, or mitigate domestic nationalist impulses, and their corresponding impact on Japan's China policy-options. Two nationalist-flavoured bilateral disputes – Yasukuni Shrine and East China Sea – are utilised as case-studies.

This thesis argues that nationalism matters, albeit to a qualified extent. Taking a realist-oriented, "middle-ground" position, it hypothesises that nationalism's salience is dependent on state-elites' perception/calculation of the conditions related to its interactions with the other aforementioned variables that concurrently influence foreign policy-making, during a given time period. It finds nationalism especially prevalent under perceptively sanguine external conditions, where an advantageous relative power position vis-à-vis China, fostered, in particular, by favourable US-Japan alliance resolve, tends to encourage assertive-nationalistic foreign policy-options, and vice-versa. Given the findings, it concludes that nationalism is an important, but not necessarily the primary driver of Japan's China policy.

Overall, this thesis makes a sustained theoretical contribution to our understanding of the international relations of Japan, and the utility of IR realism. Specifically, the hospitability of NCR to domestic-ideational theorising, can bridge mainstream IR and domestic/Area-studies approaches to advance a more holistic, albeit realist-oriented appreciation of nationalism in Japan's relations with China.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

The relationship between Japan and China has long been a source of interest to scholars of International Relations (IR). It is perhaps a puzzle for those who expect that intensified economic relations during the last three decades would result in warmer political and diplomatic exchanges. However, developments since the mid-1990s demonstrate that despite flourishing economic interactions and deepening interdependence, political ties remain, at best, lukewarm. Besides an increase in diplomatic friction arising from frequent resurrections of unresolved bilateral issues, public opinion in recent years have noted declines in mutual affections between the two societies. Indeed, bilateral relations reached an unprecedented nadir during the spring of 2005, in the wake of the outbreak of massive anti-Japanese demonstrations across Chinese cities that uncharacteristically elicited corresponding incidents of popular anti-Chinese reprisal in Japan<sup>1</sup> (Roy 2005:191; Chan and Bridges 2006:128). Although both governments endeavoured to repair their fragile relationship following the so-called “April storm”,<sup>2</sup> their efforts were eventually undermined by then Japanese prime minister, Koizumi Junichiro’s fifth pilgrimage to the controversial Yasukuni Shrine in October 2005, which resulted in a year-long suspension of bilateral summitries, as Japanese-Chinese ties struggled to find traction against a potential free-fall.

Experts commonly opine that political, socio-economic, and strategic transformations, or “structural changes” in both domestic and international realms have made post-Cold War Japanese-Chinese relations volatile (Kokubun 2001; 2003; 2006; Self 2002; Green and Self 1996; Green 2001; Takahara 2004; Wan 2006; Mori 2007; Hughes 2008). Apparently, the revival of nationalism as a product of this “structural changes” has become a potent force redefining their national interests and external orientations, which

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<sup>1</sup> This declining state of affair was acknowledged by then Chinese Vice-Foreign Minister (Vice-FM) Wu Dawei in his conversation with Japan’s Foreign Minister (FM), Machimura Nobutaka, during the latter’s visit in the aftermath of the unfortunate events. Wu reportedly told Machimura that problems developed in the bilateral ties were “the most serious difficulties since China and Japan normalised their relations in 1972.” (SCMP 19/04/2005 cf. Chan and Bridges 2006: 127-128; see also BBC 18/04/2005).

<sup>2</sup> This particular depiction of the April 2005 anti-Japanese demonstration in China (April storm) can be found in several news articles and media commentaries on the fateful event.

concomitantly affected their contemporary bilateral relationship. According to observers, the noticeable shifts in Japanese and Chinese foreign/security policies have been as much, a strategic response to the structural transformations brought about by the Cold War's demise, as a reflection of the ongoing domestic socio-political changes, where nationalism has become influential in shaping the public mood and domestic political debate. Media coverage of their current bilateral affairs has been unrestrained in blaming nationalism as the major culprit, while informed Japan-China watchers have consistently associated their fragile relationship to strong nationalist undercurrents in both countries. Although few predict violent conflict between Japan and China, many contend that domestic nationalist pressure is increasingly constraining both governments' foreign policy-options, especially when managing nationalist-nuanced issues that persistently haunt diplomatic relations.<sup>3</sup>

Scholars like Whiting (1989; 2000), Rozman (2002), Gries (2004; 2005a/b) Tamamoto (2005b) and Shi (2007) argue that rising nationalism is responsible for cultivating mutual negative images, stereotypes, and prejudices, and raising the stake of competition for pride and prestige. Meanwhile, Austin and Harris (2001), Self (2002), Glosserman (10/09/2003), and contributors of Heazle and Knight's (2007) edited volume highlight its role in perpetuating and widening the perceptual divides between the two governments and societies, all of which are contributory to one another's markedly assertive foreign policy, and hardnosed attitude in recent handling of bilateral issues that underscore their deteriorating relationship. Heazle construes that both Chinese and Japanese people's "strong sense of national pride and growing [mutual] indignation...play a large part in the current pattern of blame-laying and accusations between the two countries" (2007:181). Similarly, Roy (2003; 2004; 2005), Christensen (1999; 2005), Berger (2000), Yahuda (2006; 2007), Gurtov (2007), Chan and Bridges (2006), and Hughes (2008), among others, share the opinion that reactive-confrontational nationalisms, and "duelling national identities"<sup>4</sup> are exacerbating mutual suspicions, mistrusts, and historical acrimony, which not only threaten to derail overall Japanese-Chinese relations, but also draw the two East

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<sup>3</sup> See Chapter 2 for a discussion of, and contributors to these widely noted opinions/arguments.

<sup>4</sup> This phrase is taken from Self (2002:81)

Asian powers into potential rivalry and conflict. Simply put, the conventional wisdom recognises nationalism's efficacy in (re)defining contemporary Japanese-Chinese ties.

To be sure, both governments have thus far managed to maintain a relatively functional/pragmatic relationship, and kept bilateral tensions from spiralling out of rational control. They also appear to have the capacity to rein in domestic nationalist sentiment, to an extent, and prevent it from undermining their broader national interests in the context of the bilateral ties, and the region, as a whole. In fact, diplomatic exchanges have proceeded at various levels and channels, despite the "political chill".<sup>5</sup> Similarly, both sides have demonstrated willingness to put aside differences to cooperate via multilateral platforms on key regional security issues, i.e. the Six-Party Talks on North Korea's denuclearisation, not mentioning, the political will to seek mutual, albeit ad-hoc measures to manage their own periodic diplomatic crises arising from unresolved bilateral disputes. Moreover, both countries have seen their socio-economic linkages strengthened during the period of worsening politico-diplomatic relations (Takahara 2007).<sup>6</sup> Burgeoning bilateral trade and investments have brought mutual benefits and deepened interdependence, with an economically vibrant China not only supplanting the United States (US) as Japan's top trading partner in 2004, but also widely recognised as the "growth engine" responsible for lifting the sluggish Japanese economy out of its prolonged doldrums (Taniguchi 2005; Tok 2005). Meanwhile, "human diplomacy"<sup>7</sup> or grassroots-level interactions between the two societies have increased significantly, exemplified by the growth in tourism,<sup>8</sup> cultural and educational/academic exchanges, as well as flourishing sub-national-level cooperation, i.e. sub-regional economic integration schemes between Japanese prefectures and Chinese provinces, and the mushrooming of sister/twin cities (Jain 2006). The Chinese characterised this dichotomous trend as "cold politics, hot economics" (*zheng leng, jing re*), a

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<sup>5</sup> This term is commonly used by the Chinese to describe the worsening political climate (see PD 29/03/2006).

<sup>6</sup> According to Takahara, "progress in economic integration and the growing perception of common interests constitute the core part of the resilience of the [Sino-Japanese] relationship" (2007: abstract).

<sup>7</sup> For a commentary on the current development in grassroots-level exchanges or "human diplomacy" between Japan and China and its positive effects, see "Editorial: China and Japan", *Japan Times* (JT), 29 October 2007.

<sup>8</sup> According to statistics from the Japan National Tourist Organisation (JNTO), Chinese tourists made up 449,000 of the 5.21 million, or almost 9% of the total number of tourists visiting Japan in 2003. The number of Chinese tourists is expected to double to 20% (1.99 million) by 2010 (cf. JT 24/10/2007).

representation likewise, shared by the Japanese media and commentators in describing the state of the bilateral relationship<sup>9</sup> (Gurtov 2007:1; Chan and Bridges 2006:128).

Against the backdrop of flourishing domestic nationalist sentiment in both countries, such paradoxical trends and developments appear to contradict the conventional notion regarding nationalism's salience in shaping one another's foreign/security policy-orientation, let alone becoming an overarching feature in recent Japanese-Chinese relations. It is undeniable that the negative dynamics of rising nationalism, historical animosity, and changing power relations are fuelling mutual insecurity, and working against the emancipation of a genuinely stable and progressive relationship. Yet, one cannot but account for the propensity of other factors in the external and domestic realms, i.e. deepening economic interdependence, Washington's role within the US-Japan-China "triangular" relationship, and the domestic political process, among others, that simultaneously affect foreign policy-making, which can mitigate (or exacerbate) nationalism's impact on one's policy-behaviour/preferences towards the other. More importantly to this thesis, how nationalism interacts with these variables, and how they are mediated by the intersubjective perception/calculation of state-elites under specific conditions and time period, are crucial questions that need to be addressed, to ascertain the extent to which it influences Japanese policy-making.

Considering these fundamental yet important queries concerning nationalism's role and potency, this study sets out to systematically, explore the complex dynamics that shape contemporary Japanese-Chinese relations. Although not discounting the significance of external-structural-material factors, it aims to explicate the role of domestic-ideational determinants, namely "nationalism", and its interactions with other external-internal variables in influencing state behaviour/preferences in the bilateral ties. More specifically, this dissertation seeks to analyse the so-called "revival" of nationalism in post-Cold War Japan, its causality in redefining Japan's external policy-orientations, and its impact on the atmosphere of the bilateral relationship. Interpreting from a neoclassical realist perspective,

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<sup>9</sup> The Japanese equivalent term, "*Seirei keinetsu*" (cf. Itoh Moteshige 21/06/2004) is, however, lesser known.

it offers a theoretically informed and novel examination about why, how, when, and to what extent nationalism matters in Japan's China policy, arguing that nationalism can be salient, albeit under specific external-domestic conditions and time period, as perceived and calculated by Japanese state-elites.

### **1.1. Preliminary Literature Review and Theoretical Conceptualisation<sup>10</sup>**

From the outset, nationalism/identity politics has been an ever-present determinant in Japan-China relations, due to the complex interplay between their shared history and culture, and the evolving power dynamics that have shaped their past and present interactions. It is therefore common to find it mentioned, and/or addressed, either explicitly, or implicitly, in most studies that scrutinise the subject matter. There is a rich collection of IR and Area-studies literature on Japanese-Chinese diplomacy. Classic works by Newby (1988), Taylor (1996), Howe (1996), and Drifte (2003) provide comprehensive accounts of the history, trends, prospects, and the politico-security and economic developments of the bilateral relationship. Similarly, Whiting (1989) offers a critical analysis of the changing external and domestic dynamics on mutual perceptions and images, which have begun affecting Japanese-Chinese ties during the 1980s. Meanwhile, Zhao (1993), and Caroline Rose (1998) focus on the foreign policy-making process, the former analysing the informal mechanisms of Japan's China policy-making, while the latter proposes an IR-centred analysis of the interaction between domestic and systemic variables to interpret their respective foreign policy deliberations, when managing the 1982 history textbook dispute. Japan's China policy is also specifically examined by Johnstone (1998), Kojima (2000), Sasajima (2002), Hagstrom (2003; 2005) and Murata (2006), with all three Japanese authors scrutinising the policy-making role of domestic factors, while Johnstone explores its implications for US-Japan ties, and Hagstrom offers a relational power analysis of Japanese policy towards the Senkaku/Diaoyudao dispute. Also, recent book-length studies and edited works by Austin and Harris (2001), Soderberg (2002), Lam (2006a), and Wan (2006) offer comprehensive studies of their post-Cold War bilateral ties, drawing on the logic,

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<sup>10</sup> See Chapter 2 for a comprehensive listing and literature review of, and theoretical debate on Japanese-Chinese relations.

transformations, and shifting power dynamics that are reconfiguring and affecting their multi-dimensional relationship. Additionally, works by Wu (2000), Zhao (2002), Hughes (2002), Takamine (2005), and Yang Jian (2007) pay particular attention to developments in the security dimension of Japanese-Chinese relations, whereas Okabe (2001), Yang Daqing (2002), Rose (2005), and Lind (2008) highlighted the problems concerning history, memory, and historical reconciliation that periodically undermine their diplomatic exchanges. The abovementioned works are all but a few examples of a myriad of literature in the English language that address one of the key bilateral relationships in East Asia, besides the abundant materials published in their respective vernaculars (Soderberg 2002).

While these literatures have dealt comprehensively on Japanese-Chinese relations, from one angle or another, and notwithstanding their acknowledgement, to varying degrees, of “nationalism” as a factor, most have dedicated limited treatment to understanding its adverse impact on the bilateral ties, let alone how it affects their respective policy-making. To be sure, there are several works drawing explicit attention to the question of rising nationalism in Japanese-Chinese relations, namely those by Down and Saunders (1998/9), Rose (2000), Deans (2000; 2007), Rozman (2002), Satoh (2006a/b), He (2006), Chan and Bridges (2006), and Heazle (2007), and this list is by no means exhaustive. Both Down and Saunders (1998/9) and Deans (2000) explore nationalism’s role in the bilateral management of the Senkaku/Diaoyudao dispute during the 1990s. The former focuses on how the contradictory goals of promoting Chinese nationalism and economic development as a twin “legitimation” strategy affect Beijing’s responses, while the latter emphasises the manipulation of nationalism during the periods of dispute by elites and domestic actors in China, Japan, and Taiwan, to realise their respective political/diplomatic expedience.

Rose examines the resurgence of state and cultural nationalisms in both countries, arguing that they are “predominantly inward-responses to domestic and external changes”, and therefore carry no serious implications for Japanese-Chinese ties (2000:169). Conversely, Rozman (2002) found that nationalism, as a political tool and emotive sentiment, has contributed to their worsening mutual images, undermining both

governments' political will to bring a lasting thaw in bilateral ties. Meanwhile, He (2006), Satoh (2006a/b), Chan and Bridges (2006), Deans (2007), and Heazle (2007) argued that clashing nationalisms, national mythmaking, and the advent of the politics of pride, history, and identity, are central to understanding current Japanese-Chinese problems. Although emphasising on nationalism's role, these article-length analyses have neither incorporated clear theoretical frameworks to, systematically assess, the extent to which nationalism is responsible for their deteriorating ties, nor explicitly addressed crucial questions regarding its salience, compared to other external/domestic variables influencing Tokyo and Beijing's behaviour in the bilateral relations. Also, with the exception of Downs and Saunders (1998/9), most have not thoroughly explored the role of other variables in mitigating, or exacerbating domestic nationalist impulses, and their consequential impact on both governments' responses towards sensitive bilateral issues. Furthermore, the questions of how, in what manner, and under what conditions nationalism affect the domestic political apparatus and foreign policy-making process are left unexplained in these studies.

That said, there are book-length analysis like those of Bong (2002), and Chung (2004) that apply existing analytical frameworks to allude to nationalism's role in shaping Japan and/or China's territorial policies. The former introduces a "legitimisation strategy model" [similar to Downs and Saunders (1998/9)], which is also akin to Robert Putnam's "two-level game" theory utilised by the latter, in their respective enquiries of the 1992 and 1996 Japanese-Chinese disputes over Senkaku/Diaoyudao. However, both studies focus exclusively on one issue-area: territorial dispute *per se*, and not on Japan-China relations over a variety of issue-areas. Their analysis of the Senkaku/Diaoyudao dispute is also the only specific case involving Japanese-Chinese interactions among the several case-studies employed, with Bong (2002) looking chiefly into island disputes between East Asian states, whereas Chung (2004) focuses predominantly on China's management of its neighbourly territorial rows. Moreover, nationalism is not explicitly identified as their research objective/theme, and the period of investigation is limited to the early post-Cold War years, without much contemporary references, which is what this study aims to address.

Indeed, as important a factor as it has been deemed to be, there are few IR-oriented studies that pay specific attention to nationalism/identity politics in explaining Japanese-Chinese diplomacy, and even lesser, Japan's China policy-making. Elaborated in the following chapter, there is a qualitative difference between contending analytical approaches/theoretical traditions in terms of their treatment of nationalism in international relations, with the arguments largely transpiring within the mainstream IR-versus-constructivism/Area-studies debate.<sup>11</sup> The former, especially of the mainstream realist/liberal genre, tends to under-appreciate nationalism, and in fact, the role of domestic-ideational variables in constraining one another's policy-behaviour that affects their bilateral affairs. This is inherently due to mainstream IR theories' preoccupation with structural-material variables and system-level analysis, which causes them to ignore ideational and domestic-level theorisation, and assume "nationalism" and the likes to be unproblematic and *a priori* given (Tooze 1996). In contrast, nationalism and identity politics is central to constructivism/Area-studies' line of enquiry, which emphasises domestic-level analysis and cultural-ideational factors in explaining Japan-China relations. Expectedly, the subject matter has received most attention amongst constructivists and Japanese/Chinese studies specialists, but existing works also encounter analytical limitations that include the lack, or absence of discernible theoretical frameworks to operationalise nationalism, and overemphasis on domestic/cultural-ideational factors in explaining foreign policy-making and international outcomes, at the expense of external/structural-material imperatives.

To address such limitations, this thesis proposes Neoclassical Realism (NCR), a "middle-ground" IR construct that emphasises external-domestic interaction, and bridges mainstream IR-constructivist reasoning, to operationalise and systematically assess nationalism's role in Japanese-Chinese relations, giving specific emphasis to Japanese nationalism, and Japan's China policy-making. According to Gideon Rose, NCR is a theory of state behaviour/preferences within the broad realist research programme that generally share the tradition's standard assumption that "the scope and ambition of a country's

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<sup>11</sup> See Chapter 2 for an elaboration of the contributors of the theoretical arguments/debates, specific terminologies, and quotations mentioned in this sub-chapter.

foreign policy” is driven primarily by systemic pressures, and its relative power position in the international system (1998:146).<sup>12</sup> However, it rejects structural/neo-realism’s “ultra-parsimonious” “privileging of systemic-structural variables over [unit-level-ideational] factors” (Roth 2006:487). Neoclassical realists like Gideon Rose assume that the effects of systemic imperatives are indirect, complex, and subjective, and that “there is no immediate or perfect transmission belt linking [them] to foreign policy behaviour” (1998:146-147). Instead, they must be filtered through, or mediated by peculiar domestic political process/actors, or unit-level “intervening” variables, i.e. state-elites/decision-makers’ perception/calculation, domestic political competition, nationalism, state institutions, all of which, under specific condition/time context, stand to affect and cause variations in states behaviour/preferences (Gideon Rose 1998; Sterling-Folker 1997; Cha 2000; Taliaferro 2001; 2006; Schweller 2003; 2004). In other words, external constraints do not automatically induce states towards specific policy choices. “Rather, states respond (or not)...in ways determined by both internal and external considerations of policy elites, who must reach consensus within an often decentralised and competitive political process” (Schweller 2004:164).

Specifically to this thesis, NCR allows nationalism to be operationalised as a domestic, ideational (identity) and material (power) variable within its essentially realist-oriented framework that interacts with the domestic political process and influences Japanese policy-makers/state-elites’ perceptions/calculations, which then, determine particular foreign policy-option that either exacerbates, or alleviates bilateral problems vis-à-vis China. By problematising nationalism, the NCR model developed in Chapter 2 can systematically assess its impact, and helps explicate the conditions in which it does, or does not prevail in Japanese (or Chinese) policy-making, when managing their bilateral affairs. More significantly, it can promote a better understanding of other dynamics involved, while simultaneously answering pertinent questions regarding nationalism’s role in Japanese-Chinese relations that previous works have not convincingly elucidated.

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<sup>12</sup> The term “neoclassical realism” was coined by Gideon Rose (1998). For overviews of NCR, see his work, and those of Schweller (2003; 2004), and Taliaferro (2001; 2006).

The NCR framework has been utilised in previous studies to incorporate ideational explanations in specific areas of East Asian diplomacy, namely those by Cha (2000), Davidson (2002), and Nau (2003). For example, Cha (2000) elucidates the role of historical animosity within an NCR model of “quasi-alliances versus balance-of-threat” to address the concepts of abandonment and entrapment in the triangular alliance dynamics between the US, Japan, and South Korea during the Cold War. Meanwhile, Davidson (2002) introduces the “balance of allied resolve” model with domestic political pressure serving as the “intervening” variable, in his proposed solution to the “puzzle” of whether a rising China would become a status-quo, or revisionist power, whereas Nau (2003) seeks to explain the balance of power in Asia, via a structural model of power and identity.<sup>13</sup> Although all three studies introduce variables that are partially symptomatic of, and related to nationalism, it is not their explicit undertakings to examine and operationalise nationalism’s role in explaining their respective dependent variables, let alone their superficial definition and conceptualisation of the national phenomenon, which differs from that espoused by this study. Indeed, apart from these article-length analyses, there is to my knowledge, no existing literature that incorporates a clear, systematic NCR model to specifically operationalise, and address the question of nationalism in Japanese-Chinese relationship and/or post-Cold War Japanese foreign policy-making.<sup>14</sup>

Aforementioned, nationalism has been explicated in previous studies that utilise liberal-oriented, or other “integrative” theoretical constructs to explain Japanese-Chinese management of territorial disputes, mainly from China’s perspective (e.g. Downs and Saunders 1998/9; Bong 2002; Chung 2004; 2007). Considering their inherent characteristics, these “mid-range” theories, like NCR, share relatively similar basic assumptions, which lead to the deduction, albeit to varying extent, of comparable sets of hypotheses (see Bong 2002:20-23). However, as argued in Chapter 2, there exists,

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<sup>13</sup> Although Nau (2003) does not explicitly stipulate NCR as the basis of his conceptualisation, his analytical model shares the fundamental tenets, and is akin to the neoclassical realist construct.

<sup>14</sup> Although Bong (2002) introduces a realist-oriented sub-hypothesis, which he claims to be in the mould of NCR, the overall conceptualisation and operationalisation of his “legitimisation strategy model”, as well as both theoretical and empirical arguments/analysis ontologically reflect the Putnamesque “two-level game” rather than NCR’s logic and assumptions.

discernible theoretical distinctions, mainly in the theoretical arguments/nuances, and the deductive and ontological emphasis between these frameworks and the “NCR model of nationalism and state behaviour” incorporated in this thesis, besides the differences in the conceptualisation of the analytical construct/model, research problem, and issue-area/scope of investigation. This study is, therefore, a relatively novel undertaking, which can modestly contribute in theory-building terms, to enhancing realism’s explanation of nationalism, not only in Japan-China ties and Japanese foreign policy, but also in the international relations of East Asia, or other regions, where nationalist/identity politics thrive in interstate diplomacy.

## 1.2. Definitions, Empirical Scope and Limitations

In Chapter 4, nationalism is described as a nebulous phenomenon, intrinsically psychological, socio-cultural, and profoundly political in essence, as it is emotional and instrumental in disposition. Chan and Bridges rightly observe that the meaning of nationalism “changes with issue, time, space, and target or object” (2006:130), which explains the numerous jargons found in the literature on nationalism to define the various aspects/dimensions of its manifestation.<sup>15</sup> Considering its complexities and intersubjectivity, and for clarity and relevance, this study limits “nationalism” to an amalgamation of three mutually embracing and reinforcing meanings:<sup>16</sup>

- i) “a state of mind” (Kohn 1946:10), or psychological condition that cultivates sentiments of belonging, and unites a collective group of people (community/nation), whose members perceive to share a common identity based on unique physical-territorial, socio-cultural, historical, and emotional elements (Guibernau 1996:47) (“Self”) vis-à-vis the “Others”;
- ii) a political ideology/principle that identifies the nation with the state (Gellner 1983), and mobilises the political will of its population “to decide upon [and realise] their common political destiny” (Guibernau 1996:47; 62), domestically or internationally; and

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<sup>15</sup> Among the notable terms introduced to define the various manifestations of nationalism include “banal” (Billig 1995); “assertive” (Whiting 1983; 1995); “reactive” (Zheng 1999; Zhao 2000; 2005); “pragmatic” (Zhao 2000; 2004; 2005); “confident” (Oksenberg 1986; Rose 2000); “realpolitik” (Guang 2005); “cultural” (Yoshino 1992; Hutchinson 1994); “wounded” (McCormack 2000; Chang 2001; Gries 2004), and “dependent” (Kingston 2004; Tsunekawa 2006). Some of them are also listed in Chan and Bridges (2006:129-130, *fn.*5-11).

<sup>16</sup> These three definitions, especially the first two [e.g. (i) and (ii)], are adapted from Guibernau (1996:47, 62) and Alter (1989:3-4), whose basic ideas derive from Kohn (1946; 1965); Gellner (1983); Giddens (1985); Smith (1986; 1991; 1995), among others.

iii) a political instrument utilised by state/state-elites for mass mobilisation and other domestic political expediency (state/official nationalism), and by nationalist groups as political pressure on governmental decision-making process (popular nationalism).<sup>17</sup>

Deriving their essence from the classic definitions of Kohn (1946), Gellner (1983), Giddens (1985), Smith (1986), and Guibernau (1996), they represent nationalism's fundamental underpinnings and multi-dimensional characteristics. These meanings typically manifest two distinctive yet correlated, and at times, mutually embracing forms, namely state/official/elite-driven and popular/grassroots nationalisms.<sup>18</sup> Both are examined in this study, since state/state-elites and popular nationalists concurrently "participate in nationalist politics" (Gries 2004:87). Nationalism's rational-utility and emotional dispositions are equally taken into account, as both "sense/passion" and "sensitivity/reason" matter, when analysing international relations and foreign policy-making (Gries 2004:20, 87-90).<sup>19</sup> Taken together, such a conceptualisation that places emphasis on the "top-down" and "bottom-up" perspectives,<sup>20</sup> as well as nationalism's political/instrumental and socio-psychological dimensions,<sup>21</sup> helps generate more accurate interpretations of its role in shaping both state-society and interstate relations. It is especially applicable to understanding its impact on Japan's contemporary relations with China, since Japanese nationalism professes most of these meanings and exhibits the suggested attributes.

The primary research scope draws on the causal role of Japanese (neo-)nationalism in shaping Japan's China policy during the Koizumi administration (April 2001-September 2006), with a hindsight to the mid-1990s. Here, (neo-) nationalism's definition is limited to its "normalcy-driven", "anti-China", and "dependent" manifestations.<sup>22</sup> Chinese nationalism is periodically, albeit briefly addressed to elucidate its reactivity towards Japanese policy, and

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<sup>17</sup> This widely noted definition draws from the elaboration regarding nationalism's instrumental nature found in Gellner (1983); Brass (1991); Gries (2004); McVeigh (2004); and Downs and Saunders (1998/9).

<sup>18</sup> The above categorisation is common to studies of nationalism, and can be found in the works of Seckington (2005); McVeigh (2004); Gries (2004); and Zhao (2000); among others.

<sup>19</sup> I take the terms "sense/passion" and "sensitivity/reason" from Gries (2004) to be used throughout this thesis.

<sup>20</sup> The "top-down" and "bottom-up" view of nationalism is specifically mentioned in Gries (2004).

<sup>21</sup> Nationalism serves as both a power (material) and an identity (ideational) variable in this thesis.

<sup>22</sup> See Chapter 4 for a discussion of nationalism, generally, and Japanese (neo-) nationalism, in particular, especially the abovementioned manifestations, and contributors of the terminologies, i.e. McCormack (2000), Kingston (2004), Samuels (2007a/b), and others.

propensity in triggering reactive, anti-Chinese nationalism/sentiment within Japan that induces Tokyo's specific policy-responses. State agency and state-to-state relations are the central focus, while non-state elements are explored "with a view to determining how they affect the intergovernmental relationship" (Austin and Harris 2001:3). In this regard, this thesis utilises the "state" or more specifically, "state-elites"<sup>23</sup> as the principal agent, since they ultimately make the foreign policy decisions. The definition of "state-elites" is limited to a small cohort of central decision-makers/power-wielders within the Japanese state apparatus, comprising typically the Prime Minister (PM), Foreign Minister (FM), Chief Cabinet Secretary (CCS), heads of the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI), Japan Defence Agency (JDA),<sup>24</sup> and to varying degrees, other relevant Cabinet members. The PM and the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) is afforded particular emphasis following their consolidation of power vis-à-vis the bureaucracy via the political and administrative reforms in 2001, not mentioning, the advent of a dynamic yet allegedly "unconventional" leadership and policy-making *modus operandi* under Koizumi Junichiro. Besides state-elites, this study also addresses the role of relevant Japanese bureaucracies, namely the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), METI, and JDA, as part of the state agency. Equally under scrutiny are other domestic agents, especially political parties, i.e. the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), its coalition partners, and their political oppositions. Within the LDP, attention is given to the influence of factions (*habatsu*), policy-tribes (*zoku*), and senior "power-brokers" (*kuromaku* and "China-Hands") on China policy-making. Meanwhile, the business community (*zaikai*), interest/pressure groups, and public opinion represent the non-state agency in this analysis.<sup>25</sup>

Since nationalism manifests through both state and non-state agencies, an important aspect of this study is to observe the aforementioned actors' association with, and participation in nationalist politics. Particularly under scrutiny are the politico-ideological dispositions and affiliations of state-elites, their dependence on nationalism as a power

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<sup>23</sup> This thesis takes the commonly used term "state elites" from Bong (2002).

<sup>24</sup> Officially upgraded to "ministry" status on 9 January 2007, the JDA is now referred to as the Ministry of Defence (MOD), Japan (Reuters 09/01/2007). I use the former name in view of my period of investigation.

<sup>25</sup> The commonly noted Japanese terms mentioned above derive from Hagstrom (2003) and Hook et.al (2001).

instrument, their inclination towards nationalist, or pragmatic foreign policy agenda, and their domestic political resolve vis-à-vis nationalist and moderate elements, to infer on nationalism's salience in affecting their policy perception/calculation. Similarly, the role of key nationalist pressure groups highlighted in Chapter 4, as well as public opinion towards China shall be elucidated, since popular nationalism, when expressed via these civil society channels can be a formidable domestic political constraint on the Japanese state's behaviour/preferences.

Externally, the atmosphere of the US-Japan relationship, specifically Tokyo's perception of Washington's "allied commitment/resolve"<sup>26</sup> under their bilateral security alliance, shall be examined in concurrence with the developments in Japanese-Chinese ties to measure Japan's relative power position vis-à-vis China at a given time period.<sup>27</sup> Relative power position as defined here, does not merely refer to the conventional material power capabilities that a state possesses (i.e. economic; military, including "offensive-defensive" capabilities, and other typical material-based wherewithal) (Taliaffero 2000/1), but equally concerns, if not more, the estimation of one's favourable/unfavourable overall position and politico-diplomatic resolve vis-à-vis the other during a specific period and context. The result may not necessarily reflect the actual power distribution between the interacting states, since information on the relevant indices of power position has to be translated through what Sterling-Folker (1997:19) sees as the "opaque filter" of state-elites' perception and other domestic actors/processes, in accordance to NCR's dictum. The analysis also accounts for other significant contextual factors/actors in the international environment that concurrently affect Japanese state-elites' perceptions/calculations in China policy-making.

This research introduces two highly visible bilateral issues as case-studies to test the NCR model, namely the Japanese-Chinese debacle over prime ministerial visits to Yasukuni Shrine, and their multi-dimensional dispute in the East China Sea (ECS), which

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<sup>26</sup> This term is referred to as "balance of allied resolve" and "patron commitment" in the NCR studies of Davidson (2002) and Cha (2000), respectively. This thesis borrows, and uses all three terms, interchangeably.

<sup>27</sup> The given period is mainly, though not exclusively based on the specific period leading to the respective diplomatic rows between Japan and China over the selected case-studies, and the immediate aftermath.

comprises the Senkaku/Diaoyudao territorial row, Chinese maritime incursions, and bilateral competition for energy resources in the contested waters. The case-studies are selected on the criteria/reasons of relevancy, and nature of dispute. Firstly, both are highly relevant cases insofar as they are contemporary issues that strike the nationalist chord, and arouse strong nationalistic impulses within Japan and China. As shall be elaborated respectively in Chapters 6 and 7, the Yasukuni problem relates to their clashing national/historical identities, whereas the ECS disputes are reflective of their competing territorial nationalism and its correlation to the notion of sovereignty. Indeed, rising nationalism in both countries is widely perceived to have increased the stake and retarded possible resolutions of both issues. Besides inciting unadulterated nationalistic passion and emotion, both issues also have the tendency to be instrumentalised by Japanese (and Chinese) state/state-elites, and non-state actors (i.e. nationalist pressure groups/ individuals, etc.) for domestic political and external expediency. Secondly, both were amongst the most visible and contested bilateral issues during the period of investigation. Indeed, Koizumi's annual Yasukuni visits during his premiership became arguably the single, most damaging problem affecting their diplomatic relations, while the ECS debacles constantly ratcheted up bilateral tension that equally contributed to the Koizumi era being labelled as one of the most debilitating periods in Japanese-Chinese ties since their normalisation in 1972. Also, both case-studies resonate their longstanding and unresolved quarrels over wider issue-areas, Yasukuni reflecting the perennial "history problem", whereas the ECS concerns territorial/maritime sovereignty and geo-strategic/geo-economic considerations.

Relatedly, the two case-studies are qualitatively different; the former is predominantly a symbolic and "soft" issue, whereas the latter represents a "real/tangible" and potentially explosive problem. In other words, the Yasukuni issue, like most other "history" problems, is the kind of bilateral issue in Japanese-Chinese relations that, although having the capacity to stir passionate popular and official nationalistic outbursts, is not likely, on its own, to manifest into more potent forms of bilateral confrontation. Conversely, the ECS debacles are, to an extent, "zero-sum" issues of national security and sovereignty/

integrity, which have the propensity to arouse nationalistic impulses that galvanise societal and governmental responses “disproportionate to the material stakes involved” (Roy 2003:3). Last, but not least, both case-studies are dissimilar, in that one is primarily a single-actor/single-issue dispute, whereas the other is multi-actor/multi-issue. Specifically, Yasukuni is a “history”-related, single-issue dispute, concerning only prime ministerial Shrine visits, and mainly, triggered by a single actor in former PM Koizumi’s controversial decision to pay annual homage, during his time in office. In contrast, the ECS is, as aforementioned, a multi-issue/multi-dimensional dispute that involves not only their rivalling sovereignty claims, but also competition for geo-economic and geo-strategic control over the contested area (namely the symbolic, economic, and military-security dimensions of their bilateral ties). It is likewise, a multi-actor issue involving the actions, management, and coordination of multiple state/official actors (i.e. related ministries and agencies), as well as, the direct, provocative actions of non-state actors (i.e. related nationalistic activities of popular nationalist groups/individuals).

The selection of these two relevant, yet qualitatively different case-studies is intended to ensure that this thesis can adequately address not only the fundamental question regarding whether nationalism matters, but equally to examine why, how, when, and to what extent it matters in Japan’s relations with China, especially when it comes to managing sensitive bilateral issues of nationalistic persuasions. Since both issues are essentially, highly visible, nationalistic disputes, they are primed to help explicate: 1) whether nationalism (domestic nationalist pressure and/or state-elites’ personal nationalist convictions) is important in shaping Japan’s China policy, and if so; 2) when, and under what circumstances nationalism becomes most salient, in relations to other external-domestic factors that concurrently affect Japanese policy-making; and 3) the conditions in, and the extent to which the emotional and/or instrumental dimensions of nationalism manifest most profoundly in Japanese state-elites’ policy decision-making. In doing so, both issues, which were also amongst the most hotly and frequently contested during the period of investigation, allows this thesis to simultaneously elucidate on the much anticipated

question of whether nationalism is, in fact, the primary driver of Japan's China policy-making during the Koizumi administration, and the major factor in shaping their deteriorating ties. Likewise, the intention to select these qualitatively different case-studies is mainly to promote a broader, yet more astute comprehension of Japanese policy-makers' perception, attitude, and responses toward domestic nationalist pressure and/or their personal nationalistic convictions over a variety of issue-areas, which this thesis argues, may not be necessarily consistent, despite occurring under similar conditions/time contexts. Finally, the advantages of having single-actor versus multi-actor case-studies are that they not only allow this thesis to comprehensively capture the whole range of Japanese policy actors, and the different levels of policy-making involved, but also shed light on the degree of policy-making leverage/influence that different levels/categories of actors have, or can exude, when managing single- and multi-issue bilateral disputes of nationalistic orientation vis-à-vis China, under specific conditions/time period.

Overall, this is essentially a study of state behaviour and international outcomes between Japan and China. Specifically, its analytical aim is to explain how, when, under what conditions, and to what extent nationalism as a domestic determinant affects Japan's China policy and the bilateral relationship. This means that, despite the necessary references on China and Chinese nationalism, it is Japan and Japanese nationalism, which are the primary objects of investigation, not vice-versa. Yet, this is not a study of Japanese nationalism *per se* and therefore, does not purport to meticulously, explore from all angles the intersubjectivities of the "national" phenomena in contemporary Japan, although its fundamental underpinnings, nature, manifestations, and political/external dynamics are adequately explicated for the purpose of this investigation. It is also neither a general analysis of Japanese foreign policy-making, nor a "bi-country" undertaking to understanding Japanese-Chinese relations from a multi-dimensional perspective, but principally, a study of the contemporary trend and development of their bilateral ties, as effected by resurgent nationalistic forces on the workings of Japanese statecraft in Japan's China policy.

### 1.3. The Research Problem and Objectives

Since rising nationalism is commonly regarded as a driving force behind the decline in post-Cold War Japanese-Chinese relations, the central research problem assesses:-

- i) the manner, conditions, and the extent to which domestic nationalist pressure/sentiment in Japan is responsible for their problematic bilateral relationship;
- ii) its salience vis-à-vis other external-domestic factors constraining Japan's behaviour/preferences, towards China over sensitive bilateral issues; and
- iii) whether these other factors exacerbate/mitigate nationalism, and the related impact on Japan's policy-options, under specific conditions and time context.

This thesis agrees with the conventional notion, but only to a qualified extent. Bearing in mind the plausible roles of other variables, it takes a "middle-ground" position by hypothesising that nationalism matters in Japan's relations with China, albeit under specific external-domestic conditions and time context, as perceived/calculated by state-elites. It argues that, besides domestic nationalist pressure, Japanese state-elites need to consider other factors, which they may perceive, during specific periods, and under particular conditions, as more crucial in determining their policy-decisions, even when managing the most sensitive of bilateral disputes. Moreover, domestic nationalist pressure does not act in isolation, but interacts with these other policy-determinants, which can exacerbate/mitigate its effects on external decision-making. This study contends that nationalism's salience in affecting foreign policy-choices, i.e. choosing between assertive-nationalistic, and moderate-conciliatory policy-options, hinges on state-elites' perception/calculation of the conditions related to its interaction with other "power" variables that concurrently affect foreign policy-making, namely Japan's relative power position vis-à-vis China, and state-elites' domestic political resolve vis-à-vis nationalist and moderate forces, at a given time period (see also Bong 2002; Downs and Saunders 1998/9). It also depends on their ability to balance, or "trade-off" between achieving nationalist and pragmatic policy-objectives.<sup>28</sup> Ideally, the Japanese government/state-elites would like to embrace the domestic nationalist agenda, while simultaneously seeking to realise Japan's broader national

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<sup>28</sup> For works with similar assumptions from which this thesis draws its ideas, see Downs and Saunders (1998/9), Bong (2002), Brooks (1997), and Fearon (1994). For a good work on "trade-off", see Morrow (1993).

interests. However, their ability to advance narrow/nationalistic foreign/China policy-goals is dependent primarily on the condition of a favourable relative power position vis-à-vis China. Conversely, an ambiguous or disadvantageous relative power position would require state-elites to either balance, or trade-off between the two contradictory objectives (see Downs and Saunders 1998/9; Bong 2002). When the balancing becomes unmanageable, they may have to trade-off one for the other (Downs and Saunders 1998/9; Bong 2002), during which decision-making (rational, or otherwise) may decisively hinge on the intersubjective perception/calculation of state-elites and the prevailing domestic political process (see Sterling-Folker 1997; Schweller 2004). Such considerations underscore this thesis' NCR supposition regarding the primacy of power politics, and the intervening function of domestic-ideational variables in affecting state behaviour and the conduct of interstate diplomacy.

The results of this academic enquiry are expected to address crucial questions regarding nationalism's propensity in shaping Japan's contemporary relations with China. Indeed, depending on the condition/time period, nationalism may, or may not necessarily prevail in Japan's actual policy-options, even when managing discernible nationalist issues, like the Yasukuni Shrine and ECS disputes, although it may manifest via the symbolic/rhetorical dimension of their diplomatic responses. This study also aims to:-

- i) promote a balanced interpretation of the background, driving forces, characteristics, and international orientations of contemporary Japanese nationalism (especially the so-called neo-nationalism), and its role in domestic politics/foreign policy-making process;
- ii) comprehend the workings of domestic nationalist pressure and other external-domestic variables in shaping Japan's China policy trends, and the regressive atmosphere of their post-Cold War bilateral relationship;
- iii) enrich the related body of literature by providing an assessment of nationalism in Japanese-Chinese ties, via an "integrative" IR framework that operationalises and systematically analyses its role in the case-studies concerned; and
- iv) contribute to the progressiveness of IR realism, where NCR's hospitality to domestic-cultural-ideational theorising, can promote interactions between, and theoretically bridge mainstream IR and constructivist/Area-studies reasoning to

advance a holistic, albeit realist understanding of Japan's foreign policy and international relations.

#### 1.4. Research Design and Thesis Structure

This qualitative study employs documentary analysis, supplemented by elite interviewing as the main research methods. The basis of primary sources derives from: i) publicly available official documents (i.e. official publications, annual reports, and white papers from related ministries/agencies and think-tanks); and ii) relevant information in various published forms (i.e. official declarations and press statements, and media reports/commentaries/debates via newspapers, magazines, and news monitoring services). The latter, especially, media coverage from the *Reuters*, *Kyodo News* (KN), *Agence France-Presse* (AFP), *Yomiuri Shimbun* (YS), *Asahi Shimbun* (AS), *Japan Times* (JT), *Mainichi Shimbun/Daily News* (MS/MDN), *Sankei Shimbun* (SS), *People's Daily* (PD), *Xinhua News Agency* (XNA), and *South China Morning Post* (SCMP), among others, were a crucial empirical source in lieu of the contemporary nature of the study. These sources derived mainly from online archives of the related newspapers, and media monitoring services like *Dow Jones FACTIVA*. Additionally, public opinion surveys conducted by both government and the media provided statistical data for the analysis and interpretation of popular sentiment on nationalism, Japanese-Chinese relations, and Japanese perceptions, images, and attitudes towards the Chinese government and people, and vice versa. Meanwhile, secondary sources from the related literature furnished the background information, contending theoretical approaches, substantive argumentations, and critical perspectives that helped deepened the knowledge and understanding required to tackle the research problem.

Also, elite/expert interviews (semi-structured and open-ended formats) were employed as a supplementary, albeit important source of information to overcome/circumvent problems concerning restricted access to, and the "superficiality" (*tatema*) of official Japanese (and Chinese) records/documents, as well as language limitations. The targeted interviewees comprised relevant government officials, academics,

politicians, press members, public figures, and other informed individuals.<sup>29</sup> The selection of interviewees is, principally based on identifying those with first-hand experience/knowledge of Japan's China policy pertaining to the two case-studies, preferably the direct/indirect protagonists of the policy/diplomatic processes concerned (Hagstrom 2003:92). Equally important are relevant members of the academic/research community and media, and opinion leaders knowledgeable on Japanese nationalism and foreign policy-making. Access to interviewees derived from a combination of strategies, including personal contacts, introductions, and credible affiliations with the Keio Institute of East Asian Studies (KIEAS), and Faculty of Law, Keio University.<sup>30</sup>

This thesis is divided into eight chapters. The first two deal with the introduction and theoretical framework, respectively. Chapter 3 offers a background of the dynamics, trends and developments in Japanese-Chinese relations during the Cold War and post-Cold War periods. An insight into nationalism in postwar/contemporary Japan is the undertaking of the fourth chapter. Chapter 5 provides an analysis of nationalism and Japanese foreign policy-making, followed by an overview of the interactions between, and the reality of nationalism's salience vis-à-vis other variables in shaping Japan's China policy and the bilateral relationship. The subsequent two chapters are dedicated to the case-studies of the Yasukuni Shrine and ECS disputes. A generalisation of the findings and a view of nationalism's implications for future Japanese-Chinese diplomacy are the concluding chapter's provision.

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<sup>29</sup> Elite/expert interviews were concentrated mainly in Japan, as with the research fieldwork, in view of the primary scope of investigation and object of study. That said, there were opportunities to interview Chinese and Western scholars that were either visiting, or based in Japan and the United Kingdom, which helped generate a richer, more objective, and less Japan-biased opinion/perspective of the subject matter. See Bibliography.

<sup>30</sup> The candidate was attached to the KIEAS as a junior visiting scholar, hosted by Prof. Kokubun Ryosei (former Director) during the first phase of doctoral research fieldwork in Japan between January-March 2007. The affiliation with, and introductions by Prof. Kokubun helped yield key interviews with senior politicians from the LDP, as well as renowned Japan-China scholars via the exclusive participation in the "Conference on The Need for Conflict Prevention and Conflict Management in Sino-Japanese Relations", jointly organised by KIEAS-Silk Road Studies Programme on March-8-9, 2007. The candidate was granted another short-term affiliation with Keio University during the second phase of his fieldwork (between May-June 2008), under the auspices of the Faculty of Law.

## CHAPTER TWO

### **INTERPRETING NATIONALISM IN JAPANESE-CHINESE RELATIONS: CONTENDING APPROACHES AND ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORKS**

The study of Japanese-Chinese relations, like most analyses of interstate relationship and foreign policy-making, has largely transpired within a broad range of analytical frameworks that straddle along different approaches and contending theoretical paradigms. Depending on their respective choice of central variables and level-of-analysis, these approaches have yielded rich, but often diverse explanations of their complex, multi-dimensional ties, and the periodic variations in Japanese policy behaviour/preferences vis-à-vis the Chinese, when managing their bilateral affairs. This chapter discusses the efficacies and fallacies of the contending approaches, paying particular emphasis on their treatment of nationalism in explaining the nature of post-Cold War Japanese-Chinese diplomacy. It assesses, and questions the viability of their respective interpretations, offering instead, a modest, realist-oriented, “hybrid” analytical framework that bridges the reasoning of the competing disciplines and theoretical traditions, to systematically, assess nationalism’s role in Japan’s policy-making in the context of the bilateral ties.

#### **2.1. Contending Approaches to Explaining Japanese-Chinese Relations: Area-Studies versus Mainstream IR Theories and Alternative Frameworks<sup>1</sup>**

The task of identifying a suitable approach and theoretical framework is no less daunting, as a literature survey on Japanese-Chinese relations and Japanese/Chinese foreign policies, not only points to the complexity of choosing between competing approaches [between IR and Area-studies approaches], but equally in opting one theory over another within the IR theoretical divides (Caroline Rose 1998:29). According to Caroline Rose (1998), previous studies have largely developed within the confines of the separate disciplines of IR and Area-studies. The key distinction between these two so-called “mutually exclusive” approaches lies on their perennial debate regarding the prevalence of the “general” and “specific” features in understanding state behaviour and the nature of international politics

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<sup>1</sup> The inter/intra-disciplinary debate (notably on IR versus Area-studies) in this section draws ideas/arguments from Caroline Rose (1998:Chp.2). For a similar line of argument, see other theory-based works focusing on the contending debates within IR studies like Desch (1998); Gideon Rose (1998) and Zakaria (1992).

(Caroline Rose 1998:28). Whilst IR-oriented studies seek to establish “universally-applicable” explanations by privileging general over “country-specific” attributes, Area-studies emphasise the understanding of foreign policy via a state’s peculiar/idiosyncratic, or *sui generis* features (Caroline Rose 1998:28). Rose opines that although both approaches have produced quality research, their respective preoccupations expose them to criticisms; the IR approach for overemphasising parsimony and “denigrating factual detail”, whereas Area-studies is guilty of “amassing empirical data but [is] usually devoid of theoretical value” (Brecher 1972:1; quoted in Caroline Rose 1998:28).

Adding to this conundrum has been the presence of effervescent debates between competing theoretical paradigms within the IR discipline itself, notably realism versus liberalism of the mainstream genre,<sup>2</sup> and lately, between mainstream and alternative/critical theories like constructivism<sup>3</sup> (Caroline Rose 1998:28-29). These contending IR theories can be, fundamentally divided, according to their respective emphasis on the “level-of-analysis” and preoccupation with particular variables in explaining state behaviour/preferences and international outcomes (see Singer 1961; Zakaria 1992; Desch 1998). Proponents of macro-level analysis, or *aussenpolitik*, favour external determinants and systemic-level explanations, in contrast to their exponents at the opposite end of the theoretical divide, who privilege *innenpolitik*, or domestic, unit-level reasoning (Zakaria 1992:179-180; Gideon Rose 1998:146).<sup>4</sup> There is likewise, analytical distinction amongst theories within *aussenpolitik* and *innenpolitik*, based on their preferred analytical variables, with some privileging structural-material imperatives, while others stress on cultural-ideational factors.<sup>5</sup> For example, conventional macro-level theories like neo-realism (Waltz 1979; 1993; Gilpin 1981; 1984; Grieco 1988; Layne 1995, Mearsheimer 2001) and neo-liberal institutionalism (Keohane and Nye 1977; Axelrod 1984; Axelrod and Keohane 1985; Keohane 1984; 1989;

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<sup>2</sup> For an overview of the mainstream IR theoretical debate, see Baldwin (1993) and Kegley, Jr. (1995).

<sup>3</sup> For a critical debate between mainstream IR and constructivism/culture-oriented theories, see Lapid and Kratochwil (1996).

<sup>4</sup> *Aussenpolitik* and *innenpolitik* found in Zakaria (1992) are similarly termed as International Politics (IP) and Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA), respectively, by scholars. For example, see Kubalkova (2001).

<sup>5</sup> Rather than pitting one theoretical paradigm against the other (i.e. realism versus liberalism, or constructivism) Desch contends that the theoretical divisions are best, explained “across two dimensions: domestic versus international, and material versus ideational” (1998:155-156).

Oye 1986) privilege structural-material explanations<sup>6</sup> (i.e. neo-realists on systemic distribution of power and relative capabilities; neo-liberal institutionalists on the logic of economic interdependence,<sup>7</sup> degree of cooperation<sup>8</sup> and institutionalisation). Meanwhile, alternative discourses in the guise of Alexander Wendt's "systemic-constructivism" (1992; 1995; 1996) rationalise the workings of international politics primarily on ideational and normative grounds.<sup>9</sup> On a similar note, there are *innenpolitikers* that advocate structural-material arguments: classical realists implicitly press on state-society relations, and human nature<sup>10</sup> (Taliaferro 2006:470; Morgenthau 1946; 1967; Wolfer 1962; Aron 1966), and proponents of liberalism place premiums on domestic politics, institutions, and regime types (Riise-Kappen 1991; Rosecrance and Stein 1993; Evangelista 1995; 1997; Milner 1992; 1997; Moravcsik 1997), i.e. "two-level game" and "democratic peace" theses (Putnam 1988; Lake 1992; Russett 1993; Gowa 1995),<sup>11</sup> as opposed to ideational arguments – culture, norms, identity and interests (Lapid and Kratochwil 1996; Berger 1996; 2000; 2003; Katzenstein 1996) – championed by domestic-constructivists.

In a sense, this theoretical division within the IR approach reflects, and even, to an extent, subsumes the inter-disciplinary divides between IR and Area-studies (Caroline Rose 1998:29), considering the overlapping assumptions and exclusively domestic-centred analysis espoused by both *innenpolitik* and Area-studies. To be sure, there are subtle differences between Area-studies and *innenpolitik* theories, insofar as the former is country-specific in focus, targeting on attributes peculiar to the country/area-of-study, whereas the

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<sup>6</sup> That said, their theoretical brethrens, namely classical realism and liberalism do emphasise the role of domestic factors/actors in shaping foreign policy and international outcomes, albeit implicitly by the former (Taliaferro 2006:470), and explicitly by the latter.

<sup>7</sup> For a comprehensive review of the liberal perspective on the logic of economic interdependence, see Copeland (1996); and Russett and Oneal (2001:Chp.4).

<sup>8</sup> See Higgott (1993) for an interesting analysis of the opportunities and obstacles of economic cooperation.

<sup>9</sup> Whilst structural-realists in the Waltzian tradition assume that the structural attributes of international anarchy govern state behaviour/preferences (see Waltz 1979), systemic-level constructivists like Wendt argues that "Anarchy is What States Make of It", where the international system is a social and cultural construct, defined by states (units) within it (see Wendt 1992; 1995).

<sup>10</sup> For this discussion, see Mastanduno, Lake and Ikenberry (1989:460) and Taliaferro (2006:470; 472-475). Also, Nau contends that although "Classical realism recognized the relevance of goals, aims, values and domestic politics (identity)", these constructivist factors are conceptualised "only at the level of relationships, not the level of structure", where power (structural-material) remains the ultimate aim of international politics (2003: en.1).

<sup>11</sup> For an overview of the literature, and summaries and critiques of the "democratic peace", see also Brown, Lynn-Jones and Miller (1995); Layne, Spiro and Owen (1994).

latter, especially of the mainstream genre, is inclined on applying generally applicable variables and explanations. Yet, hospitality to ideational variables, which are also inherently *sui generis*, puts Area-studies and the alternative IR theory of constructivism well within the same analytical confines. The similarities and differences between these contending approaches and theories are defined in Table 1, based on the “level-of-analysis” and “choice-of-variables” criteria. To overcome their inherent rigidity and weaknesses, not mentioning, fastidious categorisations, scholars have embraced an “intra/inter-disciplinary” approach, developing frameworks that not only integrate macro- and micro-level analyses (i.e. Zhao 1996), but also IR and Area-studies, to generate more comprehensive and accurate accounts of international relations and foreign policy-making (Caroline Rose 1998:29; see also Katzenstein and Okawara 2001; Katzenstein 2008). Indeed, all three mentioned approaches appear in the literature on Japanese-Chinese relations.

**Table 1 Similarities and Differences between Contending Approaches and Theoretical Paradigms**

Type-of-variable Level-of-analysis	structural-material	cultural-ideational
Macro-level (external)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. mainstream IR theories of <i>aussenpolitik</i> (neo-realism/neo-liberalism)</li> <li>2. integrated framework</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. systemic constructivism</li> <li>2. integrated framework</li> </ol>
Micro-level (domestic)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Area-studies</li> <li>2. mainstream IR theories of <i>innenpolitik</i></li> <li>3. integrated framework</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Area-studies</li> <li>2. domestic constructivism</li> <li>3. integrated framework</li> </ol>

Source: Adapted and modified from Desch (1998:156).

### 2.1.1. Area-studies approach

The Area-studies approach, which is akin to the constructivist and *innenpolitik* line of thinking, and emphasises the idiosyncratic features as well as prevalence of domestic-ideational factors in shaping a country’s foreign policy, is traditionally popular in the analysis of Japanese/Chinese foreign policies, and Japan-China ties. This approach explicitly targets the “unique”, internal attributes and processes of Japanese/Chinese foreign policy-making, highlighting the significance of political and strategic culture, history, identity, ideology,

domestic political process, and the roles of decision-makers' perceptions, bureaucratic/factional politics, etc., while paying little attention to the forces of the international system in shaping state behaviour (Caroline Rose 1998:33).

According to its proponents, Japanese-Chinese relations can be, best explained through culturally and historically specific lenses, which shape the distinctive nature of their bilateral ties. For instance, they have frequently cited historical-cultural legacies, i.e. the “cultural affinity” and “teacher-student complex” theses (Scalapino 1977; Iriye 1980; 1990; 1992; Ijiri 1996; Gries 2004:40; 2005a), historical experiences, and “war-guilt” complex (Mendl 1995:85; Blaker 1993; Kojima 1988; Gong 2001b/c), among others, as key to understanding what Drifte defines as postwar Japan’s “deferential” policy towards China (2003:6-7), or Japanese “minimalist” foreign policy for that matter (Miyashita 2002:163). Others draw on political cultures, i.e. Japan’s traditional culture, behavioural patterns, and isolationist tendency (Sato 1977; Reischauer 1977 cf. Caroline Rose 1998:35); Sinocentrism, or China’s “middle-kingdom” mentality (Fairbank 1968) and cultural inclination towards elite/factional politics (Hamrin 1994) to explain their foreign policy behaviour, which are reflected in the bilateral ties. There are also works that highlight peculiar characteristics of foreign policy-making. Zhao (1993) argues that “behind-the-scenes policymaking mechanisms”, or informal channels and practice, which are distinguished features of Japanese domestic politics, have been traditionally influential in Japan’s China policy-making. The unit-level and *sui generis* emphasis of this approach, however, as Singer asserts, tend to “overdifferentiate” states (1961:83), while under-appreciating the constraints of the international system on their foreign policy orientations (see Caroline Rose 1998:31).

### 2.1.2. The IR approach: *aussenpolitik* and *innenpolitik*

Conversely, the IR approach, characterised by a lively intra-disciplinary debate, has received favourable attention in studies of Japanese-Chinese diplomacy (Caroline Rose 1998:30). Proponents of *aussenpolitik* in the neo-realist and neo-liberal institutionalist moulds emphasise the salience of systemic imperatives, and the primacy of structural-material factors in shaping Japanese/Chinese state behaviour/preferences towards their

bilateral relations. According to neo-realist studies, the contemporary trend in Japanese-Chinese relations can be, primarily viewed as a reflection of rational manoeuvring by both states in response to the structural transformation of the international environment, and their changing power dynamics, which offer constraints and opportunities in augmenting their respective external goals and strategies. Kokubun (2001; 2003; 2006), Wu (2000), Lampton and May (2000), Self (2002), Zhao (2002), Roy (2004; 2005), Pei and Swaine (2005), Mochizuki (2005; 2007), Yahuda (2006), and Glosserman (2003; 2006), among others, argue that the demise of the Cold War security architecture, growing regional uncertainties, and changing power equations between Japan and China are key to explaining the downturn in contemporary Japanese-Chinese relations. Both states are seen striving to readjust to these new dynamics in their relationship, competing strategically, on the one hand, and cooperating economically on the other, while redefining and jockeying for leadership position in the unravelling post-Cold War regional order. Glosserman (2003; 2006) construes that their problematic relationship is predictably, shaped by the new “geometry” of East Asia, with China “the ascending dragon” and Japan “the setting sun”, locked in an asymmetrical triangular relationship with America, the sole superpower. In his assessment of the security dimension of Japanese-Chinese ties, Wu notes this realist logic in Japanese post-Cold War external orientation, where “concerns over balance of power, geopolitical competition, and military-strategic rivalry constantly inform Tokyo’s thinking about the PRC” (2000:304; see also Waldron 2005:722-723).

Similarly, analysis of Japan’s shifting foreign/security policies by Heginbotham and Samuels (1998; 2002), Singh (2002), Hughes (2005), Shuja (2006), Samuels (2006), and Kliman (2006), and specifically, its China policy by Green and Self (1996), Green (1999; 2001), and Choi (2003), came up with terminologies like “normal country”, “mercantile realism”, “reluctant realism”, “creeping realism”, “transitional realism”, and “selective realism”, to characterise what they saw as Japan’s increasingly realist-oriented external/security orientations, and its inclination towards a containment-cum-engagement strategy, or policy of hedging against China’s rise in the fluid East Asian environment. A

realist-oriented definition of engagement is partially employed by Drifte (2003), and Hughes (2005), who both see Japan as having chosen a policy that is “based on providing China with economic and political incentives, hedged by military balancing through its own military force and the military alliance with the US” (Drifte 2003:3). The conventional realist interpretation of Japan’s post-Cold War relations with China can be best summarised by Green’s observation that:

Japanese foreign policy is increasingly being shaped by strategic considerations about the balance of power and influence in Northeast Asia, particularly vis-à-vis China...Where Japan’s relations in East Asia were primarily determined by the conjunction of mercantile interests and US strategy in the past, they now tend also to reflect a self-conscious competition with China for strategic influence in the region. Confidence that Japanese economic leadership would integrate China on Japan’s terms has ebbed and a new realism has emerged regarding the limits of Japanese economic influence and the growing power aspirations of Beijing (2001:6 & 9; quoted in Murata 2006:41).

Meanwhile, neo-liberals see Japanese-Chinese relations as having been, fundamentally shaped by economic considerations, where both states place high premiums on maintaining a pragmatic and functional relationship, via bilateral and multilateral engagements, to reap the benefits of deepening economic interdependence, despite periodic tensions fuelled by issues in the politico-strategic dimension. Heazle (2007), Taniguchi (2005), and Tok (2005) opine that flourishing economic cooperation and interdependence are salient in keeping Japanese-Chinese relations in check against serious degeneration, and in understanding the “hot politics, cold economics” dichotomy, or “cold peace”, in their contemporary bilateral ties. Wan Ming likewise, suggests that dramatic growth in Japanese-Chinese economic interactions fuelled by the global market, are “providing a cooperative foundation for the overall bilateral relationship and moderating political and security tensions” (2006:3). The powers of interdependence and economic imperatives in promoting a pragmatic, and relatively stable bilateral relationship are also echoed by Howe (1996), Fukushima (2002), Sutter (2002), Drifte (2002; 2003), Roy (2004), Ohashi (2004), and Xia (2007) in their less pessimistic observations of the contemporary trend in Japanese-Chinese diplomacy.

Undoubtedly, both mainstream IR theories offer broad insights and persuasive explanations, via their respective analytical *foci*. Nonetheless, their inherent over-emphasis

on systemic-structural influences make these IR approaches relatively inhospitable to unit-level investigation, and thus render them problematic by critics, who consider domestic and ideational factors as equally, if not more crucial to understanding the bilateral ties.

On the contrary, *innenpolitikers* advocating an approach that scrutinises the contents of the domestic “black box” argue that the trends in Japanese-Chinese diplomacy are often manifestations of internal decision-making processes and fierce domestic political competition, i.e. among state-elites, and between contending factions and ideological divides. Deriving mainly from the mainstream IR tradition, studies of this nature remain affixed to understanding their bilateral policies and relationship via generally applicable, domestic, structural-material (i.e. political system, decision-making apparatus, level of development) and agent-based (decision-makers’ perception, personality and idiosyncrasies, etc.) explanations (Caroline Rose 1998:32). For instance, in his scrutiny of the domestic politics of the principal actors in Japanese policy-making, Tanaka contends that “critical foreign policy areas such as Sino-Japanese relations have long been dominant themes of manoeuvring among domestic actors in the Diet, in the interagency bureaucracy, and in the media” (2000:3). Murata also views highly complicated domestic politics as a major source of Japan’s China policy, arguing that “changes in Japanese political parties, bureaucracy, and public opinion”, or more specifically, “negative mass sentiments towards China, the lack of policy coordination among coalition parties in power, and the relative decline of MOFA and its “China school” have made the Japanese [China] policy-making process more complex, defused and fragmented” (2006:37). These observations are echoed by Calder (1991; 1997), Kojima (2000) and Sasajima (2002) in their respective analysis of the domestic determinants/institutions shaping Japan’s China policy.<sup>12</sup>

Similarly, Takamine (2005; 2006) explores the domestic political and bureaucratic interests motivating Tokyo’s strategic use of foreign aid, which brought a “new dynamism” to

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<sup>12</sup> Calder (1991; 1997) looks generally into the domestic constraints of Japanese foreign policy, while both Kojima (2000) and Sasajima (2002) scrutinise Japan’s China policy, specifically. Kojima (2000:41), for instance, notes that Japan-China diplomatic problems are increasingly becoming domestic issues in both countries, which cannot be fully comprehended without taking domestic political struggles into account.

its security relationship with Beijing. Meanwhile, Tok sees China's policy towards Japan as "a contentious issue among the Chinese leadership" (2005:296), shaped by fierce political infighting between the competing factions in the ruling echelon, a view shared by Barnett (1985), Breslin (1990; 2008), Hamrin (1994), Shambaugh (1990), and Whiting (1989; 2000), who develop understandings of Chinese foreign policy-making via the analysis of leadership politics and perceptions, bureaucratic structures, institutions, and policy processes.

Some of these studies have also partially derived their explanatory power from the Liberal analytical tool of "domestic political systems/regime type" to explain the degeneration in post-Cold War Japanese-Chinese ties. The most common argument refers to their different political systems (i.e. divergent political norms, institutions, and values), magnified since the Tiananmen Incident and the Cold War's demise, which have widened the "perception gap" between both governments and societies (Glosserman 10/10/2003; Takahara 2004). Such divergence, according to Tsang (1999) and Takagi (2006), is one reason driving Japanese closer to a democratising Taiwan, and increasingly turning the island into a point of contention between Japan and China. The "Putnam-esque" "two-level game" framework is likewise, utilised to analyse Japanese-Chinese disputes, i.e. the studies by Chung (2004; 2007) on China's management of the Senkaku/Diaoyudao dispute.

An alternative and increasingly popular line of domestic-focused investigation on Japanese-Chinese relations and their respective policy-making is constructivism, which draws specifically on the power of unit-level, albeit cultural-ideational variables similar to those identified by Japanese/Chinese-studies scholars. Constructivist works by Katzenstein (1996) and Berger (1998) explore the norms and culture of anti-militarism in postwar Japanese society, in accounting for Japan's pacifist-oriented foreign policy, which according to Drifte, is an important source in explaining "Japan's inclination to deference and restraint in the bilateral relationship with China" (2003:6) that mainstream IR theories of realism and liberalism cannot fully grasp. Most popular in the constructivist vein of study has been the emphasis of "historical memory" in shaping the perceptions and images, not mentioning identity and interests of Chinese and Japanese that underscore their problematic

relationship since diplomatic normalisation in 1972. In his seminal work, Whiting (1989) draws on the salience of history/memories in shaping Chinese images of Japan and the bilateral ties. Whiting contends that Japanese war legacies in China remain pivotal in influencing the external perceptions, attitudes, and decision-making of China's revolutionary generation of leaders, as reflected in Beijing's hypersensitivity towards any shift in Tokyo's China policy-orientation, and vitriolic responses, when managing their bilateral disputes during the 1980s. Similarly, Okabe (2001), Wu (2001), Yang (2002), and Rose (2005) highlight the problems concerning history, memory, and historical reconciliation that periodically undermine their post-Cold War diplomatic exchanges, while He (2006) elucidates on the manipulation of historical memories by both sides to create national myths and revisionist discourse, which are responsible in fuelling contemporary Japanese-Chinese enmity. Another typical/regular constructivist line of reasoning is the "clash-of-identities" and "divergent nationalisms" theses, which are elaborated in the following section.

As described in Table 1, there are overlaps between constructivism, mainstream *innenpolitik* theories, and Area-studies approach, in terms of their chosen "level-of-analysis", and choice of analytical tools. Accordingly, constructivist explanations tend to suffer from similar fallacies and criticisms rendered on *innenpolitik* and Area-studies, namely an over-emphasis on domestic-level explanation, while failing to adequately acknowledge and theorise systemic constraints on Japanese/Chinese external behaviour towards the bilateral ties. Additionally, constructivism is guilty for marginalising structural-material factors in favour of cultural-ideational attributes peculiar to, and/or shared by Japan and China, which hinders its ability to make systematic and generalised assessments of the bilateral relations.

### 2.1.3. The holistic/integrated approach

The third approach is one that favours a synthesis of IR and Area-studies assumptions. Advocates of this eclectic and holistic approach opine that a more accurate explanation of Japanese-Chinese relations, and/or Japanese/Chinese foreign policy can be derived by integrating the micro- and macro-levels of analysis, and delving on both structural-material and cultural-ideational variables. Works by Caroline Rose (1998), Austin and Harris (2001),

Drifte (2003), and Wan (2006), among others, have precisely developed their studies utilising such a framework, to explain both governments' policy-options/responses, when managing their bilateral relationship. Rose asserts in her analysis of the history textbook issue that the incorporation of an organising framework explicating the interactions between international and domestic variables, is useful in overcoming the shortcomings of "standard explanations of conflict in Sino-Japanese relations" (1998:37-39). Meanwhile, Drifte proposes "a dynamic model of engagement...based on elements of Realism, Liberalism and Constructivism" (2003:4), which he deems necessary to adequately comprehend Japan's common and unique behaviour/policy-options, when managing its security relations with China. Drifte's opinion is shared by Katzenstein and Okawara (2001) in their espousal of analytical eclecticism that avoids unproductive "paradigmatic clashes", while fostering a non-exclusive, "problem-driven" approach to explaining Japan, China, and Asian-Pacific security (see Katzenstein 2008:9-10, 20-24, Chp.2). According to Katzenstein, "[e]clectic scholarship complements and utilizes, rather than replaces scholarship produced by existing traditions" (2008:9), and it promotes epistemological and ontological flexibility that help avoid parsimonious and myopic assumptions based on a single paradigm (2008:46). By combining realist, liberal, and constructivist-oriented analytical tools, and recognising the benefits of multi-level/multi-variable analysis, analytical eclecticism generates a fuller interpretation of the evolution of Japanese-Chinese relations, which in Katzenstein's opinion, "will be shaped by a mixture of engagement and deterrence in their bilateral relations, by their competitive and complementary region-building practices in an East Asia that will resist domination by either country (Katzenstein 2006), and by the cultivation of their different strategic and economic links to the American imperium" (2008:24; see also Higgott 2007). Also, Wan Ming concludes that "the complex Sino-Japanese relationship has been affected by systemic, social, and emotional factors following multiple causal processes in political, military, economic, and socio-cultural dimensions" (2006:3), which underscores the necessity for an integrated/eclectic approach to reduce the "analytical myopia" suffered by the individual/parochial lines of argument (Berger 2000:411), in studying their multi-dimensional ties.

Since this research explores the causal role of domestic-ideational determinants, specifically nationalism, and its interactions with other external-internal variables in re-defining Japan's relations with China, it is commonsensical to pursue this "third" line of inquiry as the basic organising framework. Indeed, nationalism's salience vis-à-vis other determinants in affecting Japanese behaviour/policy-preferences towards the Chinese can be systematically assessed by developing a "hybrid" framework that utilises analytical tools from both mainstream IR and constructivism/Area-studies. Such "middle-range" theories that depart from the analytical orthodoxy are presently available, with some claiming to be more hospitable to, and deductive in incorporating both external-internal variables, than others, in the analysis of foreign policy. However, these theories, notably those foregrounding on realism, have been accused of "reductionism" and "degenerative" analysis by as much, their hardcore theoretical brethren, as exponents from the opposing sides of the theoretical divides, for sacrificing parsimony, coherence, and compromising realism's fundamental premises<sup>13</sup>(Lakatos 1970:117-118; Vasquez 1983;1997; Legro and Moravcsik 1999). Before ascertaining a viable analytical framework, it would be appropriate to gauge the treatment of nationalism, generally, and its role in Japanese-Chinese ties, specifically, through the discourse found in existing literature, which have largely transpired within the context of the mainstream IR versus constructivism/Area-studies debate.

## **2.2. Treatment of Nationalism in Mainstream IR Theories: Realism and Liberalism**

The orthodox IR theoretical traditions of realism and liberalism are generally "rationalist" theories that privilege structural-material variables in the analysis of state behaviour and international outcomes.<sup>14</sup> In their contemporary guise, both neo-realism and neo-liberalism foreground systemic over unit-level investigation. The former emphasises the overarching importance of the anarchic international system in defining states interests and actions in terms of relative distribution and balance-of-power within it (Waltz 1979); while the latter

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<sup>13</sup> This debate foregrounds on the so-called definitive "Lakatosian" understanding of what constituted a coherent and falsifiable social science research programme. See Lakatos (1970). For a critique on neo-realism, and other variants of the realist research programme as degenerative, see Vasquez (1983; 1997); Legro and Moravcsik (1999), and Wendt (1995).

<sup>14</sup> According to constructivist critics like Steve Smith, the "rational choice" emphasis underpinning both neo-realism and neo-liberalism makes these mainstream theories "barely distinguishable" (2001:40).

conceives state behaviour/preferences in the light of complex interdependence and interstate cooperation (Keohane and Nye 1977). Both share the assumption that unit-level and ideational factors are *a priori* givens, “self-evident and non-problematic” (Lapid 1996:6) in the analysis of world politics. According to critics, their fundamentally “statist”, “rationalist-materialist”, as well as Hobbesian-oriented, “ahistorical”, “asocial”, and “acultural” perspectives of international relations, not mentioning, fixation with systemic-level theorising, make these mainstream IR theories analytically inhospitable to problematising non-material factors, like culture, identity, historical memories, and ideology (Inayatullah and Blaney 1996:66-67; Pasic 1996:85; Tooze 1996). In fact, cultural-ideational variables are deemed trivial, and of secondary importance by both neo-realism and neo-liberalism, and are conveniently “relegated to the domestic realm, where they remain irrelevant to the workings of international relations” (Pasic 1996:85; Tooze 1996:xix).

### 2.2.1. Mainstream IR theories’ “analytical myopia” on nationalism

Understandably, mainstream IR theories have severe limitations in offering a comprehensive understanding of nationalism in international affairs, since the “national” phenomenon is a social construct, domestic and non-material in essence, as well as subjective and inter-subjective in meanings/nature (Tooze 1996:xviii-xix; Farrands 1996:12-13; Lapid 1996:13). This inadvertently leads these theories, or the IR discipline for that matter, to conveniently ignore “the problem of nationalism” (Judt 1994:51; cf. Lapid and Kratochwil 1996:105), despite its growing salience, as events of the post-Cold War epoch suggest. According to Lapid and Kratochwil:

It is indeed strange but hardly overstated that, in an age of nationalism, international relations and most other social disciplines seem to have converged on little else but the sustained exclusion of the national problematic from their respective research agendas, relegating it to a fringe phenomenon (1996:105).

For instance, nationalism is often under-appreciated, if not trivialised, or neglected, altogether by neo-realism, due to its rigid theoretical construct and underpinnings that view states as undifferentiated (like-units), unitary actors, whose behaviour are conditioned and governed primarily by structural attributes of international anarchy (Waltz 1979). Also, the

conventional realist thought is dominated by the “primacy of foreign policy” notion, which, according to Zakaria, can be meant; i) international relations being significant in affecting/influencing the domestic arrangements of states; and ii) interstate politics as a realm separate from domestic politics, where state behaviour is prevalently influenced by systemic, rather than domestic factors/pressures (1992:179-180). By treating nation-state as a given, conventional realists in the Waltzian tradition are, forgone to overlook unit-level and ideational-normative imperatives, i.e. issues concerning character of states and the social construction of state identity, which are related and essential to comprehending nationalism. Indeed, neo-realism’s dismissal of such factors, its excessive indulgence with parsimony (Roth 2006:487), and overdependence on “system-level”, “rationalist-centred” and “structural-material”-driven explanations, among others, are fallacies that render it “problematique” when encountering nationalism from a theoretical viewpoint (cf. Lapid and Kratochwil 1996:116; Copeland 2000).

Similarly, liberal analysts tend to “underestimate the potency of nationalism” (Holsti 1995:44; see also Rosecrance 1986; Mayall 1990).<sup>15</sup> Especially to neo-liberalism, the construction of political identity, according to Tooze, is “assumed to be unproblematic”, due to its state-centric position (1996:xviii). Despite viewing it as more of a collective, the state remains the neo-liberal construct’s central unit of analysis, which makes “sub-state” variables, like nationalism and identity beyond its investigation (Tooze 1996:xix).

Critics of mainstream IR theories are also quick to highlight their flaws in theorising, and explaining developments in particular regions like East Asia, where the political climate and intra-regional relations are commonly characterised by rising nationalist impulses, which tend to promote irregular and irrational state behaviour that somewhat defy the conventional IR logic and assumptions (Berger 2000; 2003). Realistically, the politico-security instability occurring in contemporary Northeast Asia is as much, a reflection of confrontational

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<sup>15</sup> Interestingly, there are domestic-liberal works utilising the “democratic peace” thesis like Mansfield and Snyder (2005) that explicitly incorporated nationalism in understanding why democracies go to war. However, it has been charged for conflating the state and nation concept, and simplifying the treatment of nationalism, not mentioning over-emphasising its salience in precipitating conflicts. For a critique, see Bloom (2006:339-341).

nationalisms and identity-related predicaments, as with the usual variables identified by mainstream IR theories that affect regional stability, i.e. structural transformation of the regional security architecture; profound shifts in the power balance; emergence of potential non-status quo/revisionist powers; asymmetrical distribution of relative capabilities between regional actors; insufficient levels of economic interdependence; and underdevelopment of multilateral norms and institutions, to name a few (Christensen 1999:49; Friedberg 1993/4; 2000; Mearsheimer 1990a; 2001; Betts 1993/4; Buzan and Segal 1994; Van Evera 1999; Berger 2000; Ross 2006). In fact, rising nationalism and duelling national identities are increasingly shaping bilateral relations between regional actors like China and Japan, Japan and Korea, and China and Taiwan, which are problematic to standard neo-realist, or neo-liberal explanations (Berger 2003).

To be sure, mainstream IR theories have made efforts to incorporate nationalism and other unit-level, ideational variables to address the glaring anomalies found in their theorisations of interstate relations, especially in specific regions during the post-Cold War epoch. To stem the retrogression of IR realism, which has come under severe attack from constructivists for its theoretical inadequacies, contemporary realists, i.e. Mearsheimer (1990a; 1992),<sup>16</sup> Posen (1993a/b), Snyder (1991; 1993), Van Evera (1994) have opened up to nationalism's role under a revised neo-realist construct (cf. Lapid and Kratochwil 1996; Downs and Saunders 1998/9). Lapid and Kratochwil opine that, through "inclusionary control", they seek to address major nationalism-related problems in international politics from essentially neo-realist premises, a position that reflects a departure from the typically narrow Waltzian tradition of "exclusionary control" (1996:110-116).

However, critics argue that the treatment of nationalism by these variants of neo-realism appears more of a "retrofitting", or juxtaposing of the elusive phenomenon to fit into the traditional neo-realist construct without proper theorisation (Lapid and Kratochwil 1996:112). In their opinion, nationalism is treated as "merely a reflection of the more "basic"

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<sup>16</sup> Mearsheimer (1992) introduces the notion "hypernationalism" into the traditional premises of neo-realism, albeit as a secondary factor that exacerbates the insecurities of the anarchic international system, which remains his central analytical variable (cf. Lapid and Kratochwil 1996:110-113).

forces – such as the security dilemma<sup>17</sup> and power balancing among the preexisting “like units” (Lapid and Kratochwil 1996:112), reducing it to being a “second order” variable, [or] an epiphenomenon of the international system and its anarchical structure” (Mearsheimer 1990b:32; cf. Lapid and Kratochwil 1996:112). In other words, nationalism is often, invoked as an ancillary factor to supplement the inadequacy of the Waltzian logic,<sup>18</sup> exogenously incorporated to explain away anomalies in their non-traditional case-studies.

### 2.2.2. Neo-realism’s under-appreciation of nationalism in Japanese-Chinese relations

Indeed, most IR-centred studies of Japanese-Chinese relations tend to take nationalism less seriously, providing assumptions and analysis that fall short of appreciating the extent of its influence on their contemporary bilateral affairs. From the conventional realist perspective, nationalism is mostly a sub-factor exacerbating the “strategic conundrums”<sup>19</sup> and shifting power distributions between Japan and China, which studies by Green and Self (1996), Zhao (2002), Wang (2002), Self (2002); Pei and Swaine (2005), Roy (2003; 2005), Taniguchi (2005), Calder (2006), and Yahuda (2006), among others, deem as the core determinant affecting the bilateral ties. According to Yahuda, “the key to understanding the deterioration in Sino-Japanese relations is the structural change in the international politics of East Asia” (2006:162). Induced by the Cold War’s demise, he believes this change “has led to the repositioning of regional great powers and...an intensification of economic development” among East Asian states, which has helped transform “the regional and international balance of power” (2006:162-163). Compounding the structural change has been the renewed efforts by regional actors “to redefine their domestic, regional, and international identities”, which Yahuda insists, has engendered a revitalisation of assertive nationalisms in China and Japan that are developing divergently, with one cast as the other’s “putative adversary” (2006:163; see also Self 2002).

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<sup>17</sup> Christensen (1999) also acknowledges nationalism’s role in aggravating the “security dilemma” – a self-fulfilling realist logic regarding the tendency of states to be involved in unwanted conflicts, resulting from their very act of seeking security and wanting to avoid conflicts. For a seminal work on the “security dilemma” concept, see Jervis (1978).

<sup>18</sup> This term is, commonly used with other equivalent expressions like “straightjacket” in IR theoretical works, to describe the rigid underpinnings of conventional/neo-realism (see Brooks 1997; Guzzini 2004:535).

<sup>19</sup> This term is taken from Yahuda (2006).

On a similar note, Kokubun (2001; 2003; 2006; 2007) has consistently associated the degeneration in contemporary Japanese-Chinese relations and shift in Japanese strategic thinking with the structural transformation of the post-Cold War international context, which brought an end to what he calls the “1972 System” that held the bilateral ties amiably together since diplomatic normalisation. The ensuing “power shift” that saw China rising, and Japan stagnating, economically and politically/militarily, has invoked negative Japanese images and perception of the Chinese, fostering nationalistic attitudes that are increasingly driving Japan towards a so-called “psychological cold war” with China (Kokubun 2007:146-154). Zhao (2002:39) equates China’s rise to a foreign policy that is “more assertive” and “sensitive” to domestic popular nationalist sentiment, which complicates Tokyo and Washington’s strategic calculations, as the Chinese leadership becomes more vulnerable to nationalist demands, to address sovereignty issues like Taiwan and Senkaku/Diaoyudao, and redress Japanese-inflicted historical legacies.

The opposite is true with Japan’s regression vis-à-vis China, notably in economic terms, which Watanabe (2000), Takagi (2006), and many others insist, has triggered Japanese consternation, fuelling anti-Chinese sentiment that exacerbates their negative perceptions of the changing power balance (Takahara 2004; Pei and Swaine 2005; Roy 2005; Teufel-Dreyer 2006).<sup>20</sup> Yang Bojiang notes that “facing China’s rise, Japan’s nationalism prevents the country from perceiving itself as a second-rate power”, compelling it to use the US-Japanese alliance “to balance out Chinese development while defending or promoting Tokyo’s own international status” (2006:133). The “power shift” argument is also emphasised in several other studies, although some identify the shift not in terms of “diverging fortunes”<sup>21</sup> but from a “strong China, strong Japan” standpoint (Jin 2002:51;<sup>22</sup> see also Wang 2002; Yang Jian 2007; Yang Bojiang. 2006; Calder 2006). Nonetheless, they generally share the view that Japanese-Chinese enmity and rivalry are the offspring of changing power dynamics, accentuated by rising nationalism in both countries.

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<sup>20</sup> Indeed, as early as 1998, Funabashi Yoichi noted that a rising China would “induce critical, painful, and psychologically difficult strategic adjustments in Japanese foreign policy” (1998:32).

<sup>21</sup> This term, which will be used occasionally in this thesis, derives from Pei and Swaine (2005).

<sup>22</sup> This phrase is, specifically quoted in Rose (2005:6).

Nationalism as a “factor” aggravating the confrontational forces spawned by the fluid international order is also a theme shared by Christensen (1999), Self (2002), Calder (2006:130), Tsunekawa (2006), and Hagstrom and Lagerkvist (2006), in their observations of how the unravelling Japan-China power equation, coupled with resurgent nationalisms fed by historical legacies, ethnocentrism and xenophobia in both countries, are magnifying mutual security concerns, and fuelling a potential security dilemma. In his analysis, Christensen pessimistically suggests that even though nationalist emotion has yet to severely affect “the practical, day-to-day management of Sino-Japanese relations”, it does influence one another’s longer-term threat assessment, which “may be more important in fuelling the security dilemma than particular diplomatic policies in the present” (1999:54-55). Meanwhile, Tsunekawa sees Japan’s “dependent nationalism” as a product of, and a source “that has precipitated the security dilemma through action-reaction cycles aggravating perception gaps among major powers in the region” (2006:14), including China.

Another related, key external-structural variable in the realist observation is the role of the US, and the US-Japan alliance, which is, in Zhao Quansheng’s opinion, “the most significant external actor/factor” shaping the direction of Japanese-Chinese relations (2002:32). Echoing this is Takahara, who sees the US-Japan alliance as “the largest issue in Sino-Japanese ties in the 1990s” (2004:161-162). Its salience is likewise, noted in Johnstone (1998; 2000), Liu (2000), Green (2001), Vogel (2003), Drifte (2003), Wan (2003), and Christensen (2006), as with most of the works cited earlier, although opinions do diverge regarding the implications of its interaction with nationalism, or the appreciation of nationalism’s role in these works, for that matter. Optimists view the US-Japan alliance as a countervailing force suppressing chauvinistic nationalism in Japan and China. For instance, Green suggests that the reason for MOFA’s insistence for “an iron-clad defense commitment” from the US on Senkaku/Diaoyudao during the 1996 dispute, was to curtail Japanese nationalist pressure for “a unilateral military capability” to deal with the issue, which could trigger a Japanese-Chinese confrontation (2001:87). Meanwhile, despite its fierce rhetoric, Beijing has always been, quietly confident of the US-Japan alliance in

containing a resurgence of Japanese militarism, although such confidence has somewhat eroded in recent years (Green 2001:89; Wu 2000; 2005/6). Conversely, pessimists tend to see Washington's "lopsided" policy as facilitating Japanese nationalist aspirations, i.e. reinstating military force as a foreign policy instrument, and emboldening other "revisionist" agendas (history revisionism, Taiwan policy, etc.), that are bound to trigger reactive anti-Japanese nationalism in China (Liu 2000; Tamamoto 2004).<sup>23</sup>

Apart from limited theorisation, another standard realist misgiving of nationalism is the tendency to accentuate its malignancy (Lapid and Kratochwil 1996:114), of which the majority of the abovementioned studies have exaggerated in explaining Japanese-Chinese competition, rivalry, and conflict. Such extreme interpretation of nationalism is to be expected, due to realism's preoccupation with the assumption regarding state behaviour as being conditioned by the "possibility of conflict", where states are pressured into making calculations based on a zero-sum, worst-case scenario (Brooks 1997).

Likewise, it is common for realists to over-emphasise nationalism's instrumentality as a political tool utilised by both governments for diplomatic and domestic expedience. Tsang (1999) sees realist calculations as leading the PRC to foster a kind of narrow-minded nationalism that targets Japan, as a means to undercut Tokyo's credibility and intention to seek a larger political role in the region, which could hinder its own long-term external goals of irredentism and leadership in the Asia-Pacific. Conversely, the Japanese government, increasingly dominated by hawks, and shaped by *realpolitik*, is, according to Miller (2000), Tamamoto (2004), and Taniguchi (2005), seeking to rejuvenate nationalism to mobilise popular support for a broader Japanese security role that has China well within its radar.

Simply put, a conventional neo-realist perspective of Japanese-Chinese relations draws explanatory power mainly from structural-material imperatives, namely shifts in relative capabilities and the balance of power, and the role of other external factors/actors,

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<sup>23</sup> In general, "defensive realists" are known to be more optimistic and positive-sum in perspective, while "offensive realists" are more inclined to view international politics from a pessimistic zero-sum lens, although both groups are not mutually exclusive (see Brooks 1997; Taliaferro 2000/1).

i.e. the US in explaining Japanese/Chinese behaviour vis-à-vis the bilateral ties. Meanwhile, nationalism and identity issues are generally, treated as a given, and incorporated “atheoretically” as an auxiliary variable exacerbating the salience of the realist central variables (Tooze 1996).

### 2.2.3. Neo-liberalism’s treatment of nationalism: a “mirror-image” of neo-realism?

Similar to neo-realism, nationalism’s treatment by neo-liberalism is, at best, marginal and lacking in proper theorisation. The marginalisation is due to neo-liberalism’s fixation with its own set of analytical tools, which are state-centric and structural-material in essence. Although there are liberal theories that draw on domestic-level explanations, their preference for structural-material variables makes them less appreciative of nationalism or any ideational factors.

Most research in the liberal vein tend to under-estimate nationalism’s forces, with Taylor (1996), Sutter (2002), Heazle (2007), and Xia (2007), among others, implying that deepening socio-economic interdependence, and incremental political reforms in China’s case would help mitigate virulent nationalist sentiments, and eventually foster a progressive/matured bilateral relationship. Likewise, a higher degree of institutionalisation of diplomatic norms and functions, and participation in multilateral institutions serve to suppress excessive nationalism, while promoting greater cooperation between the two countries. For example, Sutter (2002) agrees that rising nationalist impulses in China and Japan are fuelling potential Japanese-Chinese rivalry even in the economic realm, as reflected by increased frictions in bilateral trade and Official Development Assistance (ODA) arrangements, and competition to establish regional Free Trade Agreements (FTAs). However, there are in his opinion, “countervailing factors” limiting the rivalry, “the most important” of which “is that both Japanese and Chinese governments are domestically focused on the economic development of their countries”, and thus understand the importance of fostering peaceful, stable and cooperative relationship with each other, and with their regional neighbours, to realise this priority goal (2002:39). This is echoed by Pei and Swaine, who cited two critical factors mitigating the risk of a Japanese-Chinese “cold

war”, namely “the top policy agenda of domestic economic reform”, and steadfast interest in “maintaining their mutually beneficial commercial ties” (2005:4-6).

Similarly, Whiting believes that against the prevailing negative factors (i.e. fragile domestic politics fuelled by rising nationalism and mutual negative images), pragmatic considerations of mutual benefits with economics playing the key role, are “likely to tip the balance in a positive direction” (2000:30). Meanwhile, Chung notes that assertive nationalism in China and Japan “is held at bay by expectations of mutual economic gains through increased trade and investment, and fear of accidental military provocation” (2004:53), in his “two-level-game” study of the Senkaku/Diaoyudao dispute. Heazle also concludes his analysis by suggesting the salience of the “hot” economic relationship, which would, at least for the foreseeable future, provide both governments “with enough motivation to contain their [mutual] political animosity...and resist any temptation to cause the relationship to deteriorate any further” (2007:200), despite the nationalism conundrum in current Japanese-Chinese diplomacy.

Indeed, from the liberal perspective, economic relations have always provided stable foundation for Japanese-Chinese politico-diplomatic ties, as with their effectiveness in channelling discord in the said arena, and are thus, expected to remain so, as Burns (2000) and Rose (2002:243) argue in their studies. Nonetheless, the logic of economic interdependence is critically questioned by Yahuda (2006), who concedes that deepening economic interactions and mutual dependence have not necessarily led to more sanguine mutual images and improved political ties in the Japanese-Chinese case. Furthermore, Hilpert and Katsuji note that growing economic interdependence can become problematic in the event of increased Japanese-Chinese economic competition, and that “economic relations may also be a reason and a trigger for bilateral conflict” (2002:152), besides their unresolved nationalist disputes and shifting power relations. Shi best sums it up by concluding that “economic interdependence is far from a sufficiently reliable “safety cushion” for China-Japan relations” (2007:7).

Another common neo-liberal view refers to multilateralism's mitigating role, where participation in regional multilateral platforms, like the ASEAN-Plus-Three, ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), and Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), not mentioning, the Six-Party Talks on North Korean denuclearisation are deemed constructive in forging mutual interests and cultivating "a habit of cooperation" (Lam 2006a:18), while containing nationalism-inspired bilateral competition and rivalry (Yang 2003; Heazle 2007; Lam 2002). Meanwhile, from the domestic-centred liberal perspective, the "democratic peace" thesis highlights the potential role of increased political reforms and democratisation in curtailing the forces of confrontational nationalisms between China and Japan, paving the way for the development of a mature relationship. To be sure, observers tend to see popular anti-Japanese nationalism becoming more salient in a democratised China, as the restraining hand of the pragmatic CCP regime withers (Takamine 2006:146-147). However, Yang Daqing suggests that although "democracy is not a panacea" (2002:23), and that "greater openness in China in the short term may unleash some more extreme ultranationalist forces, in the long run, greater openness and critical examination of its own history – by a robust intelligentsia and by journalist" will help towards realising a genuine Japanese-Chinese reconciliation (2002:26).

Proponents of sub-state/non-state level of analysis equally share sanguine views of Japanese-Chinese ties, emphasising the mitigating roles of non-government organisations (NGOs), local governments, business groups, and intensified "people-to-people diplomacy" in cushioning the debilitating impact of nationalism and state-centred, "zero-sum politico-strategic competition" on bilateral relations (Lam 2006a:12). In his study of Japanese-Chinese interaction at the sub-national government (SNG) level, Punendra Jain (2000; 2006) explores the dynamic role of Japanese SNGs in promoting grassroots linkages with their Chinese counterparts via the twinning of cities/prefectures/provinces, trade promotion, and economic/technical cooperation, which he asserts, "can do much – and sometimes more than the central government – in cultivating close and valuable ties with China" (cf. Lam 2006a:13). Takahara (2006) also claims that Japanese NGOs' activities have

contributed to forging mutual trust and alleviating anti-Japanese sentiment amongst Chinese peasants, in his case-study of a Chinese province, while Hook (2006) contends that the “China threat” discourse brewing in Japan did little to hinder the micro-regional economic cooperation and integration between Kyushu and Dalian (see also Breslin and Hook 2002).

In sum, mainstream IR studies in the realist and liberal veins are predominantly, focused on theorising their respective central variables in explaining Japanese/Chinese behaviour/actions in the bilateral ties. Although commonly cited in their analysis, most have not dedicated adequate treatment on nationalism’s role in shaping contemporary Japanese-Chinese relations. Such marginalisation is the result of their respective theoretical preoccupation, which causes them to under-appreciate nationalism, and therefore explains their limited, and typically, “after-thought” analysis of how it affects Japanese/Chinese domestic politics and foreign policy-making, and when nationalist pressure does, or does not translate into “nationalist” foreign policy, due to state responses to external and domestic constraints/opportunities.

### **2.3. Nationalism in Constructivism and Area-studies**

As an alternative theoretical paradigm, constructivism addresses key issues in international relations that mainstream IR theories fail to adequately comprehend and explain.<sup>24</sup> Like Area-studies, constructivism derives its strength from a set of assumptions and variables that systemic-based IR theories tend to ignore and consider as trivial, and of secondary importance. Specifically, it emphasises the constitutive and discursive role of domestic, cultural-ideational imperatives in shaping world affairs, i.e. culture, nationalism and identity, precisely the kind of (non-material/*sui generis*) variables scorned generally by proponents of

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<sup>24</sup> Constructivism, like realism and liberalism is more of a broader theoretical approach to the analysis of international politics than an IR theory *per se* (Berger 2003:389). There are variants to the constructivist paradigm, in lieu of its growing membership and stature as a viable “school of thought” in the IR discipline (Kubalkova 2001:6-7). Hopf (1998) contends that constructivism should be understood in its *conventional* and *critical* variants, while Burchill et.al. (2005) suggest the classification of the constructivist school based on the “level-of-analysis” criteria, namely systemic-level, unit-level and holistic constructivism. To be sure, there are clear differences between the exponents of this intra-school divide, but apart from the inherently systemic focus of Wendt’s version, constructivism as a relatively coherent theoretical paradigm, predominantly focuses “on issues of identity in world politics and the theorisation of domestic politics and culture in international relations theory” (Hopf 1998:172; see also Katzenstein 1996). Besides the above works, key text on IR constructivism includes Onuf (1989); Kratochwil (1989); Kubalkova, Onuf and Kowert (1998); and Kubalkova (2001).

neo-realism and neo-liberalism (Wendt 1995; Higgott 1994; Katzenstein 1996; Katzenstein and Okawara 1993; Johnston 1995; Hopf 1998; Berger 1996; 1998; 2000; 2003).<sup>25</sup>

According to Berger, constructivists draw attention to the “ideational and cultural world” of their “research subjects” to understand the intersubjective meanings that generate their behaviour and actions (2003:390). Constructivism explicates the social processes that endow actors (states, societies and individuals alike) with particular cognitive lenses, which help define their identities and interests, and give meaning to their preferences and actions (Berger 2000:410; Hopf 1998:174-175). International politics/relations is assumed to be an ever-changing social process, defined by the peculiar identities and interests of its constituents (states), which are themselves, social constructs shaped, and reshaped by intersubjective social norms and practices of their subjects (i.e. society/groups/individuals) (Wendt 1995; Hopf 1998). The emphasis on the intersubjective nature of the international system, and of identity and interests means that constructivists are opposed to the “rational-actor” assumption that state identity and interests are unchangeable, and fixed to that of self-help, self-interested actor, and driven purely by the distribution of material capabilities within the international system (Wendt 1995; Hopf 1998; Berger 2003). This helps explain why some states/actors behave “irrationally” in the conduct of international relations, which mainstream realism and liberalism cannot comprehend, and thus classified as anomalies in their respective analysis.

Nationalism, as an intersubjective, socially constructed, and psychological-emotional rather than rational-material phenomenon, is a staple diet in the constructivist analytical menu. Indeed, constructivism and, to an extent, Area-studies have (re)gained much of their explanatory power following the advent of nationalism and identity-related issues, and conflicts during the post-Cold War epoch, which have imposed a redefinition of the state-centric and structural-material meanings of international politics espoused by mainstream IR

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<sup>25</sup> Derived to overcome the limitations of mainstream theories, constructivism shares with other alternative IR schools of thought a common view regarding the social construction of world politics; the social rather than predominantly material basis of the basic structures of international politics (Wendt 1995:71-72); and the equal importance of domestic, unit-level analysis and the role of culture and identity in shaping international relations (Berger 2003; Hopf 1998; Katzenstein 1996).

theories.<sup>26</sup> Contrary to IR orthodoxy, a constructivist analysis problematises nationalism, not as an “epiphenomenon”,<sup>27</sup> but an independent and intangible variable that shapes state identity and interests, which then “mediate the material world, [or structure] including features like the balance of power, or opportunities for trade and cooperation” (Berger 2003:390). Also unlike mainstream reasoning, constructivism stresses on the discursive (not material) power<sup>28</sup> of nationalism and identity to explain state behaviour. This requires an approach similar to Area-studies, where the researcher, in Berger’s opinion, needs “to be sensitive towards, and engaged in a sustained investigation of the debates” surrounding the meanings of nationalism and identity “within the community of relevant policymaking actors, and to place those debates in the context of the broader societal discourses in domestic and international politics” (2003:392). This demonstrates constructivism/Area-studies favouring “interpretivist”/empirically dense and *sui generis* analysis (Hopf 1998:198) over the parsimonious and universal theorisation of the IR orthodoxies, which reflects their explanatory salience on nationalism and other ideational/non-material factors.

### 2.3.1. Constructivism/Area-studies’ understanding of nationalism in Japanese-Chinese relations

Aforementioned, there is a rich collection of constructivist/Area-studies literature on Japanese-Chinese relations. Whilst studies of nationalism and identity have flourished in this analytical vein, most are dedicated to analysing Chinese, or Japanese nationalism *per se*, paying moderate emphasis on its external role, but limited attention to assessing its impact on one’s foreign policy vis-à-vis another that underscore the contemporary atmosphere of their diplomatic relations.

Indeed, there is a proliferation of research on Chinese nationalism, with Whiting (1983; 1995); Oksenberg (1986); Unger (1996), Zheng (1999), Zhu (2001), Chang (2001); Gries (2004; 2005a/b), Chen (2005), Zhao (2000; 2004; 2005), and Hughes (2006) providing among the most extensive understandings of nationalism’s role in shaping China’s modern

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<sup>26</sup> For an insightful discussion of nationalism from the constructivist lens, see Hall (1998). See also Druckman (1994); Farrands (1996); Deudney (1996); and Doty (1996).

<sup>27</sup> This specific term derives from Lapid and Kratochwil (1996:112).

<sup>28</sup> Discursive power means the power to control intersubjective understandings (Berger 2003; Hopf 1998:177).

international relations. Postwar Japanese nationalism has likewise, received adequate scholarly attention, although specific studies on its role in Japanese foreign policy-making are surprisingly limited, despite growing recognition of its contemporary efficacy. Besides Pyle's (1996) realist-inclined study on nationalism and post-Cold War Japan's newfound assertiveness, key works by Yoshino (1992; 1997), Stronach (1995), McCormack (2000), Nish (2000), McVeigh (2001; 2004), Wilson (2001), Sasada (2006), Shimazu (2006), and Seaton (2007) provide accounts of Japanese nationalism mainly from the constructivist/Area-studies perspective, delving on its historical, socio-cultural, ideological and political dimensions, giving only partial treatment to its influence on Japan's external orientations, and almost negligible on Japan's China policy and their bilateral relationship. Miller (2000), Muto (2001), and Samuels (2007a/b) also impress on how nationalism is reshaping Japanese attitude toward security thinking, and its implications on Japanese foreign policy, without explicating its impact on China policy-making. That said, Rose (2000), Rozman (2001; 2002), Tamamoto (2001; 2005a/b), Matthews (2003), Kingston (2004), Shibuichi (2005), Satoh (2006a/b), Tsunekawa (2006), and Deans (2007) did address Japanese nationalism and identity politics in affecting the bilateral ties.

The most common constructivist explanation of nationalism in Japan's relations with China centres on the "clash-of-identities" and "identity politics" theses, which are persuasively argued in Rose (2000), Tamamoto (2001), Shibuichi (2005), Satoh (2006a/b), and Chan and Bridges (2006), among others. This line of reasoning links to the arguments on historical memories and changing images and perceptions that are elaborated in some of the above studies, as well as those by Yang (2002), Rozman (2001; 2002; 2003), He (2006) and Sasada (2006).

According to Rose (2000:178-179), the resurgence of state and cultural nationalisms in Japan and China is a fundamental reaction and readjustment to the aforesaid international and domestic developments, which have reignited nationalist debates on the questions of history, culture, and national identity, at both elite and popular levels. Although primarily meant for domestic consumption, these debates have occasionally spilt over into

their bilateral relations, triggering diplomatic controversies over “highly symbolic issues which struck at the heart of Chinese and Japanese national consciousness, identity, and interests” (2000:170). However, since they are “overwhelmingly domestic debates with domestic aims” (2000:179), Rose contends that rising nationalist impulses have “not necessarily translated into an aggressive foreign policy”, and that state nationalism in China and Japan, specifically, “did not threaten to spill out to the extent that it would jeopardize the stability of Sino-Japanese relations” (2000:170).

Similarly, Satoh (2006a) links the “odd-couple” relationship between Japan and China to the rise of the politics of history and identity in both countries. She sees their contemporary bilateral relationship as no longer predominantly defined in terms of material interest, but increasingly by expression of identity, especially in Japan’s case. The re-definition of foreign policy based on one’s identity in relation to the other is fundamental to the worsening bilateral ties, as their identities and nationalisms are apparently at odds with one another (Satoh 2006a). Whilst modern Chinese nationalism is very much defined by historical memories of Imperial Japan’s exploits in China,<sup>29</sup> she sees Japanese seeking to either distance themselves from, or reinterpret such memories positively, in their quest to reinvent a more prideful national identity. This “clash of identities” is, in Satoh’s opinion “an obvious recipe for disaster”, when translated into their mutual bilateral policies (2006a:5-7).

Tamamoto (2001), Hashizume (2001), Shibuichi (2005), and Deans (2007) also assert a similar argument in their studies of the Yasukuni Shrine dispute. According to Tamamoto, “there is discontinuity in the Japanese [psyche] between the prewar and postwar states”, with the August 15, 1945 surrender date marking the break, and becoming “the defining moment of a new postwar Japanese national identity” (2001:36). As such, it is common for Japanese to be somewhat ambivalent regarding the prewar/wartime eras, as reflected in their lackadaisical attitude towards war apology and Chinese (and Koreans) sensitivities surrounding prime ministerial Yasukuni visits and historical revisionism, a sentiment which the Chinese find so repulsive (Tamamoto 2001:36). Meanwhile, Shibuichi

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<sup>29</sup> See Gries (2004; 2005a/b) and Callahan (2004) for the Japan factor in Chinese identity formation.

sees “a clash of incompatible identities” as “the essence of the Yasukuni dispute” (2005:213). According to him, the disputants (China, and Japanese leftists and rightists) hold contending images of Yasukuni that correspond with their respective historical identities: the Chinese perceive the shrine as a symbol of unrepentant Japanese militarism, while many Japanese, notwithstanding the leftists, view it as “honoring those who sacrificed their lives for [the betterment of] the Japanese nation” (2005:199, 213). Such divergent identities and symbolisms, Shibuchi insists, leave the contending parties with little choice, but to either oppose, or support Yasukuni, triggering “conflicting political and diplomatic pressures” on Japanese premiers’ decisions regarding shrine visits (2005:199).

Undoubtedly, the formation of confrontational national identities has much to do with conflicting interpretations of history, and the evolving nationalist narratives in both countries, which have accentuated the perennial “history problem”, making it a major thorn in contemporary Japan-China relations. This line of inquiry is found in most constructivist-oriented analysis, and specifically elaborated in Okabe (2001), Yang (2002), Gries (2005a/b), Rose (2005), and He (2006). According to Rose, “The history problem centres on an inability to agree on a shared version of history (both within Japan and between Japan and China)” (2005:6), a conundrum that has brought ramifications on other areas of the bilateral ties, which makes a genuine Japanese-Chinese reconciliation difficult, if not impossible to achieve. This is echoed by Satoh, who sees both countries holding particular and incompatible views on national history, especially of WWII; the Japanese war narrative has a narrower scope that generally begins with the Pearl Harbour attack, compared to the Chinese version of a protracted war starting from the 1931 Manchurian Incident (2006b:6). The widely perceived Japanese “collective amnesia” over this “obscured” war episode is pivotal to understanding the Japanese-Chinese “history problem” (Satoh 2006b:6).

The conflicting interpretation also stems from the so-called “victor-victim” genres that evolved in their nationalist historical narratives. While Gries attributes Chinese indignations towards Japan to the emergence of a popular “victimisation narrative” “that blames “the West”, including Japan, for China’s suffering”, besides the official Maoist “heroic” or “victor”

national narrative (2005a:9), Fujiwara (2001),<sup>30</sup> Miller (2002), Rozman (2002), and Kingston (2004)<sup>31</sup> see an enduring Japanese “victim consciousness” as justifying a “self-vindicating”, revisionist history in Japan that contradicts Chinese interpretations. Indeed, He (2006) identifies such “national mythmaking” triggered by domestic nationalist politics, as fundamental to comprehending their current diplomatic problems. Specifically, she blames “elite historical mythmaking” in both countries for the flourishing of “flagrantly nationalistic historical myths”, which created divergent national memories that “perpetuated and reinforced the problems of history” in Japanese-Chinese relations (2006:69). That said, Seaton (2007) claims that despite the stereotypical images of Japanese in collective denial over their war history, Japan’s war memories are not oxymoronic and dominated by the narrow elite-led nationalist narrative, but are probably “the most contested memories of any of the major WWII combatant nations.” However, “this perspective does not seem to matter in China and Korea where the “orthodoxy” of an unrepentant Japan in denial goes unchallenged” (quoted in Kingston 05/08/2007, see also Berger 2007; Hartley 2007).

There are also those who view different cultural responses to history as a basis to understanding their divergent treatment of the past. Whereas it is the Chinese cultural norm to reflect on history, Austin and Harris opine that the Japanese “cultural tradition of letting bygones be bygones” (2001:61) makes them comparatively less receptive of the past. Whiting similarly notes a “professed proclivity of the Japanese to live in the present with little interest in the past, particularly if it reflects unfavourably on the nation” (1989:187 cf. Austin and Harris 2001:61). Yang Daqing (2002:18-19) also shares the notion of cultural differences in creating misunderstandings that exacerbate the history row between China and Japan, such as those caused by their culturally rooted interpretations and usage of lexicons/terms to describe sensitive events of their shared history.

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<sup>30</sup> For a detailed discussion of history and nationalism from the Japanese perspective, see Fujiwara (2001).

<sup>31</sup> Kingston notes that “many Japanese may nurture a keen sense of victimization regarding the Pacific War that baffles its Asian victims” (2004:231). Japan is thus “seen to be shirking the burden of its history to the extent that it continues to embrace a self-vindicating narrative that casts the nation as victim and relegates competing narratives to the margin” (Kingston 2004:250).

Another closely related argument refers to changing mutual images and perceptions, fuelled by growing fear/vulnerability, and the “superiority-inferiority” complexes inherent in both nations. Aforementioned, Whiting (1989) links the shift in Japanese-Chinese ties during the 1980s to changing Chinese images of Japan that was fuelled by nationalism-induced historical memories of Japanese war exploits. Indeed, the correlations between nationalism, and images and perceptions have become salient in shaping their post-Cold War relationship. According to Rozman (2002), nationalist emotions in Japan and China, coupled with a lack of political will from both sides to overcome mutual distrust, and contain the intensity of public emotions, were responsible for the major deterioration in mutual images, and the downturn in bilateral ties between 1989 and 2001. Sasada (2006) also relates the rise of emotional, anti-Chinese nationalism in Japan, notably amongst youth to deteriorating images and perceptions of China, which have been exacerbated by the “China threat perception”, and the proliferation of nationalist narratives via various media sources (i.e. *manga*, *anime*, internet, etc.), in light of the “conservatisation” of the Japanese media and intelligentsia. Meanwhile, Yang Bojiang sees China and Japan as having both “superiority and inferiority complexes” resulting from their “mixed histories of being the most powerful East Asian countries and also being humiliated and marginalized” (2006:136), which makes nationalism much more salient in Japanese-Chinese relations. The psychological-emotional dimension that generates nationalist-flavoured sentiments of supremacy and fear, pride and prejudice, and power competition in their bilateral interactions are likewise, argued in Matthew (2003), Tamamoto (2003; 2004; 2005b), Tsunekawa (2006),<sup>32</sup> and Hagstrom and Lagerkvist (2006).

Undoubtedly, constructivism is feasible in explaining nationalism. In contrast to the conventional IR approaches, which commonly ignore cultural-ideational and identity-related variables, constructivism explicitly identifies them in formulating its analytical underpinnings. Indeed, constructivism provides a useful platform for analysing nationalism in Japanese-

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<sup>32</sup> Tsunekawa contends that contemporary Japanese nationalism “is not an expression of aggressive affirmativeness”, but rather “a defensive bluff” to offset the psychological vulnerability of Japanese weakness and fear toward, among others, an increasingly assertive China (2006:2).

Chinese ties that are significantly affected by history, culture, and identity-related issues. However, limitations of the constructivist/Area-studies literature include their prevailing tendencies of not incorporating explicit analytical frameworks to operationalise nationalism, and in overstating the *sui generis* features of Japanese-Chinese relations and policy-making. And, if mainstream IR studies marginalise cultural-ideational factors, i.e. nationalism and identity, constructivism/Area-studies often exaggerate their importance, while failing to adequately acknowledge the effects of the external environment and structural-material variables on state behaviour/preferences.

#### **2.4. Bridging the Divides: A Neoclassical Realist Perspective**

In view of the highlighted limitations, this study advocates Neoclassical Realism (NCR), which is hospitable to both mainstream and constructivist variables, as the central analytical framework. Aforementioned, NCR's "middle-ground" position of favouring domestic-level/constructivist reasoning allows this thesis to problematise nationalism as a variable that mediates the external environment and influences the domestic political process and perceptions of Japanese policy-makers, which in turn, shape particular foreign policy behaviour that either exacerbates, or alleviates bilateral problems vis-à-vis China.

NCR is a variant of IR realism that posits the role of domestic politics in international relations and foreign policy analysis. Emerging in the 1990s, NCR has gained relative grounds as a realist theory of foreign policy that generally shares the fundamental tenets of the realist theoretical tradition, only to separate itself from its systemic-focused brethren by explicitly underlining and theorising the "intervening" role of domestic variables in producing foreign policy behaviour.<sup>33</sup>

Indeed, contemporary realists, i.e. Zakaria (1992); Desch (1998); Sterling-Folker (1997); and Finel (2001/2); among others, have begun "paying more attention to interactions between international and domestic politics", and "integrating domestic political concerns

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<sup>33</sup> There are similarities between NCR and Stephen Brook's "postclassical/defensive realism". However, the former can be distinguished by its explicit and deductive theorisation of domestic-level variables within its analytical construct, as opposed to the ad-hoc application espoused by the latter (Gideon Rose 1998:150-151).

into the *realpolitik* framework” (Sterling-Folker 1997:3) to enhance realism’s explanatory power. Major neoclassical realist works (Gideon Rose 1998; Zakaria 1998; Taliaferro 2001; 2006; Schweller 2003; 2004; 2006; Cha 2000; Christensen 1996; 1999; Wohlforth 1993; 1995; and Nau 2003) all illustrate the significance of what Schweller deems as the “peculiar domestic structures and political situations” of states as “intervening” variables that partially affect their behaviour and response to the external environment (2004:164). Beginning with the assumption that systemic and domestic-level theorising is potentially compatible, neoclassical realists distance themselves from the orthodoxy of the Waltzian tradition that invariably views realism as *a priori* “systemic theory, which is deductively inhospitable to domestic-level theorizing” (Sterling-Folker 1997:3). According to Roth, neoclassical realists reject neo-realism’s ultra-parsimonious “privileging of systemic-structural variables over second-image factors—those at the level of individual state—and first-image variables—those at the level of individual human beings” (2006:487).<sup>34</sup> This means that NCR does not deny the primacy of systemic-level analysis, but believes that unit-level impetuses are equally responsible in affecting state interests/policy-choices, and thus ought to be incorporated to account for actor behaviour in interstate relations. Unlike most structural-realists, NCR adherents like Gideon Rose, contends that there is no such thing as a clear and automated “transmission belt” that directly translates systemic imperatives into foreign policy outcomes (1998:146-147; Schweller 2004:164; Taliaferro 2006:485). Instead, constraints/opportunities offered by the international system are defined and translated through the complex domestic political process that serves “to channel, mediate, and (re)direct policy outputs” (Schweller 2004:164) in response to such external forces.

In other words, neoclassical realists agree that the parameters of a state’s foreign policy and external interests are driven primarily by systemic pressures, i.e. relative power distribution of states within the international system (Gideon Rose 1998:146). However, the definition and causality of such imperatives is “indirect and complex, because [they] must be translated through intervening variables [such as state-elites] at the unit-level” (Gideon Rose

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<sup>34</sup> For a similar argument, see Gideon Rose (1998) and Thayer (2000).

1998:146). More specifically, they argue that constraints and opportunities thrown up by the anarchic international system are “murky and difficult” to interpret (Gideon Rose 1998:152), and have to be filtered through the fuzzy and intersubjective prism of foreign policy-makers, or state-elites involved in the decision-making process, before being translated into policy outputs (Sterling-Folker 1997). State behaviour/actions are therefore, dependent on the perception of those individuals, or groups involved in foreign policy-making regarding the incentives/disincentives imposed by the international system, and their choosing of one option over the others, in the foreign policy menu (Taliaferro 2006:485-486).<sup>35</sup>

Neoclassical realists have also earmarked other unit-level factors deemed important to the domestic political process, which include bureaucratic and factional politics, public opinion, media, political culture, and state institutions, among others (Sterling-Folker 1997:2; Gideon Rose 1998; Roth 2006; Taliaferro 2006). From NCR’s perspective, these variables have to be accounted for their role as arbitrators between the condition of the international environment and state responses to it. They are treated as “intervening” variables that serve to affect state ability to respond effectively to systemic pressures, such as to explain what Desch opines as “the lag between structural change and alterations in state behaviour”, and the “irrationality” of some states that fail “to adapt to the constraints of the international system” (1998:166). The “intervening” role posited to domestic variables is based on the conventional realist assumption that the level of pressure in the international system is always high, or what is defined as “structurally determinate condition” (Desch 1998:169). As such, states responses are expected to be primarily motivated by systemic pressure, and failure to do so are mainly due to domestic-level “intervening factors” (Desch 1998).

However, some neoclassical realists suggest that domestic variables may have a more “independent” impact on state behaviour, under specific structural conditions. According to those who assume that the international system is not always a constant state of malign power and security competition, domestic factors may be afforded “greater

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<sup>35</sup> According to Gideon Rose (1998:157-161), perception, notably that of political and foreign policy elites is regarded by most neoclassical realists as an important domestic variable, with some making perceptual factors central to their analytical framework. For similar views, see Schweller (2003:336-339)

independent explanatory power” (Desch 1998:169) on foreign policy-making, under relatively benign/ambiguous external conditions (see also Sterling-Folker 1997:22; Schweller 2004; Taliaferro 2000/1).<sup>36</sup> This means that domestic variables can intervene most saliently under such conditions, during which they may even assume some independent functions.<sup>37</sup> Here, the “independent” notion refers more to “flexibility” in effecting policy-variations, rather than the propensity to “operate independently of structural variables in shaping states’ foreign policies” (Taliaferro 2006:486), since such independence is still dependent on external-structural conditionalities. Generally, neoclassical realists share almost, if not similar assumptions in describing the nature of the international environment and its impact on actor behaviour/preferences, as well as the function of the domestic political process in encouraging, or preventing actors from effectively recognising and addressing structural-systemic imperatives.

## **2.5. A Neoclassical Realist Framework of Nationalism and State Behaviour/Preferences**

How nationalism/national identity as an “intervening” (with at times, “independent” function) variable affects the foreign policy of nation-states, and how best can it be incorporated into the NCR theoretical construct? NCR adherents have introduced domestic variables to supplement foreign policy analysis. Perception of state-elites,<sup>38</sup> bureaucratic/factional politics, political culture, elite-mass linkage, and “strong state-weak state” dichotomy are, considered variables that potentially influence foreign policy direction (Schweller 2003; Taliaferro 2006). Notwithstanding the primacy of systemic imperatives in defining the parameters in which foreign policy-choices are tailored, neoclassical realists argue that these domestic determinants are important, and depending on the particular time and

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<sup>36</sup> According to Taliaferro (2000/1:132), NCR, like neo-realism can be separated into two different camps, namely the “defensive” and “offensive” variants. Those making the above assumption are mainly “defensive-neoclassical realists” (2000/1). Taliaferro suggests that the defensive variant of neo-realism (defensive-realism or postclassical realism) and “defensive-NCR” are mutually complementary, as both share four auxiliary assumptions, namely “(1) the security dilemma is an intractable feature of anarchy; (2) structural modifiers influence the severity of the security dilemma in particular regions or between particular states; (3) material power drives states’ foreign policies through the medium of leader’s calculations and perceptions; and (4) domestic politics limits the efficiency of states’ responses to systemic imperatives” (2000/1:159).

<sup>37</sup> I thank Prof. Christopher W. Hughes for clarifying and enlightening me on this mid-ground realist trait.

<sup>38</sup> For a comprehensive analysis of perception and misperception in international politics, see Jervis (1976).

situational contexts, may have the power to affect state interests and policy-preferences via their “intervening” properties. According to Schweller, “Structural imperatives rarely...compel leaders to adopt one policy over another”; rather, states respond to structural constraints and opportunities “in ways determined by both internal and external considerations of policy elites, who must reach consensus within an often decentralized and competitive political process” (2004:164). This suggests that state responses to external pressures/incentives “may be less motivated by systemic-level factors than domestic ones” (Schweller 2004:164). Guided by NCR’s dictum, this section aims to develop an analytical framework that incorporates and explicates nationalism’s relationship with the said domestic variables, along with its interactions with external determinants, to assess its salience vis-à-vis these imperatives in shaping Japan’s post-Cold War relations with China.

The perceptions of decision-makers, or state-elites responsible for, and involved in foreign policy-making are deemed crucial, and commonly utilised in NCR frameworks (Wohlforth 1993; Christensen 1997; Zakaria 1998; Van Evera 1999), since systemic pressures are assumed as having to be filtered through their “opaque” cognitive lenses (Sterling-Folker 1997:19). Without a clear/direct link between system structure and actor behaviour, the incentives/constraints imposed by the structural environment are at best, vague/fuzzy, and have to be translated through the intersubjective understandings of “flesh and blood officials” (Gideon Rose 1998:158). This implies the need to account for policy-makers’ perception, and scrutinise how these actors actually comprehend international pressures in particular situations, as it is such understandings that are then, causally translated into foreign policy behaviours/outcomes (Gideon Rose 1998:157-158; Schweller 2003:336-337). According to Gideon Rose (1998), the introduction of perception as an “intervening” variable marks a distinctive separation between hardcore structural-realists and their neoclassical brethren, the latter offering a theoretical bridge that makes them relatively amenable to constructivists’ reasoning.<sup>39</sup> It allows the theorisation of identity-related,

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<sup>39</sup> Without sacrificing the fundamental realist premises, namely the primacy of relative power and structural constraints, NCR holds the “middle ground” between neo-realism and constructivism (Gideon Rose 1998:152),

cultural-psychological factors, including nationalism that “may serve to exacerbate, or mitigate the tendencies that are inherent in a system’s structure” (Friedberg 1993/4:11; cf. Gideon Rose 1998:164), or more importantly, how they affect actors’ perceptions of “their own and others’ capabilities, and how such perceptions are translated into foreign policy” (Gideon Rose 1998:168).

Indeed, neoclassical realists have called for the explicit incorporation of socio-psychological and cultural-ideational variables to elucidate how they inform state-elites/decision-makers’ perceptions (see Gideon Rose 1998:168; Taliaferro 2000/1:161). Nationalism is one such variable, insofar as it derives its political character, meanings, and power from these elements. How then, does nationalism and national identity affect perception? Perception is generally, understood as one’s intersubjective understandings of an object, or situation that derive from his/her particular cognitive lenses (Jervis 1976). These cognitive lenses are endowed by the socio-psychological, cultural and communicative processes that one is subjected to in life, which help define one’s identity and interests, and inform his/her choices of actions by “mediating the material world or structure” (Berger 2003:390). Nationalism, with its socio-psychological and cultural underpinnings, is one such cognitive lens that serves to i) imbue individuals or groups within the modern political community known as the nation with a collective identity, essentially defined as the “national identity”;<sup>40</sup> ii) shape their perceptions; iii) and inform their interests and preferences (Guibernau 1996).<sup>41</sup> Since national identity is defined in the context of the society of nation-states, nationalism as its denominator essentially has direct causal effects on nation-state perceptions regarding its place in the objective, material world, and its relationship with other national actors (Guibernau 1996:73). These perceptions, shaped by socio-psychological, cultural, and communicative processes like shared historical memories, education, media,

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a position that offers greater explanatory power compared to the two extremes, insofar as the synthesis of systemic-material and domestic-ideational factors makes NCR analysis more detailed, and non-exclusive.

<sup>40</sup> Like individual identity, national identity is an interpretation of the “self” that establishes who, what and where the nation is in social, psychological and political terms (Guibernau 1996:72; Hopf 1998:175).

<sup>41</sup> According to Guibernau (1996:72-73), the identity of one “self” (the question of who, what and where am I) is often defined in reference to the existence of the “other”, implying that identities exist only in societies. Thus, national identities exist in the international society of nation-states, which define and organise them (Guibernau 1996:73). See Chapter 4 for a more detailed discussion on nationalism and national identity.

and pre-existing cultural and belief systems, among others, give meaning to, and drive the forces of nationalism (Berger 2003; Guibernau 1996; Druckman 1994). Nationalism thus, not only orientates the national consciousness, but also forges the perceptual lenses of both government and people of a nation-state.

In the NCR construct, nationalism is affective on state perceptions via state-elites/central decision-makers. That said, the perceptions of other elite and societal groups, and the public are equally relevant in mediating the state's policy-making process (Taliaferro 2006:485). For instance, in countries where factional politics is a dominant feature, rival elite groups' perceptions may at times, influence policy-choices. Likewise, the perceptions of pressure groups and the masses, when translated into public opinions, can have a strong policy-making impact, depending on the degree of elite-mass linkage (see Beasley et.al 2002). Specifically in foreign policy-making, nationalism can define central decision-makers' perceptions by invoking friendly, or adversarial images of other countries, accentuating, or reducing their mutual differences, not mentioning, promoting confidence, or scepticism of their place vis-à-vis other states in the international system (Druckman 1994). Moreover, in countries where the state is relatively susceptible to domestic politics and public opinion, nationalist sentiments that drive the domestic political debate and public perceptions may have a strong, albeit indirect arbitrary impact, insofar as they can pressure state-elites into adopting particular foreign policies that may, or may not effectively address the constraints/opportunities imposed by the international system. In interstate relations, nationalism can widen, or bridge mutual perceptual divides, which may consequently translate into either policy of appeasement, or confrontation (Van Evera 1994).

Indeed, nationalism is affective on domestic politics, i.e. moulding the domestic political debate and influencing political competition, which may have bearing on a state's foreign/security policy-orientation. In countries where nationalist elements dominate the political leadership and apparatus, the "national interests" tend to reflect their parochial interests, and thus, the prevalence of policy-preferences geared towards realising nationalist goals. Meanwhile, in countries where domestic power struggles between rival political

parties/factions/bureaucracies/groups tend to affect governmental policy-making, nationalist pressure (i.e. from rightwing parties/factions, conservative politicians, military hardliners, etc.) can influence policy-decisions, and potentially undermine the pragmatic considerations of state-elites, when managing “nationalist” issues. This is especially in cases where state-elites are dependent on nationalist support to secure their domestic power position, which makes them vulnerable to such pressure (Downs and Saunders 1998/9; Bong 2002).

Similarly, nationalism can be introduced in realist frameworks that draw attention to “strong state-weak state” dichotomy, or domestic mobilisation theories in explaining foreign policy-making. Both Zakaria (1998) and Christensen (1996) draw on the concepts of “state power” and “national political power”, respectively, to emphasise the significance of state/government ability to control and mobilise domestic resources (human and material), in shaping their foreign/security policy initiatives. Such “powers”, according to them, underscore the relative effectiveness of state-elites in making unilateral decisions and dispensing strategies to meet international challenges or opportunities (cf. Gideon Rose 1998:160-164; Taliaferro 2006).

Nationalism, when viewed as a political instrument, certainly has an “intervening” role insofar as it can be, and has been often utilised by state-elites for domestic mobilisation. Its utility function, in Taliaferro’s opinion, is especially noticeable amongst “weak states” (governments with limited powers of domestic extraction), where state-elites have greater inclination towards manipulating nationalist sentiment to mobilise the political support of their citizenries for the adoption of particular domestic, and/or external policy strategy (2006:488, 491-492). Conversely, domestic nationalist elements tend to stoke nationalism to undermine the efforts of pragmatic, but “weak states” to mobilise national resources towards pragmatic policy considerations (Downs and Saunders 1998/9).

Aforementioned, nationalism can equally affect foreign policy-making to varying degrees, via non-governmental pressure groups and public opinion (Beasley et.al 2002). Although nationalism is generally associated with the state, popular nationalism may feature

prominently in the domestic nationalist discourse. Popular nationalism, in exerting its influence through civil society channels can be a significant source of domestic political pressure on foreign policy-making, especially if strong elite-mass linkage characterises a state's political system, and when state-elites' domestic political resolve is dependent on nationalist support/patronage. Simply put, nationalism has the propensity to not only shape the perceptions, images and attitudes of state-elites, but also colour the domestic political debate (moderate-pragmatists vs. ultra-rightist/revisionist), determine the adhesiveness/level of elite-mass linkages, and affect state capacity to mobilise domestic resources for national/foreign policies, among others.

In view of its encompassing effect, this thesis develops an NCR analytical construct, with nationalism serving as a key variable possessing an “intervening” (with sometimes “independent”) role that interacts with other unit-level and external factors to affect Japanese state-elites' policy-choices that either exacerbates, or mitigates the problems in Japanese-Chinese relations. For a start, the basic NCR framework comprises two sets of interactive variables (Diagram 1). Whereas external factors are primarily “independent” variables, domestic determinants serve as “intervening” variables (with sometimes, independent function) that mediate, and interact with the former, and with one another to produce particular foreign policy-options, or the “dependent” variable. The external variables identified for this study are the: 1) international security environment; 2) allied resolve/commitment;<sup>42</sup> 3) diplomatic leverage vis-à-vis disputant-state; and 4) interdependence (bilateral/multilateral), which ascertain the parameter of Japan's China policy-options. Meanwhile, the domestic variables include: 1) nationalism (state/popular manifestations); 2) state institutions (strong/weak state); and 3) domestic politics (power competition between elites/factions/parties/ bureaucracies). Specifically to this thesis, nationalism is assumed to interact with these other determinants in affecting Japanese state-elites' perceptions/calculations of the external-domestic conditions, namely Japan's

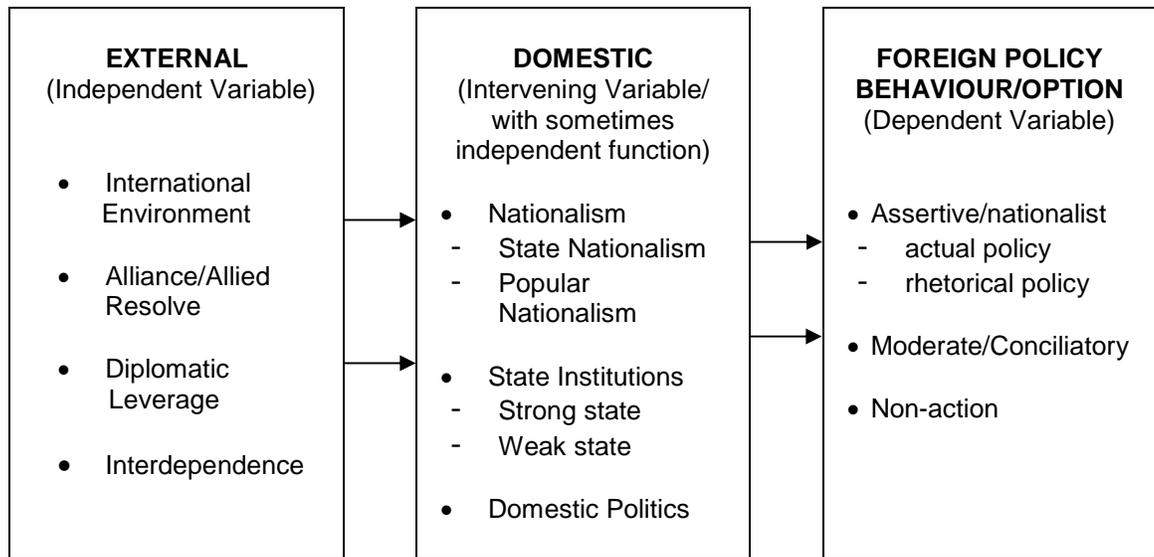
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<sup>42</sup> This variable draws ideas from, and is partially based on the concepts of “patron commitment” by Cha (2001) and Davidson's “balance of allied resolve” (2002), introduced in their respective NCR-oriented analysis. It adopts their generally shared assumption that perceptions of favourable allied resolve/commitment would encourage states to seek more self-serving external policy-goals (i.e. nationalist goals), and vice-versa.

relative power position vis-à-vis China, and their domestic political resolve vis-à-vis “nationalist” forces, which then define their specific policy-options, when dealing with the Chinese over the case-studies.

**Diagram 1**

**NCR Framework of Nationalism and State Behaviour/Preferences**



Source: Partly adapted and modified from Taliaferro (2006:486)

This framework requires the Japanese “state”, or more specifically, “state-elites” be made the primary agent, since they ultimately dispense the foreign policy-decisions. This necessitates the task of identifying their political-ideological dispositions and affiliations, their dependence on nationalism as a power instrument, their inclination towards nationalist, or pragmatic external agenda, and their domestic political resolve vis-à-vis nationalist and moderate elements to infer on nationalism’s salience in affecting their perception/calculation. Also under scrutiny are other domestic agencies, namely the LDP and its coalition partners, bureaucracy (MOFA, JDA/MOD, METI, etc.), political oppositions, and non-state actors (i.e. media, intelligentsia, nationalist/pacifist pressure groups, *zaikai*, and public opinion). For external agencies, the responses of the Chinese government and society, and the US’ role (within the US-Japan alliance, and as a salient actor in the US-Japan-China “triangular” relationship) are considered, together with other relevant contextual factors/actors in the international environment that simultaneously affect Japanese foreign policy-making.

Building on the modest framework, this section operationalises nationalism within an interactive “macro-micro” model to explicate how, when, and under what condition, it prevails in Japan’s China policy-making. NCR stresses that domestic influence on foreign policy depends on the constraints/opportunities imposed by the international system. This is coherent with the realist tradition’s basic assumption, which emphasises the primacy of systemic imperatives in conditioning the environment in which nation-states function and operate. Nonetheless, NCR goes further by assuming that the environment primarily serves to limit, but not govern a state’s specific foreign policy-choices, leaving such processes to domestic factors/actors, i.e. nationalism and state-elites’ perception/calculation (Sterling-Folker 1997; Dessler 1989). When international pressures are low, or when the probability of conflict is relatively obscure, NCR assumes that states can exercise a wider range of policy-options, thus giving nationalism and other domestic factors a bigger impact on foreign policy-making (Desch 1998). Under such conditions where domestic political bargaining enjoys greater saliency in the decision-making process, nationalist pressures (i.e. nationalist politicians, popular nationalist sentiments, etc.) may prevail and force, or even encourage states to adopt nationalist over prudent foreign policy-options. Likewise, state-elites fostering, or are dependent on nationalism for domestic political expediency, may allow it a more affective role in engendering state behaviour, under a relatively low-pressure international environment. Conversely, when external pressures are high, and the likelihood of threat becomes imminent, state preferences are bound to be curtailed, thus reducing the leverage of domestic imperatives on foreign policy-making (Desch 1998). This implies that nationalist forces have lesser bargaining power in policy-making. Instead, state-elites as “rational” actors are expected to respond to systemic imperatives, rather than domestic nationalist pressures, or their nationalistic convictions, when determining policy-options.<sup>43</sup>

NCR, however, does not exclude the possibility of domestic attributes superseding systemic imperatives even in times of tremendous structural constraints, since international pressure does not directly translate into specific set of behaviour/preferences, but must be

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<sup>43</sup> This paragraph’s line of argument is developed based on the NCR-oriented works of Desch (1998); Taliaferro (2001; 2006), and Sterling-Folker (1997).

filtered through unit-level factors/actors, namely state-elites' perceptions, which can "intervene", and cause states to act contrary to systemic imperatives.<sup>44</sup> According to Sterling-Folker, since state-elites perceive external pressures through the "prism" of their own intersubjective processes, their evaluation of the situation may not be necessarily objective. Even in the pursuit of survival, their efficiency in responding to those pressures "remain grounded in the processes from which actor identities, interests and behaviours are derived" (1997:22). This assumption grants nationalism an "intervening" role affecting state-elites' ability to dispense "rational" policy-options.<sup>45</sup> In sum, NCR prescribes nationalism with mostly "intervening" and, sometimes "independent" functions in foreign policy-making, pending on prevailing external conditions. Nationalism serves mainly as an "intervening" variable under structurally determinate conditions, whereas under a low-pressure, external environment, it may develop concurrent independent functions in affecting actor behaviour/preferences (Sterling-Folker 1997:22; Desch 1998:169).<sup>46</sup>

Superficially, NCR's incorporation of external and domestic-level theorisation looks similar to other middle-grounding frameworks deriving from both liberal and realist traditions. However, Sterling-Folker argues that, unlike the liberal construct, both the systemic and the domestic can be deductively incorporated, and "act as simultaneous independent variables in the [neoclassical] realist argument" (1997:22). This is done by separating and juxtaposing both contexts under the "environment-process" nexus, with the international system acting

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<sup>44</sup> This means that the international system imposes pressures on, and opportunities to the "self-help" units that constitute it, but according to Waltz, it cannot determine "how effectively" these units (state actors) "will respond to those pressures and possibilities" (1979:71).

<sup>45</sup> According to Sterling-Folker, the domestic process, serving as an "opaque filter" through which assessments, choices and judgements are being made regarding the international realm, would not only "inhibit actors from objectively judging choices, behaviours and outcomes", but could even act as "a barrier to their survival during time of major external crisis" (1997:19-20).

<sup>46</sup> Desch (1998) in his analysis of how cultural theories may supplement realist theorising, suggest the possibility of domestic factors having a more independent role under specific structural conditions. According to him, under a "structurally indeterminate" environment, where states have more policy-options and domestic bargaining have greater leverage, domestic factors may have more independent impact on state behaviour/preferences (1998:168-169). Conversely, under a "structurally determinate" environment, where a state has limited policy-choices, and is expected to respond primarily to systemic-material imperatives, he asserts that domestic factors has less independent impact on foreign policy-making, but may still act as "intervening" variables that can limit the effectiveness of state responses towards the structural condition (1998:169). Desch, nevertheless, contends that domestic factor is mostly an "intervening" variable in realist theories (1998:170). This argument is also noted in Brooks' assumption on domestic and non-realist variables shaping state behaviour/preferences-of-action, under his "postclassical realist" construct (see Brooks 1997).

as the anarchic “environment” that disposes a set of constraining conditions, while domestic factors serve as the internal “process” through which systemic constraints are translated into policy-outcomes (Sterling-Folker 1997:4-8; Taliaffero 2006:479-480; Dessler 1989). Ontologically, this “environment-process” nexus separates NCR from the liberal-oriented “two-level game” framework that incorporates both systemic and domestic as process-based variables, which actually renders the latter deductively inconsistent and theoretically inhospitable to domestic-level theorising (Sterling-Folker 1997:4).<sup>47</sup> NCR also differs from postclassical/defensive realism that purports to entertain domestic/unit-level analysis. Unlike NCR, the latter variant is susceptible to charges of reductionism, “because its first-order systemic argument does not account for much of the actual behaviour, thus forcing its adherents to contract out the bulk of their explanatory work to domestic-level variables introduced on an ad-hoc basis” (Gideon Rose 1998:150-151). Last, but not least, NCR needs to be differentiated from analytical eclecticism (Katzenstein 2008; Katzenstein and Okawara 2001), despite their convergence on the importance of adopting a holistic approach that derives analytical tools from other theoretical traditions to comprehensively explain state behaviour and international outcomes. Unlike neoclassical realists, whose basic theoretical assumptions/arguments derived from IR realism, which explain their advocacy for the primacy of power politics and first-order systemic/external explanation, while not discounting other levels and types of variables of analysis, proponents of analytical eclecticism do not favour specific research traditions, but rather, draw selectively elements from multiple theoretical paradigms to generate their explanations. In doing so, they also totally eschew parsimony, in preference for a non-“method-driven” analysis (see Katzenstein 2008), which inevitably leads to an absence of clear, systematic analytical frameworks to produce theoretically informed understandings of foreign policy and interstate relations. Such differences, and its incompatibility with this thesis’ research objectives (i.e. to provide a systematic analysis via a discernible analytical construct, and to enhance IR realism’s

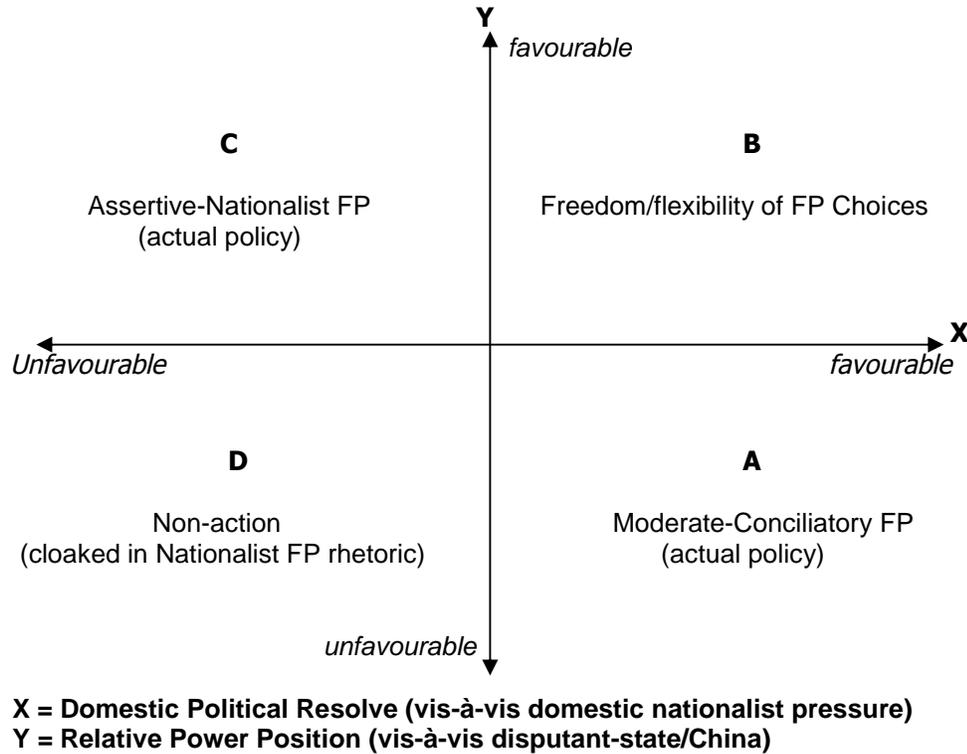
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<sup>47</sup> According to Sterling-Folker, since realism is essentially an environment-based theory, while liberalism claims to be a process-based theory, the incorporation of domestic factors as process-based variables by the former is deductively consistent compared to the latter (1997:4-5). The ontological nuance makes this thesis’ framework theoretically different from previous works like those of Bong (2002) and Chung (2004) that employ the liberal-oriented “two-level-game” or other mid-range constructs.

explanatory power and relevance), are the reasons why NCR is chosen ahead of analytical eclecticism, as the central analytical framework for this study.

**Diagram 2**

**NCR MODEL OF NATIONALISM AND STATE BEHAVIOUR/PREFERENCES<sup>48</sup>**



Based on the stipulated assumptions, a modest NCR model can be generated by juxtaposing the external (independent) and the domestic (intervening/independent) variables in two separate axes, to represent their interactions, which produce foreign policy-outcomes (dependent variable). Represented in Diagram 2, the external variables identified earlier are incorporated into the model to measure Japan’s relative power position vis-à-vis the disputant-state, China (as perceived by state-elites), along the Y-axis. Meanwhile, nationalism is factored with other domestic determinants, to measure the domestic political resolve of state-elites, specifically against nationalist pressure, along the X-axis. Independently, both axes provide a measure of state-elites perception/calculation in terms of the degree to which they feel confident, or vulnerable against the pressure imposed by the respective set of variables, based on a “favourable-to-unfavourable” continuum. *Ceteris*

<sup>48</sup> This NCR Model draws the basic idea of the “X-Y-axes” modelling from Nau (2003).

*paribus*, each axis generates its respective hypothesis on the expected Japanese behaviour/policy-option: **(H1)** by the Y-axis, and **(H2)**, the X-axis. Essentially, the juxtaposition of X- and Y-axes would yield four more sub-hypotheses **(H3-H6)** representing the likely foreign policy-options under specific external-internal conditions and time context (marked by Quadrant **A** to **D**; see also Table 2).<sup>49</sup>

**Table 2**

**NCR HYPOTHESES ON STATE BEHAVIOUR/PREFERENCES**

<b>HYPOTHESIS/ (QUADRANT)</b>	<b>EXTERNAL-DOMESTIC CONDITIONS AND EXPECTED FOREIGN POLICY-OPTIONS</b>
<b>H1</b>	When the relative power position vis-à-vis the disputant-state is decisively/determinately favourable (strategic environment + allied resolve + diplomatic leverage + interdependence), a state tends to adopt assertive-nationalist foreign policies (domestic-ideational factors gain FP salience under low-pressure external-structural environment, hence the opportunity for state-elites to advance state/popular nationalist agendas to realise personal nationalist convictions and/or political expedience). Conversely, maintaining a moderate-conciliatory/non-action policy is the likelihood, when a state faces unfavourable relative power position (state-elites expected to respond to external-structural constraints and suppress domestic-ideational goals).
<b>H2</b>	State-elites suffering from a decisively unfavourable domestic political resolve (vis-à-vis nationalist pressure), <i>ceteris paribus</i> , are compelled to adopt assertive-nationalist policies, when managing sensitive bilateral issues. Conversely, moderate-conciliatory policies are likely, when they enjoy favourable domestic political resolve (vis-à-vis nationalist pressure).
<b>H3 (A)</b>	When state-elites perceive a determinately unfavourable relative power position vis-à-vis the disputant-state, but enjoy favourable domestic political resolve, the tendency is to adopt moderate-conciliatory policies.
<b>H4 (B)</b>	When the state encounters an advantageous relative power position vis-à-vis the disputant-state, and the domestic political resolve of state-elites is favourable, they will enjoy flexibility/freedom in terms of policy-choices.
<b>H5 (C)</b>	State-elites perceiving a favourable relative power position vis-à-vis the disputant-states, but feeling vulnerable towards domestic nationalist pressure, may be inclined towards assertive-nationalist foreign policy-option.
<b>H6 (D)</b>	State-elites perceiving their state's relative power position and domestic political resolve to be decisively disadvantageous are constrained to opt for non-action, cloaked in nationalist rhetoric/symbolic gesture, as a means to circumvent the problem of contradictory foreign policy-goals posited by the international environment and domestic processes (external pressure supersedes domestic constraints).

Sources: Adapted and modified from Bong (2002:20-23); Davidson (2002); Downs and Saunders (1998/9).

<sup>49</sup> The hypotheses H1-H6 are adapted and modified from Bong (2002:18, 20-23), Davidson (2002) and Downs and Saunders (1998/9). Comparable hypotheses and models are found in other “mid-range” theoretical conceptualisations. See Mastanduno, Lake, and Ikenberry (1989), Cha (2000), and Nau (2003), among others. What differentiates this thesis’ NCR-based hypotheses with the “two-level-game” or, other mid-range hypotheses adopted by the likes of Bong (2002) and Downs and Saunders (1998/9), are theoretical nuances like: i) its espousal of the primacy of external factors; ii) nationalism’s “intervening” role on state-elites’ intersubjective perception of the external-domestic conditions; iii) auxiliary assumptions regarding the potential irrationality of state behaviour, iv) ontological positioning of the “external” as environment rather than process-based variables; and v) conceptualisation of analytical framework.

These policy-options (H3-H6) are primarily, hypothesised on the condition of the respective external-internal domains being either determinately favourable, or otherwise. In the event where state-elites face an ambiguous domestic political resolve, NCR's first-order systemic argument assumes that the preferred policy-option would largely depend on the perceived relative power position vis-à-vis the disputant-state. Conversely, an ambiguous relative power position would make a combination of assertive-cum-conciliatory measures the favoured policy-option, irrespective of the prevailing domestic condition (Table 3).

**Table 3**

**Expected State Behaviour/Preferences-of-action**

Relative Power Position (vis-à-vis disputant-state) Domestic Political Resolve (vis-à-vis nationalist pressure)	Favourable (H1)	Ambiguous	Unfavourable (H1)
Favourable (H2)	Flexible policy-option (H4) (Quadrant B)	Assertive-cum-conciliatory policy-options (btwn. A & B)	Moderate-conciliatory policy-option (H3) (Quadrant A)
Ambiguous	Assertive-nationalist policy-options (btwn B & C)	Assertive-cum-conciliatory policy-options	Moderate-conciliatory policy-options (btwn. A & D)
Unfavourable (H2)	Assertive-nationalist policy-option (H5) (Quadrant C)	Assertive-cum-conciliatory policy-options (btwn. C & D)	Non-action (H6) (Quadrant D)

By problematising nationalism, which under specific international and domestic conditions, can cause variations in state behaviour/policy-options, this NCR model enables its impact to be systematically assessed, and helps explicate the conditions in which it does, or does not prevail in Japanese (or Chinese) policy-making, when managing their bilateral affairs. More significantly, it can contribute to a better understanding of other dynamics involved, while simultaneously answering questions on nationalism's role in Japanese-Chinese ties that traditional IR theories and constructivism have not adequately explained.

**2.6. Conclusion**

There are contending approaches and theoretical constructs to explaining Japanese-Chinese relations, generally, and assessing nationalism's role in the bilateral ties,

specifically. Notwithstanding their respective explanatory power, “standard” theoretical approaches, from mainstream IR realism and liberalism, to constructivism/Area-studies tend to be ill equipped in comprehensively addressing the subject. The “analytical myopia” reflects their rigid analytical confines and limited tools, which lead to their respective over-emphasis on, and/or marginalisation of particular “level-of-analysis” and “type-of-variables”. In view of such limitations, this chapter proposes an NCR-oriented analytical framework to provide a better understanding of nationalism’s role in Japan’s China policy. The operationalisation of nationalism in the NCR model can help realise the research objective of making a modest contribution to theory-building, specifically in enhancing IR realism’s explication of nationalism in Japanese-Chinese relations. Indeed, NCR’s underpinnings, as opposed to those of neo-realism, allow a degree of reciprocity with respect to non-realist/constructivist assumptions, which enhances realism’s explanatory power of nationalism/identity in the study of contemporary international relations. Although, neoclassical realists may be criticised by their hardcore brethren and non-realist exponents for failing to defend the tradition and integrity of IR realism (e.g. Legro and Moravcsik 1999),<sup>50</sup> many contemporary realists are content to viewing such a reconstruction as necessary to enhance the “progressive power of realism” (Walt 1997; Schweller 2003). What NCR offers is a level of flexibility not found in the narrow premises of the Waltzian construct, which opens the path for a deductive engagement with constructivism-inspired approaches, and a step towards alleviating some of the “enduring dilemmas” of IR realism (Guzzini 2004:558). The NCR model of nationalism and state behaviour/preferences is operationalised in Chapter 6 and 7, to assess nationalism’s salience in affecting Japan’s policy-options in the bilateral disputes over Yasukuni and the ECS. Preceding them are chapters that analyse the background of Japan-China ties, and Japanese nationalism and foreign/China policy-making.

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<sup>50</sup> In fact, the “theoretical degeneration” critique of realism, and especially NCR by Legro and Moravcsik (1999) was, according to neoclassical realists, due to their misinterpretation of the realist canon, and overly rigid definition/labelling of IR realism, and preoccupation with “paradigmatism” (Feaver 2000). For a defence of NCR and realism, and comprehensive response to the critique, see Feaver et.al. (2000), especially the correspondence by Schweller, Taliaferro, and Wohlforth. See also Schweller (2003).

## CHAPTER THREE

### **THE TRENDS, DEVELOPMENTS, AND DYNAMICS OF JAPANESE-CHINESE RELATIONS**

The decline in recent Japanese-Chinese relations is hardly surprising, considering their historically tainted and hostile bilateral interactions throughout Asia's modern history. Japan's imperialistic transgression on Chinese soil during two Japanese-Chinese wars that lasted until the end of World War II (WWII), have evidently set in motion and shaped the problematic trends of their bilateral exchanges, thereafter. Although formal diplomatic ties resumed in 1972, and a progressive relationship ensued under the so-called "peace-and-friendship" framework, it has remained fragile, to date, and yet to mature into one based on mutual trust and genuine amity. Instead, historical excesses continue to haunt the governments and peoples of both countries, occasionally stifling, and threatening to haul their contemporary relationship "back to the future".<sup>1</sup> Interpreting from a neoclassical realist perspective, the following is an overview of the trends and developments, and the external and domestic dynamics (identified in the NCR framework) that shape the bilateral ties throughout the Cold War and post-Cold War eras.

#### **3.1. Bilateral Relations during the Cold War: From Confrontation to Normalisation**

Japanese-Chinese relations were largely adversarial during the Cold War, imposed mostly by ideological division, and leanings on confrontational blocs that epitomised the rigid bipolar security order in East Asia. The physical and emotional-psychological "wound" from the second Japanese-Chinese war also made the Chinese Communist regime, whose legitimacy derived from its anti-Japanese resistance and heroics, cautious of postwar Japan. Since 1950, China had sought to align with the Soviet Union, following the US containment policy and threatening encroachment of its borders.<sup>2</sup> Conversely, the Cold War's advent saw Japan's postwar position strategically transformed from being an American-occupied

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<sup>1</sup> Used by Mearsheimer (1990a) to describe the reversion of the post-Cold War European system to its past system of multipolarity, prior to the WWII, this phrase is adapted here to describe the possibility of Japanese-Chinese relations returning to its past confrontational posture.

<sup>2</sup> The conclusion of the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance and Mutual Assistance on 14 February 1950, incorporated the People's Republic of China (PRC) into the Soviet alliance framework, placing it in direct confrontation with the US and its allies, including Japan (see Bedeski 1983; Yahuda 1996).

territory to becoming Washington's "junior partner" in the strategic calculus against the broadening Communist "sphere-of-influence". The "policy-reversal" saw Japan absorbed into the US-led alliance framework, via the 1951 US-Japan Security Treaty. Correspondingly, its China policy was subordinated to the Cold War "alliance logic", placing the Japanese directly in confrontation with their Chinese neighbour (Zhao 1997:98-100).

The overarching alliance framework resulted in the absence of official diplomatic relations. However, it did not prevent both countries from maintaining unofficial economic ties, where bilateral trade proceeded, albeit at minimal proportion (Zhang 1998:57; Taylor 1996:3; Burns 2000:38).<sup>3</sup> Japan, led by the "pragmatic" Yoshida administration, was reluctant to adopt an overtly confrontational posture, and thus, did not sever all channels of interaction with China (Iriye 1996:48). Beijing also sought to maintain unofficial interactions via "people's diplomacy", or "cultural diplomacy" aimed as much at wooing the Japanese citizenries, as a strategy to detach Japan from its American ally (Jain 1977:8; Caroline Rose 1998:43).<sup>4</sup> The pragmatism demonstrated by both governments propelled an expansion of non-governmental exchanges, and the conclusion of several joint statements and private trade agreements in the 1950s saw a gradual increase in Japanese-Chinese commercial relations (Jain 1977:Chp.2-3).<sup>5</sup> The 1962 semi-formal "Liao-Takasaki" trade system, designed explicitly to help expand overall bilateral ties, with a view of ultimately realising diplomatic normalisation (Burns 2000:39), also led to both sides enjoying a relatively congenial relationship, despite being technically at war (Taylor 1996:3; Iriye 1996:54).<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> In 1950, unofficial bilateral trade amounted to less than USD60 million, comprising mostly Chinese soybeans, salt, coal and iron exports to Japan, and Japanese exports of textile machinery, steel, engines, and pumps to China (Burns 2000:38; Taylor 1996:3; Zhang 1998:57).

<sup>4</sup> Beijing adopted this grassroots-level diplomacy to foster "good-neighbourly" relations between the two citizenries via the promotion of cultural and economic exchanges (Jain 1977:8; Chp.2). According to Caroline Rose, it was a "charm-offensive" strategy implemented to inculcate "a large body of public opinion in Japan favourable to the PRC that would put pressure on the government to normalise relations with China" (1998:43).

<sup>5</sup> More than thirty non-governmental agreements and joint statements were concluded between the various socio-economic groupings of China and Japan at the height of the "peoples' diplomacy" period between 1953 and 1957, on areas of trade, fishery, cultural and scientific exchanges, as well as repatriation of Japanese nationals and war criminals (Jain 1977:8-9; 1981:11-12; Caroline Rose 1998:43-44)

<sup>6</sup> The "L-T trade agreement" represented Liao Chengzhi and Takasaki Tatsunosuke, the names of the two "semi-formal" representatives used to facilitate bilateral trade (Iriye 1996:54). According to Caroline Rose, this "friendly trade" system was limited to Japanese companies designated as "China-friendly", specifically, those permitted to trade with China via their acceptance of the preconditions set forth by the Chinese government. It

That said, the “unofficial” ties were intermittently undermined by developments in their respective domestic politics. For instance, most observers consider the 1958 “Nagasaki flag incident”<sup>7</sup>, where China temporarily suspended relations with Japan, to be Beijing’s pretext to display its discontentment over the reluctance of successive pro-US and pro-Taiwan administrations led by Hatoyama and Kishi to reciprocate Chinese efforts to enhance unofficial relations (Lee 1976:38; 1984:3; Burns 2000:38).<sup>8</sup> Similarly, bilateral tension rose in the 1960s following the arrival of the Sato administration, whose purported “anti-China” stance, and overt leanings on Taiwan and the US incensed Beijing (Jain 1981:54-56; Caroline Rose 1998:47-48),<sup>9</sup> exacerbating an already delicate political situation stirred by earlier Chinese provocations, i.e. nuclear test, and participation in the Vietnam War that drew strong Japanese criticisms. Japanese-Chinese ties also suffered during the Cultural Revolution. Political friction ratcheted up to extreme levels, while trade activities were stifled by China’s “inward-looking” policy of self-sufficiency and overwhelming ideological considerations (Iriye 1996:55), not mentioning, the escalation of anti-Japanese rhetoric, and pressure on Japanese companies to meet Chinese political demands (Caroline Rose 1998:47; Lee 1984:7).<sup>10</sup>

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was, as Rose’s asserted, “semi-official, long-term”, and based on fixed volumes of annual bilateral transactions, “negotiated collectively by representatives of Japanese companies and Liao’s liaison office” (1998:47).

<sup>7</sup> The incident took place in May 1958, where a Japanese youth tore down a Chinese flag at a Chinese stamp exhibition held in a shop in Nagasaki (Caroline Rose 1998:44-45; see also Jain 1977:38).

<sup>8</sup> Beijing’s displeasure towards Tokyo began to mount by mid-1950s, when the Hatoyama administration, under pressure from Washington, failed to respond to persistent calls for the establishment of a Chinese resident trade mission in Tokyo, as stipulated in their first two unofficial trade agreements (Burns 2000:38; see also Lee 1984:3). The arrival of the “pro-Taipei” Japanese premier and ex-member of the Tojo war cabinet, Kishi Nobusuke, caused further deterioration with his Taiwan visit, and efforts to remilitarise Japan under the proposed revision of the US-Japan security treaty. Although the Kishi government initially supported the provisions granting semi-diplomatic status to Chinese trade officials, and the establishment of the resident trade mission under the fourth private trade agreement, it consequently rescinded these privileges following pressures from Washington and Taipei, much to Beijing’s disappointment (Burns 2000:38; Jain 1977:36-39).

<sup>9</sup> PM Sato Eisaku’s state visits to Taipei and Washington in 1967 and 1969, respectively, and his explicit pro-Taiwan declarations, and commitment towards the US-Japan security arrangement, which included implicitly guaranteeing Taiwan’s security, were perceived by Beijing as a sign of Japan’s support for a “Two-China policy”(Caroline Rose 1998:48). Together with the renewal of the US-Japan security treaty in 1970, these policies were seen as an affront, and a revival of Japanese militarism under American patronage, as well as imminent steps towards establishing a military alliance, aimed principally at suppressing China (Lee 1976:86).

<sup>10</sup> According to Lee, Japanese firms and trade negotiators were required to express unequivocal support for the Cultural Revolution, by participating in mass demonstrations or attending political lectures, and issuing joint political statements that favour enhanced relations between China and Japan, in return for improved trade deals (1984:7; see also Caroline Rose 1998:47).

Japanese-Chinese diplomacy unravelled during the late 1960s as profound developments in the PRC's "strategic-triangle" relationship with the two superpowers saw it distancing from the Soviet Union towards a confluence of strategic interests with the US (see Breslin 2000:Chp.6). Beginning with Henry Kissinger's diplomatic overtures to Beijing in 1971, Sino-US rapprochement led to China rejoining the international community as a full-fledged UN member-state, before culminating in President Nixon's visit in February 1972 (Yahuda 1996:80). Japan was caught off-guarded by the dramatic shift in Sino-US relations, and the "Nixon Shock" (Zhao 1997:133), but convergence of economic, and increasingly, security interests over a growing Soviet threat enabled Tokyo to rapidly respond to the shift in Western attitudes to normalise relations with Beijing (Austin and Harris 2001:16).<sup>11</sup> Without the structural constraint, Japan and China formally established diplomatic ties in September 1972. Obviously, the "normalisation" would have had been impossible without Washington's consent (Kokubun 2001:10), as Tokyo had always subordinated and calibrated its China policy with its senior partner's grand strategy. It would also be unfeasible without Chinese forbearance of the US-Japan alliance, which they previously perceived as threatening, but had since, appreciated its significance in constraining Soviet expansionism and underpinning East Asia's strategic stability (Yahuda 1996:84).

That said, domestic developments also laid the groundwork for a smooth normalisation process. Besides earlier efforts to maintain unofficial economic relations as a harbinger towards eventual diplomatic ties, the ebbing of the Cultural Revolution and emergence of a more pragmatic Chinese and Japanese leadership provided an environment conducive for doing so (Burns 2000:40). Particularly, the arrival of a powerful "pro-China" Japanese administration under Tanaka Kakuei (Schlesinger 1999), whose diplomatic initiatives and skillful negotiations over problematic bilateral issues, ranging from Taiwan and Senkaku/Diaoyudao, to war reparations, facilitated the swift establishment of diplomatic

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<sup>11</sup> Ijiri opines that the shift in Japan's China policy after the "Nixon shocks" and China's entry into the UN were, based on "a great deal of flexibility and dynamic situational adaptability" (1996:63).

relations with Beijing, besides strong encouragement from the *zaikai*, media, and opposition parties (Burns 2000:40; Lee 1976:10; Fukui 1977b; Drifte 2003:22-23).<sup>12</sup>

Japanese-Chinese relations further strengthened following the signing of the 1978 Peace and Friendship Treaty (PFT). Preceding it were twelve other practical agreements covering various aspects of their engagement,<sup>13</sup> including the Long Term Trade Agreement (LTTA),<sup>14</sup> which established the legal framework for a progressive bilateral relationship, under the “peace-and-friendship” slogan (Kokubun 2001:11-12). Although these earlier accords catapulted economic relations to new heights,<sup>15</sup> overall interactions remained limited primarily to bilateral matters, and conducted almost entirely via government-to-government initiatives (Kokubun 2001:11). It was the PFT, which reconstituted Japanese-Chinese relations at the heart of East Asian international politics, especially with their tacit recognition of the Soviet “threat”, and *de facto* “strategic alliance” with the US, to contain its expansionism (Yahuda 1996:85; Bedeski 1983). That said, the process towards concluding the PFT had its share of obstacles, characterised by protracted negotiations over the inclusion of the “anti-hegemony clause”, and the Senkaku/Diaoyudao dispute (Mochizuki 2007:232-233).<sup>16</sup> Ultimately, both governments’ pragmatic resolve facilitated the process, opening a new chapter in Japanese-Chinese ties.

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<sup>12</sup> According to Burns, while agreeing to the “One-China” policy, Tanaka was able to secure Chinese acquiescence over Japan’s intention to maintain non-diplomatic relations with Taiwan via trade offices that double-up as *de facto* political representatives, in an arrangement similar to that of the Japanese-Chinese “pre-normalisation” framework (2000:40). Both sides also agreed to shelve their territorial dispute over Senkaku/Diaoyudao, and China, on its part, agreed to renounce war reparations claims worth around USD50 billion (Lee 1976:10 cf. Yahuda 1996:84). Fukui (1977b:98) credits the swift normalisation to ““critical” decisionmaking” in response to growing pressure from Japan’s opposition parties, *zaikai*, and media for an early Japanese-Chinese rapprochement, while Drifte (2003:23-24) credits the role of “strong political leadership in Japan”.

<sup>13</sup> For the list of agreements, refer to Zhao (1993:119).

<sup>14</sup> Concluded on 16 February 1978, the LTTA was designed to facilitate economic complementarities and address bilateral trade issues between the two economies. More importantly, specific provisions under this accord linked bilateral economic relations to their respective domestic/national economic interests, making economic interdependence a fulcrum in advancing overall bilateral ties (Zhang 1998:66-68; 2000:51-53).

<sup>15</sup> Bilateral trade jumped several folds within the first few years of diplomatic normalisation, with Japan emerging as China’s largest trading partner (Iriye 1992:127; Zhang 1998:62; Burns 2000:41).

<sup>16</sup> Japan’s initial reluctance to conclude the PFT was due to concerns over the controversial “anti-hegemony clause” that could antagonise the USSR, and its desire to maintain an “equidistant” policy with all neighbours, including the communist superpower (Bedeski 1983). Also, the indecision in resolving the Senkaku/Diaoyudao dispute during the 1972 joint communique saw its untimely resurfacing as a problematic issue that delayed the PFT negotiations. However, besides shelving the territorial dispute, Japan’s acceptance of, and China’s reciprocal decision to include a “disclaimer” to neutralise the implication of the contentious clause, exemplified both sides’ pragmatism to realise a progressive relationship (Bedeski 1983:31-32; Zhao 1997).

Indeed, bilateral relations have flourished since 1978, underpinned by burgeoning economic interactions throughout the 1980s. The PFT, which coincided with the launching of China's economic modernisation programmes, facilitated a rush of Japanese firms into the Chinese market and the establishment of joint industrial plant projects during the so-called second "China Boom" period (Kokubun 2003:32). Most conspicuous was the financing of the Baoshan Iron and Steel by Nippon Steel Corporation, a product of intergovernmental initiative that became "the flagship symbol of friendship between the two countries" (Kokubun 2003:33; 1986). The Japanese business community's enthusiasm, were however, short-lived, when Chinese firms started revoking their contracts following structural problems in the domestic economy that necessitated the implementation of an "adjustment" policy (Howe 1996:111; Takagi 1999:20-21).<sup>17</sup> Japan was thus compelled to offer China ODA loans to help salvage these projects and alleviate the bilateral dilemma (Kokubun 2003:33; Whiting 1989:97).

The "Baoshan" setback proved temporary as structural reforms and excess demands in China during the mid-1980s rejuvenated bilateral economic interactions (Howe 1996:111-112). Especially, the decentralisation and "marketisation" of the Chinese political economy saw market-driven decisions gradually replacing elite-inspired, intergovernmental initiatives, a new trade pattern that greatly facilitated the expansion of economic ties (Howe 1996:15; Zhang 2000:53-68). By the latter half of 1980s, more Japanese businesses began investing and moving their production facilities to China in search of cheap labour, amid the sharp rise of the Japanese yen, and their desire to access the Chinese consumer market. Although the overall amount was insignificant throughout the 1980s, constituting less than 1% of Japan's annual global FDI figures,<sup>18</sup> Japanese investment started soaring following the signing of the

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<sup>17</sup> Ijiri opines that the "Baoshan" issue reflected the *zaikai*'s failure to thoroughly consider the fundamental differences, and realities of China's political and economic systems, before rushing into the Chinese market (1996:64). The "Baoshan shock", according to Caroline Rose, precipitated "cancellations and postponements" of other joint projects, between 1980-1981, bringing "disillusionment and bitterness...amongst the Japanese business community" (1998:53), as well as temporary negative repercussions to their budding economic relations (1998:54). For a detailed analysis on the "Baoshan shock", see Kokubun (1986).

<sup>18</sup> Chinese statistics recorded only 27 cases of Japanese direct investments, amounting to USD950 million, between 1979 and 1983 (Kokubun 2003:36). Japanese FDI began to increase between 1984 and 1987, in a period that coincided with amicable developments in Japanese-Chinese political relations.

1988 Investment Protection Pact, and Deng Xiaoping's symbolic "southern tour" in 1992, which affirmed China's commitment towards economic liberalisation/reforms (Austin and Harris 2001:207, 209-211, 226).

Equally boosting the bilateral relationship was the generous amount of Japanese aid to China. Beginning with the first package in December 1979, Japanese ODA<sup>19</sup> has become a symbol of Japan-China "friendship" ties (Burns 2000:45; Takamine 2005). Not only was Japan the pioneering distributor of ODA to China, it also became the single largest provider of bilateral loans to the Chinese, through four major assistance packages amounting to more than USD13 billion (Burns 2000:45; Mori 2007:30-32).<sup>20</sup> China emerged as the largest recipient in 1987, and remained amongst the leading destinations of Japanese ODA throughout the 1990s (Wakisaka 1998:117; Soderberg 2002:120; Mori 2007:31). Likewise, bilateral trade grew exponentially, especially with the opening of China's coastal provinces to international trade in the 1980s. Geographical proximity and mutual trade complementarities saw two-way trade figures surpassing USD19 billion in 1988 from just over USD5 billion, a decade before (Taylor 1996:124; Takagi 1995:99). The flourishing trade ties especially benefited Japan, which gained annual trade surpluses throughout the 1980s as Japanese goods dominated the Chinese market, prompting discontentment and concerns over a "second [Japanese] invasion" (Wilson 1985:143-144).<sup>21</sup> Nonetheless, the diversification of China's foreign economic relations (Burns 2000:43), and gradual transformation of its trade composition saw the surplus pattern swinging in its favour in 1988, and Japanese trade deficit has since become an annual trend in their bilateral trade statistics (Zhang 2000:53-68). By the early 1990s, Japan became China's largest trading partner, while the Chinese rose steadily in the Japanese list of largest trading nations (Taylor 1996:122), epitomising their deepening economic interdependence.

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<sup>19</sup> Japan's ODA to China comprises yen loans, technical cooperation, and grant aid/assistance. For a record between 1980-2004, see MOFA (2006:41). For more specific discussions about Japanese ODA to China as a foreign policy tool, see Iokibe (2003), Drifte (2003:136-137), and Takamine (2006).

<sup>20</sup> Between 1979-1999, Japan provided 41.91% of the total major foreign government loans to China, making it by far the largest contributor, followed by Germany with merely 9.86% (Lin 2003:381 cf. Mori 2007:32).

<sup>21</sup> See Austin and Harris (2001:256), for the use of a similar term.

Japan was also at the forefront promoting China's integration into the international community. Besides helping China attain "developing country" status in the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) to facilitate ODA disbursement, Japan proactively supported Chinese membership in international institutions, from the World Bank, to the World Trade Organisation (WTO), and also admission into regional multilateral fora, like the APEC in 1991 (Deng 1997:375, 383; Burns 2000:48). Tokyo also played a key role persuading other Group-of-Seven (G-7) member-states to lift their economic sanctions on China, not long after the 1989 Tiananmen incident (Whiting 1992:46).

Similarly, mutual dependence has deepened via significant increases in grassroots-level exchanges. From tourists and students, to industrial and business personnel, the number of Japanese entering China multiplied from 54,000 in 1979 to approximately 1.47 million in 2000 (Kokubun 2006:27). Reciprocally, Chinese entering Japan rose unprecedently since the 1980s, besides the influx of illegal entrants (Kokubun 2006:27). Beginning in 1982, the "twin/sister-cities" concept was introduced to commemorate the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of diplomatic normalisation (Caroline Rose 1998:55), and this has since, become a common practice in promoting greater socio-cultural exchanges. Favourable mutual societal images, reflected in public surveys also depicted the generally amiable mood. Japanese affections towards the Chinese peaked at 78.6% in 1980, based on the annual PMO opinion poll, and the affinity ratings remained high throughout the decade, hovering between the upper 60% to lower 70% range (Kokubun 2001:9; see Figure 1).

On the diplomatic front, Japanese-Chinese ties recorded remarkable progress. The upbeat political climate was typified by the numerous high-ranking exchanges under the "Japan-China friendship" banner,<sup>22</sup> making 1980s as amongst the most conducive and friendly period (Takagi 1999). In May 1982, Chinese Premier Zhao Ziyang traveled to Japan to commemorate the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of normalisation. Japan reciprocated with a visit in September by PM Suzuki Zenko. The CCP Secretary Hu Yaobang visited Tokyo the

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<sup>22</sup> This maxim to describe the nature of Sino-Japanese ties is used in Kokubun (2001; 2003), and found in other works by both Japanese and Chinese scholars.

following year, and this was ensued by official callings from the new Japanese premier, Nakasone Yasuhiro, in 1984 and 1986. The amicable atmosphere continued with visits by Nakasone's successor, Takeshita Noburo and Chinese Premier Li Peng, in August 1988 and April 1989, respectively.<sup>23</sup> These state visits were usually, accompanied by new concepts to enhance overall bilateral ties, and, on Japan's part, economic incentives and loan/investment packages to cajole the Chinese (Deng 1997).

The bilateral relationship had its share of problems, the superficially positive trend notwithstanding. Specifically, unresolved "history" problems and rising nationalism in Japan during the 1980s saw the Chinese dampening diplomatic relations temporarily, only to resume after obtaining Japanese concessions on negotiations over a variety of other issues. A case in point was the 1982 Japanese school history textbook controversy that coincided with the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of diplomatic normalisation. In what was originally a domestic affair, in which Japan's MOE was "falsely reported" by the leftwing media for "diluting" Japanese wartime actions in a school textbook screening exercise, the issue became "internationalised" and developed into a major diplomatic row vis-à-vis China (Ijiri 1996:65; Yang 2001:181). The event triggered a series of "Japan bashing" rhetoric by the Chinese leadership and media, who not only accused Japan of trying to "sanitise" its war history by downplaying and omitting sensitive facts on Japanese brutality in China and Asia, but also charged Tokyo for abetting the revival of Japanese militarism (Caroline Rose 1998:Chp.4). The controversy was eventually contained, after the Japanese government yielded and took measures to appease the Chinese. Observers see the incident as a classic example of how China skillfully manipulates "history" to put Japan on the defensive, and in the process, drawing Japanese concessions on other bilateral issues (Ijiri 1996; Caroline Rose 1998).

Following the textbook incident, Japanese-Chinese ties returned to the superficial "friendship" mood that signified the third "China boom" phase (Ijiri 1996:69).<sup>24</sup> The goodwill

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<sup>23</sup> For a comprehensive account of these high-ranking exchanges, from which information on this section derives from, see Takagi (1999:22-23).

<sup>24</sup> The terms "boom", "honeymoon" (Kokubun 2001; Mori 2007) and "fever" (Ijiri 1996) are used to describe periods of rapidly improved overall relations between Japan and China.

eventually ebbed, and bilateral relations suffered another temporary setback, when Japanese PM Nakasone made an official visit to the controversy-laden Yasukuni Shrine on 15 August 1985. The untimely homage, coinciding with the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Japan's WWII surrender, triggered popular indignation across China (Whiting 1992:45-46). Beijing's vehement criticisms and student-led anti-Japanese demonstrations in Chinese cities saw the Japanese government again buckling to Chinese pressure (Shibuichi 2005:207). The trend repeated itself in the 1987 "Kokaryo" issue, where a Japanese high court ruling recognising Taiwanese jurisdiction over an old Chinese student dormitory in Kyoto, sparked yet another diplomatic row that saw Beijing pressuring, and Tokyo "kowtowing" in the usual diplomatic fashion. Both issues were, subsequently settled, following Tokyo's conciliatory measures, which further entrenched the asymmetrical trend governing the bilateral ties (Ijiri 1996:73).

There were other bilateral irritants throughout the 1980s ranging from the 1984 and 1986 sequels of the textbook issue, and Japanese politicians' controversial remarks on war history, to bilateral trade imbalances that escalated political tensions. Bilateral relations also suffered temporary interruption following the Tiananmen incident of June 1989,<sup>25</sup> when Japan and other industrialised nations imposed sanctions on China for alleged serious human rights violations by the Chinese authorities in suppressing the pro-democracy demonstrations (Austin and Harris 2001:186). That said, Japan was initially reluctant to openly reprimand China, and was prudently managing the issue, due to its own dubious moral position and blemished wartime record, and the potentially negative repercussions of isolating the Chinese (Shambaugh 1996b:85-86; Drifte 2003:30). Indeed, it was Japan's initiative as the first G-7 state to lift the sanctions and resume diplomatic ties with China. However, it is widely believed that the Tiananmen incident has severely damaged Japanese perceptions and images of China, generating stark awareness and magnifying differences regarding the norms and values shared by the two governments and societies (Matsuda 2005:3). Most analysts view it as another watershed in Japanese-Chinese relations, which

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<sup>25</sup> In the June 4, 1989 incident, the Chinese government took drastic measures to quell student-led pro-democracy and anti-government demonstrations at the heart of the Chinese capital that saw the PLA launching what Western media described as a forceful and "bloody" crackdown/"massacre". For an overview of the Tiananmen 1989 tragedy as a "test" of Japan's China engagement strategy, see Drifte (2003:29-32).

compounded by transformations in the international and domestic realms, propelled the beginning of a declining trend throughout the remainder of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Takagi 1999).

### 3.2. Post-Cold War Relations: “Hot Economics, Cold Politics”?

The “boom-bust” trend and political frictions not only persisted, but have risen exponentially during the post-Cold War period, following “structural changes” in the traditional framework of Japanese-Chinese relations (Jin 2002:34-35; Kokubun 2001:10; Mori 2007:37-63). Externally, the Cold War’s demise rendered the tacit US-Japan-China “strategic triangle” meaningless, bringing a strategic transformation to the international order that affected bilateral relations to the core (Kokubun 2003:37). Conversely, deepening socio-economic interdependence has spawned problems that were non-existent during the period of superficial relationship, while generational shift in leadership and masses, and changing tunes in domestic politics amid rising nationalism have spun what Self opined as “new social threads and political dynamics” that continually exposed the limitations of the “friendship framework” (2002:80; Kokubun 2003:32). Indeed, their vibrant economic interactions have not, contrary to some expectations engendered closer politico-security relations (Yahuda 2006; 2007). Diplomatic ties have reached a nadir in recent years, reflecting the so-called “hot economics, cold politics” dialectic, or what some observers deemed as “cold peace” (Taniguchi 2005), making Japanese-Chinese relations increasingly fluid and enigmatic (Heazle 2005:6).<sup>26</sup>

Aforementioned, Tokyo’s belief in engaging, and not isolating China following the Tiananmen incident, witnessed the speedy resumption of bilateral ties in 1991, marked by PM Kaifu’s August visit to Beijing (Takagi 1999:24).<sup>27</sup> A year later, diplomatic relations reached a new milestone, when Emperor Akihito made an official visit to China, in what was considered an act of “emperor diplomacy” (*tenno gaiko*) (Hook et.al. 2001:170). The historic, “first ever” visit by a Japanese monarch, was laden with symbolism, given Imperial Japan’s

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<sup>26</sup> Some observers deemed this contradictory development in the political and economic dimensions of their bilateral relationship as a potential sign of Sino-Japanese “cold war” (see Hagstrom and Lagerkvist 2006).

<sup>27</sup> Green sees the Tiananmen tragedy ironically creating an “artificial honeymoon” in Japanese-Chinese ties (2001:78).

war legacy in China (Shambaugh 1996b:87). Although drawing protest from Japanese ultra-nationalist elements, the event proceeded without unforeseen incidents.<sup>28</sup> Indeed, the generally positive reception in Japan and China has had both governments reckoning a “new episode” in Japanese-Chinese relations (Jin 2002:106), which ironically, turned out to be one that was eventually marred by persistent deterioration until late 2006.

Japanese-Chinese diplomacy progressed following reciprocal top-level visits by then CCP General Secretary Jiang Zemin and the first non-LDP Japanese premier, Hosokawa, in 1993 and 1994, respectively, heralding a “distinct warming in relations” (Shambaugh 1996b:87) that raised expectations of a genuine reconciliation. The Japanese leadership has, on its part, offered various degrees/expressions of war apology during such summitries, with the Emperor offering his “deep remorse” statement in 1992 (Okabe 2001:59), followed by Hosokawa’s “landmark” apology during his visit, where the term “aggression” was used for the first time (KN 20/03/1994; cf. Austin and Harris 2001:56). Since then, successive Japanese premiers, from Muruyama to Koizumi, had in almost ritualistic fashion, professed different degrees of apology, when they formally met their Chinese counterparts. Despite several “history”-related problems, i.e. discovery of the “Unit 731”, “comfort women”, Chinese civil demands for war reparations, and insensitive statements made by Japanese elites regarding the “Nanjing massacre” and the Sino-Japanese war, diplomatic ties remained generally favourable. China’s pragmatism in securing Japanese goodwill and support during the post-Tiananmen period saw the 1990 diplomatic row over Senkaku/Diaoyudao quickly subsiding without much of the usual Chinese rhetorical display (Drifte 2003:51; Chung 2004). Japan’s moderately independent China policy, exemplified by the Hosokawa administration’s acquiescence of the Chinese, or generally “Asianist” stance on human rights, which differed from its American ally’s position, also facilitated warm relations (Shambaugh 1996b:87; Hook et.al 2001:171).

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<sup>28</sup> Besides the *uyokus*, there were 26 LDP “Young Turks” amongst the most vociferous in protesting against the Emperor’s planned visit (MS/MDN 09/11/1992 cf. Austin and Harris 2001:46). Likewise, there were public opposition in China over the visit, but was effectively suppressed by Beijing (Rozman 2002).

Meanwhile, economic relations remained robust. Bilateral trade reached USD39 billion in 1993, before escalating to USD57.5 billion in 1995, fuelled by trade complementarities and mutual comparative advantages between the two economies (Shambaugh 1996b:88-89; Hillpert 2002:44-46). Paralleling this trend has been the expansion of Japanese FDI, which soared 84% to USD1.07 billion in 1992 alone, making Japan the fourth largest investor in China, with investment totalling USD3.39 billion (Shambaugh 1996b:89; Taylor 1996:58; Burns 2000:46). Another three-fold increase saw annual FDI reaching USD4.32 billion in 1995 (Farrell 1998 cf. Austin and Harris 2001:212). Likewise, Japanese ODA to China increased, despite the introduction of more stringent guidelines,<sup>29</sup> with annual figures surpassing USD1 billion, between 1992-1995.<sup>30</sup>

Nevertheless, mutual security developments have had both countries re-evaluating and raising concerns regarding their respective strategic ambitions in the transiting post-Cold War order. China's double-digit increase in annual defence spending since 1989, and modernisation that focused on enhancing the People's Liberation Army's (PLA) power-projection capabilities (Bitzinger 2003), not mentioning the resumption of nuclear tests, began to worry Japanese security planners (Drifte 2003:43). By 1993-1994, growing anxieties over China's security development were publicly expressed in both Japanese and foreign media, leading to explicit calls of concern from successive Japanese administrations (Shambaugh 1996b:93; Drifte 2003).<sup>31</sup> Conversely, a shift in Chinese strategic perception/thinking saw Japan emerging as a major rival and potential nemesis in the uncertain future regional order (Shambaugh 1994:6; Whiting 1996:609-611). Exacerbating this mainstream Chinese perception and distrust of Japan were the groundbreaking, albeit gradual expansion in Japanese security policies, especially after 1992, besides the Self-

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<sup>29</sup> During PM Kaifu's 1992 visit to China, a new ODA guideline was announced, stipulating that disbursement to recipient countries would be based on, among others: i) trends in defense expenditures; ii) development and production of WMD, iii) efforts to promote democratisation, and iv) respect for basic human rights and freedom (MOFA 1991:131; cf. Shambaugh 1996b: 87; Takagi 1995:107-108).

<sup>30</sup> Figures based on OECD-compiled data on Table 5.1. "China's ODA Receipt from Japan (1979-1998)" found in Austin and Harris (2001:164).

<sup>31</sup> Drifte highlights Japanese elites concerns over China's military modernisation, which among others, included the so-called "Higuchi Report" that gave veiled references to the "Chinese military challenge" (2003:44, 88). See Drifte (2003:Chp. 2, Part 2 and 3) for an excellent overview of Japan's security concerns about China.

Defence Forces's (SDF) growing military capabilities and comparatively huge budget (Hughes 2005).<sup>32</sup> Their changing mutual security perceptions and developments proved to be a principal factor affecting their contemporary bilateral affairs.

As with the traditional tendency, their "good-neighbourly" relations proved ephemeral. Diplomatic goodwill started receding from mid-1990s onwards, as structural transformation inevitably forced both countries to manoeuvre and readjust to the changing international and domestic environments (Yahuda 2006:162). Their growing asymmetries and changing relative strategic and economic positions began to develop into a pertinent source of mutual discomfort. With China's economy growing annually at spectacular rates, matched by sustained military augmentation, concerns over a perceived "Chinese threat" began to echo, not only in the West, but also among Japan's "China" watchers, and within the "corridors-of-power" in Kasumigaseki and Nagata-cho (Drifte 2003:80-83). Japan's protracted "post-bubble" recession further accentuated the asymmetries and fuelled Japanese insecurity. Conversely, Tokyo's expanding international role and increasingly assertive foreign/security policy-orientation generated unease in Beijing. Compounded by domestic developments, i.e. generational change and rising nationalism fuelled by historical enmity, bilateral relations deteriorated amid an increased frequency of diplomatic clashes.

Japanese-Chinese tension ratcheted up in March 1996, when China took belligerent measures to deter Taiwan from contemplating unilateral independence during the prelude to the Taiwanese presidential election. The PLA conducted full-scale naval exercises and missile tests in the Taiwan Strait, precipitating a dangerous escalation of hostility that saw two US Navy aircraft-carrier battle groups deployed to the narrow sea-lane to check Chinese intentions (Garver 1997:Chp.6; Christensen 1999:62). Although the crisis did not manifest into a military confrontation, it heightened Japanese awareness regarding their own (in)security vis-à-vis the Chinese (Wang 2000:363), prompting Tokyo to freeze grant aid to

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<sup>32</sup> Although Japan's annual defence budget rarely exceeded 1% of its annual GDP (except during the Nakasone administration), it was still comparatively large, due to its gargantuan national economy. See Chapter 5.

China (Takamine 2005). In fact, the Diet had rallied for a similar punitive action the year before, in response to Chinese nuclear weapons testing (Green 2001:78).

Not surprisingly, Taiwan has re-emerged a contentious issue, with the fragility of Japanese-Chinese diplomacy aggravated by the shift in Japanese attitude towards Taiwan (Wang 2000:358). Although officially committed to the “One-China” policy, Tokyo has become increasingly flexible, especially in granting Taiwanese state-elites permission for official/semi-official visits to Japan since 1994, while Japanese public images of Taiwan improved favourably vis-à-vis China, much to Beijing’s chagrin (Wang 2000:362-363; Takahara 2004:161).<sup>33</sup>

Similarly, Japan has begun reviewing its security policy in conjunction with the US, including the view of maintaining the status quo of Taiwan and its surrounding areas/sea-lanes that are strategically vital to Japan (Roy 2005:200). The Clinton-Hashimoto joint-declaration for the revision of the 1978 Guidelines for US-Japan Security Cooperation, soon after the Taiwan Strait crisis, reflected such intentions, besides the alliance’s strategic interests in hedging against future Chinese power, as advocated in the “Nye Initiative” (Yang 2003:307; Drifte 2003:89-93). Under the revised Guidelines, Japan agreed to provide “logistical and rear-area support” for American operations covering military contingencies in “areas surrounding Japan” (Johnstone 2000:132; Soeya 1998; Green and Mochizuki 1998). Despite both allies’ reiteration regarding the non-inclusion of Taiwan, and the “situational” rather than “geographical” nature of the definition, Beijing remained unconvinced, perceiving it to be none other than a US-Japanese grand strategy to contain, and intervene in China’s domestic affairs (Yang 2007:139; van Kemenade 2006:57-58). Tokyo’s reluctance to renounce any involvement in a Taiwan contingency (Roy 2003:9), and subsequent

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<sup>33</sup> The Olympics Committee of Asia (OCA) controversially extended an invitation to Taiwan’s President Li Denghui to attend the 1994 Asian Games in Hiroshima, triggering strong Chinese protest and threats of boycott (Takagi 1999:28). Although Tokyo caved in to the protest by thwarting Li’s visit, it did not budge in inviting Vice-Premier, Xu Lide, to attend the Games in his place, marking the first high-ranking visit by Taiwan’s elite since 1972 (Shambaugh 1996b:92; Takagi 2006:118). Tokyo also invited Taiwanese officials to the Osaka APEC conference months later, where a meeting held between the two trade ministers, broke a 22-year moratorium on ministerial-level summits between the two sides (Shambaugh 1996b:92).

participation in the US-sponsored Theatre-Missile-Defence (TMD) programme, further evinced the Chinese of Japan's conviction to support a US-led intervention to derail their reunification aspirations (Drifte 2000:455). Roy sees Chinese observers perceiving Japan's "North Korean threat" excuse to be a "smokescreen" for a TMD project, ultimately aimed at negating China's missile capabilities (2003:9; Wang and Wu 1998:32; Ulland 2002:16; Wu 2000:299-300). Besides advancing Japanese strategic interests, they fear its deployment on Aegis destroyers could effectively nullify the potency of a Chinese missile threat on Taiwan (Roy 2003:9; Hughes 2002:76; Takagi 2006:120-121; Yahuda 2006:167) and inevitably, reinforce Taipei's secessionist tendencies.

The mid-1990s onwards also witnessed the eruption of territorial dispute and history-related problems that failed to dissipate, despite earlier reconciliation efforts. The changing domestic political dynamics, and resurgent nationalism fuelled by a new generation of leaders and masses have made these issues highly "visible" and increasingly difficult to manage. Besides PM Hashimoto's July visit to Yasukuni, the Senkaku/Diaoyudao dispute resurfaced in 1996, when popular nationalist actions dragged both governments into a diplomatic conundrum, characterised by mutual high posturing and assertive rhetorical exchanges (Deans 2000). Although subsequently shelved through the usual ad-hoc diplomatic manoeuvres and statecraft, the incident underscores nationalism's growing constraint on both sides' ability to effectively resolve the territorial issue. More significantly, it highlights Tokyo's departure from its "deferential" attitude in dealing with Beijing (Drifte 2003), signifying a "new realism" and assertiveness in Japan's China policy (Green 2001).

Japanese-Chinese diplomacy worsened following Jiang Zemin's 1998 state visit to Japan that was marred by the Chinese head-of-state's excessive "history" mongering. It was widely reported that Jiang had tenaciously sought for the insertion of a formal apology statement from Japan in the Japanese-Chinese joint declaration during the visit, partly due to Tokyo's recent similar offering to South Korea's Kim Dae-jung, and domestic political pressure that ostensibly compelled him to forthrightly address the "history" problem (Gong

2001c:50-51). However, PM Obuchi's refusal to oblige (Takahara 2004:166)<sup>34</sup>, prompted the Chinese leader to lecture his Japanese hosts on their failure to appropriately redress "history", a proven manoeuvre in pressuring Tokyo to satisfy Chinese demands (Roy 2005:195). The Japanese "war-guilt and apology fatigue" set in on this occasion, Jiang actions triggering strong media and public indignation (Takagi 1999:36; Murata 2006:43). The visit ended disappointingly for both sides. It also reinforced the negative images of, and hardened attitude in Japan towards China that would bring longer-term repercussions to their relationship.

"History" festered on with the Obuchi administration demolishing significant postwar taboos, a development the Chinese deemed as counterproductive to the bilateral relationship. The 1999 legislations to expand the SDF's role alarmed Beijing, while the re-enactment of *Hinomaru* and *Kimigayo* brought more Chinese consternation regarding resurgent Japanese nationalism that could further strain their problem-infested ties (Itoh 2001). That said, Premier Zhu Rongji's diplomatic finesse during his Japan visit in October 2000, proved successful in mending relations that were gravely affected following the mentioned bilateral impasses. According to Rozman, the Chinese "charm-offensive" under the so-called "smile diplomacy" was a remedial step to address the badly damaged Japanese images of China, and safeguard their vital economic interests (2002:113).

The ambiance of Japanese-Chinese relations, nonetheless, failed to improve as the new millennium dawned. Despite general progress, bilateral ties remained bedevilled by history-related quarrels that undermined mutual efforts to move relationship forward (Yang 2003: 307). The Koizumi administration's assertive China policy did not help matters. Koizumi's contentious visits to Yasukuni-*jinja*, and his explicitly pro-Washington posture and

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<sup>34</sup>According to Takahara (2004:166), Obuchi was also under pressure from the LDP to rebuke Chinese apology demand. The Japanese premier thus, presented a declaration that stated "*the Japanese side is keenly conscious of the responsibility for the serious distress and damage that Japan caused to the Chinese people through its aggression against China during a certain period in the past and expressed deep remorse for this*" (quoted in Rose 2005:106), which fell short of an apology similar to the one given to Korea. For a comprehensive account of the "apology issue", see Rose (2005:100-108) and Gries (2004:90-97).

unprecedented efforts to transform Japan into a “normal state” made him amongst the most unpopular Japanese leaders in China (Curtin 2003b). Besides its alleged acquiescence to history revisionism, the Koizumi administration’s espousal of constitutional reform of the Article IX, incremental policy-shifts via legislations that extended the parameters of Japanese security activities abroad, and strengthening of military relations with the US in the post-“9/11” era, have caused Chinese unease. In certain respects, China would prefer the retention of the US-Japan alliance as a constraint against independent Japanese remilitarisation, but such perception has become fuzzy with Taiwan imminently re-emerging in the US-Japan strategic calculus. Japan’s decision to jointly declare Taiwan as a “common strategic objective” during the US-Japan Security Consultative Committee (or “Two-plus-Two” Talks) in February 2005 aggravated Chinese suspicions regarding Tokyo’s shifting posture, and more significantly, the realness of the alliance’s hedging strategy against China’s rising power (Lam 2005:280-282). The JDA’s identification of China as a potential security concern in the *2005 National Defence Program Guidelines (NDPG)*,<sup>35</sup> further fuelled Chinese apprehensions (van Kemenade 2006:55).

Exacerbating Japanese-Chinese tension were several history-related incidents, ranging from accidents involving chemical weapons abandoned in China by the Imperial Japanese Army, to Tokyo’s endorsement of “revisionist” history textbooks. Diplomatic squabbles had also risen amid frequent recurrence of their territorial/maritime disputes in the ECS, namely their rivalling claims over Senkaku/Diaoyudao, the demarcation of its maritime resource boundaries, and contested jurisdictions regarding gas exploration rights (Drifte 2008a/b). Another related issue was the intrusions of Chinese vessels into Japanese territorial waters, under the pretext of conducting maritime research, but perceived as Chinese attempts to collect “military data”/intelligence for eventual submarine operations (Takamine 2006:129). Compounded by steady increases in Chinese naval capabilities,

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<sup>35</sup> The *NDPG for Fiscal Year 2005 and After* which received the approval of Japan’s National Security Council and Cabinet in December 2004, noted that “China, which has a strong influence on the security in this region, has been modernising its nuclear and missile capabilities as well as naval and air forces, and expanding its area of operation at sea”, and in response, called for greater Japanese attentiveness to the future direction of Chinese security ambitions. See *National Defence Program Guidelines for FY2005 and After*, 10 Dec. 2004.

these incidents have heightened Japanese concerns over China's destabilising actions in maritime affairs (Pei and Swaine 2005:5-6).<sup>36</sup>

Other notable diplomatic discords included the storming of the Japanese consulate in Shenyang by Chinese authorities in September 2002; the "fracas" following China's defeat to Japan in the 2004 Asian Cup final; and Chinese Vice-Premier Wu Yi's abrupt cancellation of a scheduled meeting with Koizumi in May 2005. Bilateral ties were also undermined by the all-out Chinese efforts to block Japan's intensified bid for a permanent UNSC seat in 2005, which sparked-off a popular Chinese internet petition campaign that garnered 44 million signatures (Calder 2006:133), whilst Beijing covertly lobbied against Tokyo's bid. To be sure, there were positive expectations in 2002-2003 that the new "fourth generation" Chinese leadership under the technocratic "Hu-Wen" administration would embrace a "new thinking in Sino-Japanese relations",<sup>37</sup> and pursue a more pragmatism-oriented Japan policy (Soerensen 2006:116-117). However, such optimism remained elusive as diplomatic relations reached an unprecedented nadir following massive anti-Japanese demonstrations across Chinese cities in April 2005.

Deepening socio-economic interdependence has also begun manifesting problems. Indeed, rather than bearing the expected fruits, enhanced people-to-people interactions have unwittingly accentuated their stereotypically negative mutual perceptions and images (Yahuda 2006:162). Recent public opinion surveys illustrate a dramatic decline in mutual affections between the two societies. In Japan, the PMO annual polls reveal a regressive trend, with the percentage of respondents feeling no affinity to China gradually increasing, and reaching unparalleled highs in 2005-2006, while figures on those with positive response plummeted from the surreal highs of over 70% during the early 1980s, to less than 50% (Figure 1). Conversely, Chinese polls in 2002 recorded a dismal 5.9% of respondents

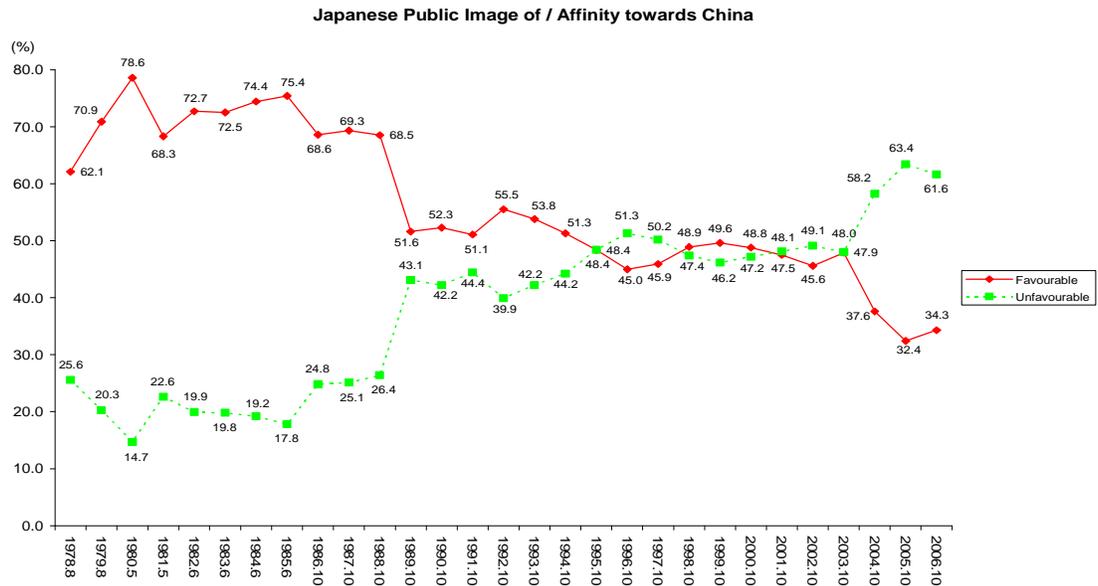
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<sup>36</sup> See Chapter 7 for a detailed case-study of the ECS disputes and China's maritime/naval incursions.

<sup>37</sup> The "new thinking on Japan" refers to the intellectual voices in Beijing's academic circle, i.e. Ma Licheng and Shi Yinhong, calling for the abandonment of the "history" card in favour of pragmatic engagement with Japan, which apparently reflected the Japan policy direction of the new leadership of Hu Jintao and Wen Jiabao. For a thorough discussion on the "new thinking", see Ma (2003) and Gries (2005b).

suggesting Japan as “friendly”, while 43.3% voted the opposite, and that, escalated to 63% in 2005 (cf. Yang 2003:306; BBC 24/08/2005). As Self construes, the premise regarding intensified personal contacts breeding mutual affections between peoples has yet to be proven, in the case of Japanese-Chinese relations (2002:81).

**Figure 1**



Sources: Cabinet Office, Japan; Taniguchi (2005:449); Matsuda (2005:10); Tsunekawa (2006:20-21)

On the economic front, Japanese have become acutely aware of, and concerned about China’s growing challenge, and the shifting balance in Japanese-Chinese economic interdependence. Notwithstanding the trade deficits, the spectre of Japan’s manufacturing sector “hollowing out”, following mass relocation of manufacturing firms to China (Nikkei 19/08/2002) to exploit Chinese comparative advantages and lower production costs, raised fears of a Chinese economic threat, as their lopsided interdependence deepens (Roy 2003: 9; Ohashi 2004:182-184). The 2001 trade dispute that saw both sides invoking protectionist measures to curtail mutual imports of certain products, illustrate the drawbacks of deepening economic interdependence, which adds to their conventional bilateral impasses (Hilpert 2002:46-47; MOFA 2002:59). Also, their contest to offer separate FTAs to ASEAN member-states and competing ideas of East Asian regionalism (see Higgott 2007), has enlivened the prospects of Japanese-Chinese economic competition, and possibly, regional rivalry (Roy 2003:6; Terada 2006).

That said, both governments have resolutely rallied behind their deepening economic interdependence to effectively buffer against serious erosions of diplomatic relations throughout the last decade. Japan, on its part, has maintained its policy of economic engagement and actively supported China's enmeshment into the global economy (Drifte 2003), i.e. China's accession into the WTO, where Japan was first amongst G-8 nations to conclude the WTO bilateral negotiations with China (Lawrence 1999:20; cf. Zhao 2002:37). Similarly, China's "third" and "fourth" generation leadership has continuously promoted economic ties with Japan as the vehicle towards realising economic modernisation. Hence, the "hot economics, cold politics" dialectic in Japanese-Chinese ties is not surprising, considering the continued emphasis on the economic dimension as the foundation of overall bilateral relations, despite their fallout in the politico-diplomatic realm.

Retrospectively, bilateral trade surpassed USD100 billion in 2002 (MOFA 2003:28), with China set to overtake the US as Japan's largest trading partner. This feat was duly achieved in 2004, with trade volume reaching an all-time high of USD214.6 billion (BBC 26/01/2005; cf. Tok 2005:299), as China accounted for 20.1% of Japan's total trade, surpassing the US at 18.6% (MOF 2004; cf. Lam 2005:289). Indeed, Japan has China's phenomenal economic performance to thank for, serving as the "growth engine" that successfully alleviated the protracted Japanese economic recession (Taniguchi 2005:446; Anonymous interview G). The reversal of economic fortune, and awareness of China's importance to Japan's economic health saw the "Sinophobic" perception abating by 2003, as the *zaikai* appeared to increasingly "tie its fate with the Chinese economy" (Taniguchi 2005:445-446). With China maintaining its outstanding economic growth, a renewed sense of optimism accelerated Japanese FDI inflows into the Chinese mainland. According to Kokubun (2003:34), Japan experienced its "fifth China boom", with the rate of Japanese commercial investments in China rising exponentially since 2000, totalling nearly USD40 billion by 2003 (Yahuda 2006:164). Even the spectre of rising anti-Japanese nationalism during the April 2005 demonstrations failed to deter the buoyant mood of Japanese firms,

with some 54.8% enunciating commitments to expand their investments and presence in China, soon after (JETRO 07/06/2005; cf. Tok 2005:299; Anonymous interview G).<sup>38</sup>

Overall, post-Cold War relations have expanded, but the fragility that continues to eulogise their bilateral ties since 1972, does not promote optimism of a genuine Japanese-Chinese reconciliation. According to Yang Jian, contemporary Japan-China relations are still very much “in the shadow of the past” (2003:308). Historical residues remain a chief culprit invoking mutual prejudice and distrust amongst policy-makers and public, which have hitherto undermined their political will to seek resolution to both endemic and new bilateral issues. Self construes that their over-reliance on the existing mechanism of “friendship diplomacy” to mediate problems and preserve “a mirage of good relations” (2002:77), have thus far “accomplished no more than a façade of friendship” (2002:78). Furthermore, structural changes in both international and domestic environments, and rising nationalism, have magnified divisions between the two countries. Although elements to enthuse a more sanguine outlook exist, the negative by-products of such changes are “crowding out the positive aspects of bilateral ties” (Self 2002:77).

### **3.3. External and Domestic Dynamics Shaping Japanese-Chinese Relations**

The overview of the two defining eras reveals the shaping of Japanese-Chinese affairs by both external and domestic dynamics. Whilst the constraints/opportunities imposed by the international system, and one’s relative material and discursive capabilities vis-à-vis the other have largely defined the parameters of bilateral interaction, the overview also highlights the salience of domestic determinants that periodically influenced and dominated the course of their foreign policy-behaviour/responses. This reflects NCR’s dictum that stipulates the primacy of external/structural-material variables in limiting the boundaries of state behaviour, and the mediating/intervening role of domestic variables in dispensing the specific preference-of-action. Japan’s relations with China, is therefore, comprehensible,

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<sup>38</sup> This opinion is shared by a senior METI official from the Trade Policy Bureau (Anonymous interview G).

when both sets of variables are systematically analysed via the NCR framework, to explicate their functions and dynamic interplay in shaping its China policy, and the bilateral trends.

### 3.3.1. External Dynamics

Japanese-Chinese relations have always been, and will continue to be, shaped by external circumstances, which “define the room for manoeuvre and the responses of the two governments in their mutual relations” (Austin and Harris 2001:2).<sup>39</sup> The above overview shows that the external dynamics are similar to those identified as the “independent” external variable in the NCR framework, namely the international/systemic environment, one’s diplomatic leverage vis-à-vis the other, the US-Japan alliance commitment/resolve and the correlating US-Japan-China triangular politics, and economic interdependence. As described, the post-1945 international structure/system spawned constraints/opportunities that facilitated as well as impeded bilateral ties. Particularly, the rigid bipolarity of the nascent Cold War system and “alliance commitments”, hindered opportunities for an early Japanese-Chinese reconciliation, insofar as both countries, being “proxy states” in adversarial camps, had to subordinate their respective foreign policies to the overarching bipolar international order. Whilst the US-Japan security treaty restricted Japan’s China policy, the Chinese were, constricted by their alliance with the USSR, a major structural constraint that impeded formal diplomatic interactions in the 1950s and 1960s.

Interestingly, bilateral interactions remained manageable during the height of the Cold War, despite the given context of regional bipolar hostility. The prospects of a renewed Japanese-Chinese conflict did not materialise in the form of direct military engagements, other than the episodic tensions caused by the indirect impact of Sino-American hostility during the Korean War, Taiwan Strait crises, and Vietnam War, where Japan was implicated by “alliance commitment” to help contain communist expansionism (Austin and Harris 2001: 14-15). Indeed, rather than totally subordinating the bilateral relationship to the logic of

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<sup>39</sup> Austin and Harris observe that external factors define the trends and developments in Japanese-Chinese relations more than “any factors under the direct influence of either governments” (2001:2), while Whiting (1989:200-1) suggested the prevalence of relative capabilities and external posture of key regional actors, namely the US and the Soviet Union in drawing the boundaries of the relationship.

confrontation and non-engagement, pragmatism and mutual interests saw both states nurturing limited economic engagements at the unofficial level (Taylor 1996:2; Iriye 1996:48). Considering the Cold War's structural determinacy, such deviating state behaviour indicates NCR's assumption regarding the mitigating role of economic interdependence, and plausible intervention of domestic political and economic imperatives/actors in Japanese (and Chinese) policy-making.

Nonetheless, it should be noted that both countries' prerogative to partially circumvent the structural imperatives, i.e. evading direct military confrontations and keeping informal channels of economic interaction opened amidst sporadic regional conflagrations, was arguably abetted by the tacit acquiescence of the US, and the USSR, to a lesser extent. Indeed, their informal trade relations were dependent on American sanction over Japanese proposition of the "separation of politics from economics" formula (*seikei bunri*), which allowed Japan to promote economic interactions with China in the absence of formal political ties (Iriye 1996:53). Even then, Japanese-Chinese commerce was negligible, partly due to export restrictions imposed by their respective economic blocs.<sup>40</sup> Systemic pressures appeared more salient in the political realm, where persistent Chinese overtures to resume formal diplomatic interactions were, matched by enduring resistance from successive postwar Japanese administrations, from Yoshida to Sato, presumably the outcome of intense American pressure/*gaiatsu*.

Conversely, the deepening Sino-Soviet rift, and eventual fallout following their border skirmishes in the late 1960s engendered a strategic transformation in the regional security architecture that ultimately provided the window of opportunity for Japan and China to normalise diplomatic relations. Specifically, it brought a confluence of strategic interests that provided the impetus for a Sino-American rapprochement (Zhao 1997:132). This strategic shift correspondingly nullified the major constraint in Japan's China policy that saw Tokyo outdoing its American ally to establish official relations with Beijing. Developments in the

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<sup>40</sup> Among the "bloc-imposed" trade barriers included the China Committee (CHINCOM) and Coordinating Committee (COCOM) restrictions, enacted following the outbreak of the Korean War (Iriye 1996:52-53; Drifte 2003:21; Taylor 1996; Burns 2000).

international environment equally facilitated the signing of the PFT. On China's part, the threat of Soviet expansionism and urgent need to incorporate Japan into a tacit strategic alliance against the USSR saw Beijing pushing for its early conclusion, and the inclusion of the "anti-hegemony" clause. Japan's signing of the PFT, despite "domestic" reservations, was also, dynamically influenced by external considerations. They included what Bedeski reckons as Japanese concerns over a possible drawdown in US military presence under Carter's regional disengagement policy, Soviet hardline policy on the Northern Territory impasse, and more significantly, intention to harmonise with US diplomatic trends, following Washington's momentum towards normalising relations with Beijing (1983:4 & 40).

The decline in contemporary bilateral relations also reflects their manoeuvring and policy-responses towards the post-Cold War international environment. The Cold War's demise has immensely transformed the East Asian strategic landscape, and Japanese-Chinese ties have been duly affected by the fluidity and new configuration of power relations in the region (Zhao 2002:32). Not only did it render the US-Japan-China "strategic-triangle" obsolete, the post-Cold War order precipitated the emergence of a relatively low-pressure/ambivalent external environment, which according to NCR's interpretation, gave both Japan and China newfound foreign policy flexibility, not mentioning, domestic leverage in policy-making. The period also saw their relative power position undergoing significant shifts. "Diverging fortunes" since the early 1990s – China's rapid economic growth against the protracted "post-bubble" recession suffered by Japan – have altered the regional power balance.<sup>41</sup> Compounded by China's wherewithal vis-a-vis Japan's ambivalence in the politico-security realm, these asymmetrical developments in their relative strategic and economic positions have created considerable unease, leading to mutual policy readjustments that in ways contributed to a renewal of Japanese-Chinese animosities (Pei and Swaine 2005:3).

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<sup>41</sup> Mentioned in Chapter 2, the term "diverging fortune" derives from Pei and Swaine (2005). Zhao (2002:33) characterises this asymmetrical development and regional power reconfiguration in the post-Cold War era as the "two ups" and "two-downs", referring the former to the US and China, while Russia and Japan as the latter.

In the security dimension, their respective policy-shifts, undertaken as much in response to the fluid international strategic environment, as to one's changing security perception vis-à-vis another, have aggravated mutual insecurities. The incremental shifts in Japan's security policy have been partly a response to the international community's call for more substantial Japanese contribution following the first Gulf War, where Tokyo was heavily criticised for "free-riding" and overly depending on its "cheque-book diplomacy" (Miller 2000:5). Notwithstanding North Korea's mounting security threat, i.e. Taepodong missile test, *fushinsen* (mystery ship) incursion, and abduction of Japanese citizens, sustained Chinese military build-up and occasional belligerence in managing regional security issues equally encouraged a thorough review of Japan's post-Cold War security policy. Furthermore, the fundamentality of the US-Japan alliance to Japanese overall security conception required Tokyo to continue calibrating its national defence guidelines to complement its ally. Such developments have concomitantly influenced China's strategic perceptions and sense of insecurity in a largely American-dominated "unipolar" international system.<sup>42</sup> With US foreign policy becoming increasingly unilateral in approach (Dieter and Higgott 2007),<sup>43</sup> and Sino-US relations deteriorating amid a series of impasses, ranging from human rights to Taiwan, Japan's newfound assertiveness and renewal of "alliance commitment" have heightened Chinese anxiety regarding Japanese security ambitions, specifically its remilitarisation under American auspices, in a perceived, joint effort to hedge China's rise (Christensen 1999:59-63; Wu 2000:301; McCormack 2004; Johnson 2005).

Indeed, the US' shifting position in the context of the US-Japan-China "triangularity" (Soerensen 2006) has profoundly affected Japanese-Chinese diplomacy. Zhao Quansheng rightly observes that the US is "the most significant external actor/factor, and has had a tremendous influence on the direction of Sino-Japanese relations" ever since the PRC's establishment (2002:32). Particularly, developments in US-Japan relations/alliance have

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<sup>42</sup> According to Zhao, Chinese observers describe the new global structure as *yi chao duo qiang* – which means the US assuming the sole superpower role, surrounded by multiple powers in the EU, China, Russia, and Japan (2002:33). They believe the current unipolarity is a transitional phase toward the emergence of a multipolar world order, but fear its rise would be hindered by the US-Japan alliance (Drife 2003:37; Zhao 1997:Chp.10).

<sup>43</sup> For an interesting work on the impact of US securitisation of its economic policy in Asia, as a possible means to contain China, see Dieter and Higgott (2007).

prevalently affected Japan's China policy and the general trends in Japanese-Chinese relationship. Most noticeable are the downturns throughout the two defining epochs, which have retrospectively coincided with the periods of strengthened US-Japan relations and renewed Japanese obligations towards the American-led security arrangement. The nadirs in pre-1972 relations occurred when Tokyo sought to redefine the US-Japan security treaty, despite vociferous objections from Beijing and domestic pacifist forces within Japan. Likewise, the deterioration in post-Cold War diplomacy reflects China's apprehension towards Japanese decision to enhance US-Japan security cooperation, and uneasiness regarding the inequidistant nature of the "triangular relationship" that increasingly portrays China as the target, in a "two-against-one" context,<sup>44</sup> especially since the mid-1990s (Zhao 2002:47; Drifte 2003:10). Complicating matters is "Taiwan", a dilemma in Japan's relations with China, with regard to Tokyo's alliance commitment that connotes an obligation to support US military intervention, in the event of a Chinese "forceful reunification" of the island. Tokyo's cautious attitude vis-à-vis Taiwan, exemplified by its measured response to the 1996 Taiwan Strait crisis, and what Drifte (2003:97) sees as Japan's "interpretational somersaults", or preferred ambiguity regarding the scope of the revised US-Japan Guidelines (Wang 2000:364-372),<sup>45</sup> has been diluted by its subsequent participation in TMD development, and its 2005 joint declaration with Washington on Taiwan's future security. Such mixed signals have had Beijing becoming ever more suspicious of Tokyo and Washington's commitment to the "One-China" principle. China's passing of the Anti-Secession Law in March 2005 underscores such concerns (Christensen 2005), a move which further complicates the "Taiwan question" in the US-Japan-China relationship.

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<sup>44</sup> The Chinese fear of being isolated in a "two-against-one" scenario is also noted in Christensen (1999: 73).

<sup>45</sup> According to Wang, Tokyo voiced its disapproval of Chinese belligerent actions during the 1996 Taiwan Strait crisis, but refrained from officially endorsing the US aircraft carrier battle groups' deployment from its bases in Japan, to avoid aggravating Chinese suspicion of a US-Japan collusion to intervene in the Taiwan issue (2000:364). Likewise, fierce debate took place in the Japanese Diet regarding the definition of the revised scope of the US-Japan Security Guidelines. According to Wang, Japanese policy-makers were concerned that it could violate the Article IX and draw Japan into an unwanted military confrontation with China (2000:369-372). The enactment of the three security bills in 1999 were apparently meant to give Japan the "strategic ambiguity" with regard to the provision of logistical support to US military operation in Taiwan (2000:371; Green 2001:90-92). This diplomatic manoeuvre was apparently, aimed at alleviating the alliance dilemma of "entrapment and abandonment", and maintaining the Taiwan status quo (see Green 2001:90-92; 106).

Additionally, the general atmosphere governing Japanese-Chinese interactions had been affected by one's diplomatic leverage vis-à-vis another during specific external conditions and time periods, their relative material capabilities notwithstanding. Although somewhat ambivalent during the pre- and immediate normalisation period, their Cold War ties recorded superficial progress in the decade following the PFT's conclusion, regardless of sporadic problems concerning war history, and the continuous political recrimination and manipulation of related issues by Chinese leaders to draw economic concessions from their Japanese counterparts. This generally upbeat political climate was, partly facilitated by external-structural pressures that necessitated mutual efforts, and political will, to consciously promote warmer ties and subordinate bilateral differences for their common strategic interests in containing the Soviets. It was also, largely fostered by what scholars deemed as Japan's "deference" to a structured and asymmetrical pattern in their post-normalisation relationship that saw China consistently adopting a "high-posture", while the Japanese, due to their war-guilt and moral inferiority complexes, always responded with the "low-posture" attitude of mollifying the Chinese (Ijiri 1996:61,69; Drifte 2003:18).<sup>46</sup> Barring the "logic-of-reassurance" thesis (Midford 2002), this so-called "friendship framework", which operated on such tacit understanding, and on an impromptu basis of removing "immediate obstacles" to promote continuous, "superficial friendship" (Ijiri 1996:64; Self 2002), was responsible for skewing the perception of one's diplomatic leverage vis-à-vis another that affected the lopsided management of the said bilateral issues during the 1970s-1980s.

Conversely, the unfavourable ambiance governing their post-Cold War relations reflects the change in perception of diplomatic leverage, especially in Japan's case. Underpinning this climate has been the emergence of a low-pressure, ambiguous international strategic environment that encouraged the expansion of one's foreign/security policy scope and ambition, which, compounded by their shifting power relations, have aggravated mutual insecurities. Together with domestic political developments, i.e. generational shift in leadership and masses, and changing political mood amid rising

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<sup>46</sup> Drifte (2003:18) calls such Japanese behaviour as "deferential" policy or "deference to China". Both terms are utilised intermittently in this thesis to describe the stipulated Japanese behaviour.

nationalism, these dynamics have instigated a shift in Japanese attitude and perception of diplomatic leverage vis-à-vis the Chinese. Specifically, attitudes have hardened, bringing Japanese perception to more “realist-ic” levels that, concomitantly, led to the obsolescence of the “kowtow” diplomacy, when managing their bilateral affairs.

Economic interdependence is another bilateral dynamic that serves as a key mitigating factor in the international context and vanguard of amiable Japanese-Chinese relations. It was economic considerations, which provided the basis for unofficial relations during the early Cold War decades, laying the groundwork for the normalisation of political relations in 1972. Since then, their flourishing economic interactions and deepening interdependence have become a significant constraint against politically induced deterioration in overall ties. Besides being the most positive feature, Drifte contends that Japan's economic interactions with China “has had a soothing influence on bilateral disputes” (2002:62). Both governments have been acutely cognisant of its benefits, not only in boosting the performance of their respective national economies, but also in promoting a positive “spill-over” effect into other dimensions of their relationship (Yahuda 2006:166). Japan, especially, according to experts, has vigorously used its economic strength as a key China policy instrument, in view of its “global civilian power” status (Drifte 2003:28; Yahuda 2006).<sup>47</sup> Successive Japanese administrations have expanded trade and investments with, and disbursement of ODA to China, as the fulcrum of postwar reconciliation, besides serving Japan's own economic interests. Pledges to promote economic ties are thus, a favoured official intergovernmental rhetoric, considering its fundamentality to the realisation of a durable relationship.

As political ties suffer in the post-Cold War period, economic interdependence has become ever more critical in preventing a free-fall in overall bilateral relations. With their economies increasingly intertwined, one can reasonably argue that both governments have shown remarkable resilience in sustaining a working relationship, despite intensified

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<sup>47</sup> Inoguchi and Bacon (2006) suggest Japan is moving from “global civilian power” to “global ordinary power”. See also Hughes (1999) for Japan's economic power as a foreign policy tool vis-à-vis North Korea.

diplomatic altercations, to safeguard their mutual economic interests (Anonymous interview F). Like their predecessors, the Hu-Wen leadership has continued prioritising China's modernisation and development, where a robust economic relationship with Japan remains fundamental in realising such aspirations.<sup>48</sup> Similarly, the Koizumi administration, despite its unparalleled assertiveness towards China, equally calibrated its engagement policies to avoid alienating its neighbour, considering the intractable importance of Chinese commerce to Japan's own economic vitality (Lam 2005:286-289; Drifte 2003). Although interdependence has proliferated new problems, with signs of friction already apparent, it remains a strong rallying point for stable relations. Interestingly, as Japan and China find themselves being "uneasy bedfellows" (Zhang and Drysdale 2000) in the contemporary "cold politics, hot economics" scenario, a sense of *déjà vu* reminiscent to the "*seikei bunri*" era can be felt, as both governments strive to prevent their politico-diplomatic differences from festering into the economic realm. Nonetheless, as Yahuda (2006) noted, the restraining effects of economic interdependence and globalisation remain questionable, under thriving domestic socio-political dynamics that also shape their bilateral affairs.

### 3.3.2. Domestic Dynamics

The above description highlighted the external dynamics that define the parameters of the bilateral interactions between Japan and China. However, NCR also stipulates the salience of domestic dynamics, which have consistently affected Japanese-Chinese diplomacy, with variables from domestic political competition/elite politics to nationalism having, to varying degree, determined one's policy and management of their bilateral problems. Domestic determinants have, especially, become efficacious in the post-Cold War period, following the lessening of structural pressures, and corresponding emergence of a fluid/indeterminate international environment. The rekindling and frequency of the aforementioned bilateral

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<sup>48</sup> Since the 1980s, China's strategy to develop "comprehensive national power", which included economic power, has made economic ties with Japan essential to realising such aspirations (Yang 2003:313).

disputes underscores NCR's assumption regarding the potency of domestic variables in foreign policy-making, under such external circumstances.<sup>49</sup>

Particularly, domestic political imperatives have incessantly influenced one's policy towards the other, of which the "highs-and-lows" in Japanese-Chinese relations arguably transpired. Kojima rightly observes that Japan's China policy has become "intertwined" with Japanese domestic politics, especially since 1972, following the domestication of diplomatic issues by contending political factions, divided by their "pro-Beijing" and "pro-Taipei" sentiments (2000:41). Indeed, scholars commonly agree that one cannot adequately explain many bilateral issues that inflamed their relationship without referring to domestic political competition (Kojima 2000; Whiting 1989; Ijiri 1996). Some were primarily domestic-centred issues, only to be internationalised, owing to political pressure and elite manipulations for domestic political expediency. Besides territorial disputes and Taiwan, the constant resurrection of history-related problems needs to be understood in the context of internal political dynamics, which have occasionally forced Japanese and Chinese leaders to take assertive stances, to bolster their power positions and political incumbency. From history textbook to Yasukuni, the periodic diplomatic rows over history in the 1980s coincided with key developments in domestic politics, and were linked to elite power competition (Kojima 2000:41; Murata 2006).<sup>50</sup> Its contemporary rekindling amid similar circumstances, underscores NCR's assumption regarding the linkage between, and "intervening" function of domestic politics on external relations.

Japanese-Chinese relations have been, similarly affected by correlated domestic political developments, i.e. shifting political terrain, and leadership transition/change-of-administration. Evidently, the "highs-and-lows" coincided with the waxing and waning of political elites and parties that held favourable perceptions of each other, and were

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<sup>49</sup> The resurrection of the "Taiwan issue" is a case in point. Unlike the Cold War's determinative environment that helped kept it relatively quiet, the fragility of contemporary Japanese-Chinese diplomacy has been induced by the low-pressure, ambivalent external environment (Wang 2000:362-363; Takahara 2004:161), which according to NCR, allows "pro-Taipei" forces in Japan to exert their policy-making influence.

<sup>50</sup> The history textbook, Yasukuni Shrine and Kyoto dormitory controversies coincided with major events and developments in Chinese domestic politics in the 1980s, i.e. the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> CCP Congresses in 1982 and 1987, respectively, and the reshuffling of top leadership in 1985 (Kojima 2000:41; Whiting 2000:17-18).

principally committed to promoting friendly relations. Especially in Japan, the emergence of “China-friendly” administrations since 1972 (i.e. Tanaka, Ohira, Takeshita, Hosokawa), precipitated periods of remarkably affable relations (Murata 2006). Likewise, “China school” MOFA bureaucrats (Drifte 2003:19), and “pro-China” politicians that hailed from the influential LDP’s *keisei-kai* faction, and generally, the “normalisation” generation, with few exceptions, had played important roles in cementing the “friendship framework” (Self 2002) that governed bilateral ties until the early 1990s. Despite the occasional challenges from “pro-Taiwan” and hawkish elements, the dominant sentiment within the Japanese political circle had been arguably geared towards appeasing, and enhancing ties with China, partly because of their war-guilt complex and sense of moral debt, and also, due to pragmatic considerations. Moreover, the formidable leftwing/pacifist presence i.e. the Japan Communist Party (JCP) and Japan Socialist Party (JSP) [now the Socialist Democratic Party of Japan (SDPJ)] during the Cold War successfully neutralised ultra-nationalist-rightwing and “anti-China” influences within the Japanese political arena, whilst exerting political pressures on successive LDP administrations to improve ties with Beijing.

However, domestic political transformations since mid-1990s, marked by generational change in leadership, and the weakening of leftist/pacifist institutions, have begun negatively affecting Japanese-Chinese relations. Specifically, these “structural changes” have altered the power balance and affected the customary competition between “pro-Beijing” and “pro-Taipei” forces in China policy-making (Kokubun 2003; Mori 2007). According to Drifte (2002:53), the passing of powerful “pro-China” politicians and bureaucrats responsible in mustering political support for warmer bilateral ties saw their replacements by a new generation of more independent, assertive, and less “China-sympathetic” leaders. The increased political frictions in recent times suggest the reluctance of contemporary Japanese state-elites to placate China, notably on traditionally sensitive issues.<sup>51</sup> Unlike their predecessors, leaders, like Obuchi and particularly, Koizumi, were

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<sup>51</sup> Apart from being commonly acknowledged by most Japan-China observers, the comments and opinions on China and Japanese-Chinese relations during my interview with one of the LDP’s “rising stars” and Diet-members, Suzuki Keisuke confirm this observation (Suzuki interview).

more defiant and willing to challenge, and “offend the Chinese, if necessary” (Self 2002:80; Soerensen 2006:114). Obuchi’s disregard of the Chinese “war apology” demand during Jiang’s visit, and the obstinate posture adopted by Koizumi and his Cabinet members on the Yasukuni and textbook issues, are noteworthy elucidations of this domestic “wind of change” in Japan’s China policy-making.

Specifically to this thesis, the arrival of Koizumi Junichiro, a dynamic, but allegedly nationalistic Japanese PM, had saliently affected Japan-China relations. According to Lam, the “Koizumi factor”, referring to his “combative” personality and assertive policy, contributed immensely to the “abysmal state of relations between the two neighbours” (2005:275).<sup>52</sup> Indeed, Koizumi’s apparent abandonment of “friendship diplomacy” proved to be a principal source of bilateral friction. Since his anointment in April 2001, Koizumi’s reluctance to succumb to Chinese pressure had provoked the contempt of China’s leadership and masses. Particularly, his annual Yasukuni pilgrimages, and insistence regarding his right to do so, irked Beijing, who considered such callous acts by Japanese leaders as tantamount to repudiating Japan’s militaristic past (Rose 2005). The worsening ties had also to do with Koizumi’s cabinet appointments and their politico-ideological affiliations, which according to Johnson (2005), comprised several “hard-line, anti-Chinese, pro-Taiwanese politicians”. Lam shared Johnson’s observation that there were no “China-friendly” politicians appointed to his cabinets [prior to October 2005], since the firing of Tanaka Makiko, ex-FM and daughter of Tanaka Kakuei, in January 2002 (2005:285 *fn.21*). Furthermore, Koizumi is said to have had marginalised not only *keisei-kai*, but factional politics, as a whole, by personally determining his cabinet line-up, and not depending on factional patronage, but instead, rallied support “directly from the LDP rank-and-file and Japanese public opinion” (Lam 2005:285 *fn.22*; Taniguchi 2005:452; Park 2001:458). Koizumi’s political independence and popularity, coupled with political and administrative reforms in 2001 that enhance the PM’s

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<sup>52</sup> A former Senior Vice-Minister at the Cabinet Office claims that Japan’s basic policy stance towards China remained unchanged, but opines that the “Koizumi factor” made the difference (Anonymous interview D).

authority at the expense of bureaucratic influence, provided his Administration with greater levers on China policy-making<sup>53</sup> (Pei and Swaine 2005:3-4, Tanaka 2001).

Meanwhile, within the ruling LDP, the correlated decline of *keisei-kai*, following corruption scandals and retirement of “China-Hands” like Nonaka Hiromu (Taniguchi 2005:452-453), precipitated the ascendancy of the hawkish and “China-sceptical” *seiwa-kai* (ex-Fukuda/Mori) faction (Pei and Swaine 2005:4; Kato interview/1).<sup>54</sup> Paralleling such developments has been the waning influence of leftist/pacifist opposition parties and the concomitant shift of Japanese politics to the centre-right position (Yahuda 2006:168). Altogether, these domestic transformations have hastened the meltdown of “pro-China” political forces in Japan (Lam 2005; Drifte 2002).

The negative impact of Japan’s political transformation on Japanese-Chinese relations, though, has a mitigating domestic factor in the *zaikai*, which has been traditionally influential in pressuring Tokyo to adjust its overall China policy to advance Japanese commercial interests in the Chinese mainland (Hook et.al 2001:55-56). It was the *zaikai* that provided dynamic input to the *seikei bunri* policy that facilitated informal economic links with China during the pre-normalisation period, and since 1972, has continued preserving the most prosperous dimension of Japanese-Chinese relationship, while keeping politico-diplomatic ties in check against serious erosion.<sup>55</sup> It is true that the *zaikai*’s policy-making influence has somewhat diminished along with the demise of Japan’s traditional “pork-barrel” politics, following electoral reforms in 1994 (Anonymous interview G). Yet, one should not under-estimate its role in deterring the Koizumi cabinet from overly intimidating Beijing, since economic considerations remain fundamental to Japan’s overall China policy-calculations.

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<sup>53</sup> See Chapter 5 for a more detailed elaboration of the PM’s foreign policy-making influence.

<sup>54</sup> According to a senior “pro-China” LDP politician, Kato Koichi, the *seiwa-kai*, which both Koizumi and Abe belong, is predominantly “anti-China” and “pro-US”. This faction contends that good ties with the latter do not co-exist well with the former, which necessitates a trade-off. (Kato interview/1). See also Chapter 5 for further discussions on nationalism, factional politics and China policy-making.

<sup>55</sup> The *zaikai* was instrumental in overcoming economic setbacks, i.e. the ‘Baoshan’ episode (Hughes 1999: 181), and political uncertainties following the Tiananmen tragedy that threatened Japanese-Chinese ties.

Nonetheless, the braking effect of economic factors can be dampened by an equally, pervasive, domestic, socio-political dynamic in nationalism. Evidently, nationalism had undermined Japanese-Chinese relations during the Cold War. On China's part, diplomatic tensions arising from Senkaku/Diaoyudao, history textbook, and Yasukuni controversies, among others, were as much manifestations of domestic nationalist impulses, as Beijing's political manipulations to obtain politico-economic concessions from Tokyo. Similarly, these issues gained salience in the Japanese domestic political discourse and agenda, following manipulations by elements from the political left and right in Japan, as well as the rise of "confident nationalism" during the era of "miraculous" economic growth in the 1970s-1980s (Sasaki 2001). However, both governments' pragmatism in shelving the related disputes suggests the prevalence of the Cold War-imposed external-structural constraints in negating excessive domestic nationalist influence in the policy-making process.

Importantly to this study, nationalism has apparently, gained salience in post-Cold War Japanese-Chinese diplomacy. Indeed, resurgent nationalism in Japan and China in the 1990s has conceived a political climate detrimental to their fragile relationship. Besides undermining their mutual societal images and attitude, flourishing domestic nationalist forces have had, to various degrees, affected one another's policy-orientation, contributing to the recent proliferation of diplomatic discords over a plethora of bilateral issues. For instance, the aforementioned history-related problems were indubitably, manifestations of nationalism in Japanese and Chinese politics that have arguably influenced their mutually assertive responses, when managing these disputes. The rekindling of the ECS territorial/maritime disputes and Taiwan, and their shifting mutual security perceptions/policies that seemingly target each other as potential threats, underscore nationalism's impact on the bilateral ties. Especially in Japan, thriving anti-Chinese nationalist sentiment, compounded by the other mentioned political developments, are partly, responsible for reinventing contemporary Japanese-Chinese diplomacy.

### **3.4. Conclusion**

The above overview of Japanese-Chinese relations highlights a relationship persistently shaped by a compendium of structural-material and ideational dynamics deriving from both external and domestic realms. It also illustrates the primacy of external imperatives in defining the scope of bilateral interactions, and salience of domestic factors in dispensing one's policy-preferences. In the post-Cold War period, domestic variables, particularly nationalism, has seemingly emerged as a key foreign policy driver that contributed to their worsening relationship. This leads to the impending questions posed by this thesis, namely how, in what manner and conditions, and to what extent nationalism affects foreign policy-making, particularly in the Japanese context, when managing issues endemic in their problematic ties. This warrants an analysis of Japanese nationalism, followed by an impact assessment of nationalism in shaping Japan's China policy and the bilateral relations, which are the themes of subsequent chapters.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **THEORIES OF NATIONALISM AND ITS MANIFESTATIONS IN JAPAN**

Transformations in both international and domestic realms have markedly affected contemporary Japanese-Chinese relations. Domestically, structural and ideational changes have triggered coalescing political shifts that saw nationalism apparently regaining salience in their domestic and external agendas. Highlighted in Chapter 3, domestic nationalist pressure constitutes a growing constraint that can affect and limit foreign policy-options, especially when managing nationalistic-nuanced bilateral issues. In Japan's case, the frequent resurrection of diplomatic impasses vis-à-vis China, and their correlations with domestic nationalist politics, reflects this policy-making scenario. This chapter analyses nationalism, and its so-called "resurgence" in post-Cold War Japan. It begins with a brief discussion on the definitions, concepts, and roles of nationalism in modern international relations. Next, the intricacies of Japanese nationalism are elaborated, via a brief account of its genesis and historical developments, followed by an examination of the driving forces and manifestations behind its contemporary revitalisation. Special attention is allocated to defining state/elite-driven and popular nationalisms. Questions regarding the "state-popular" relationship, notably their points of convergence/divergence and correlated influence on state behaviour/policy-options are, addressed, accordingly.

#### **4.1. Defining and Understanding Nationalism**

The term "nationalism" is among the most difficult to define and clarify with accuracy (Ozkirimli 2000; Guibernau 1996; Smith and Hutchinson 1994). The plethora of definitions accompanying nationalism's extensive literature suggests the lack of an all-encompassing meaning to this nebulous phenomenon (Zheng 1999:ix; Alter 1989). Hans Kohn, one of the "twin founding fathers"<sup>1</sup> of the intellectual discourse on nationalism (Kemilainen 1964 cf. Ozkirimli 2000:13) defines it as "a state of mind, in which the supreme loyalty of the

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<sup>1</sup> Although nationalism has implicitly emerged in the discourse and writings of renaissance thinkers, such as Renan, Rosseau, Kant, Weber, and Durkheim, most scholars on nationalism consider Hans Kohn and Carleton Hayes as arguably the "twin founding fathers" (term derives from Kemilainen 1964) of the academic scholarship of nationalism. For further discussion, see Kemilainen (1964); Ozkirimli (2000); and Alter (1989).

individual is felt to be due to the nation-state” (Kohn 1965:9). Ernest Gellner, another prominent scholar of nationalism sees it as “primarily a political principle, which holds that the political (state) and national (nation) unit should be in congruent” (1983:1). Meanwhile, Anthony Smith contends that nationalism is “an ideological movement for attaining and maintaining autonomy, unity and identity on behalf of a population deemed by some of its members to constitute an actual or potential nation” (1991:73). These “textbook” definitions exemplify nationalism’s multi-dimensional nature – it is political, socio-cultural, and psychological – making it a powerful and pervasive, yet enigmatic force in the modern world.

Predominantly viewed as a product of modernity emanating from 18<sup>th</sup> century European history (Smith 1995; Breuilly 1982), nationalism is synonymous with, and inseparable from the concepts of “nation”, “nation-state”, and “national identity”(Baycroft 1998:3). Nationalism fundamentally concerns the “nation”, another puzzling term to define, due to its ambiguous relationship with other kindred concepts, i.e. race and ethnicity (Ozkirimli 2000:58), and its tendency of being widely, but mistakenly equated with the concept of “state” (Connor 1994:92). Apparently, the terms “nation” and “state” are not identical, as argued by Arthur Waldron, who saw the former possessing substance not inherent in the latter, namely “a feeling, a passion, a legitimating power that the word ‘nationalism’ possesses to an unequalled degree” (1985:417; cf. Zheng 1999:x).<sup>2</sup> Nationalism also co-exists with the “nation-state” concept. Modernist views on nationalism’s genesis highlight the political, economic and socio-cultural transformations, and the state’s role in engendering nationalism and the formation of nation. Eric Hobsbawm sees nation and nationalism as “invented traditions”, a product of “social engineering” by states

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<sup>2</sup> Guibernau defines “nation” as “a human group conscious of forming a community, sharing a common culture, attached to a clearly demarcated territory, having a common past and common project for the future, and claiming the right to rule itself” (1996:47). Conversely, a “state” in Max Weber’s contention refers to “a human community that claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory” (1948:78). Whilst these definitions highlight the nation as possessing multi-dimensional characteristics: it is psychological, cultural, territorial, political, and historical; the state, with its primarily political and territorial features, appears much more limited in substance. This vindicates Waldron’s observation, illustrating a marked distinction between the two concepts; the former espousing a socio-cultural and psychological dimension the latter does not possess, namely the objective features of language, culture, religion, and common descent that form the basis of a collective identity, and the subjective element of consciousness and affection towards the perceived shared identity (Kellas 1991:2; cf. Zheng 1999:x; Ozkirimli 2000:58).

(Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983 cf. Ozikirimli 2000:121), while Gellner (1983) associates the formation of “high culture” in industrial societies, and the consequent emergence of nations through state fostering of nationalist sentiments via mass education and communication. Both perspectives, Guibernau asserts, emphasise the state’s utilisation of nationalism to create a nation-state that is “coextensive” and identifies with it, where state-society/citizen/nation relation is not merely a political association, but also “an expression of the multidimensional relation which derives from the idea of nation formation” (1996:59). Moreover, according to Zheng Yongnian, nationalism comprises “institution” and “identity”, two crucial components of the nation-state (1999:x). Zheng opines that nationalism is not salient when expressed by individuals in its raw and disorganised form, especially in the context of international relations (1999:x). It becomes credible only after it is organised and expressed collectively by institutions (1999:x). In modern international society, its successful expression is unequivocally through the “state”, the foremost institution in the Westphalian world order (Young 1976:72; cf. Zheng 1999:x).

Next, nationalism emphasises the individuality and distinctiveness of a nation-state, specifically its “national identity” (Zheng 1999:x). Identity, by definition, refers to “an interpretation of the self that establishes what and where the person is in both social and psychological terms” (Guibernau 1996:72). Guibernau construes that “when one has identity one is situated”, and that “identities exist only in societies, which define and organize them”, and it exists and defines only in relations to other identities (1996:72). At the individual level, identity reflects “the need to belong to a community”, and in the modern world where “nation” is one such community, “national identity is its product” (1996:72-73). National identity thus, refers to the collective sentiment shared by members of a perceived nation, or an “imagined community” (Anderson 1991) that distinguishes and situates them from other national communities. As the “creator” of national identity (Guibernau 1996), nationalism situates a nation-state vis-à-vis other national actors within the modern international society/system.

National identity usually derives its essence from more basic forms of identity. It is typical for nation-states with near homogenous societies to forge national identity based on

elements like shared culture and common descent. Conversely, such primordial features tend to be divisive and obstructive to its formation in nation-states with heterogeneous and polarised societies. However, “national identity” can transcend these objective-cum-divisive features, if they are, superseded by the intersubjectivity of what Kellas opines as, a people’s consciousness of, and devotion/affection for its nationality, and sense of belonging to the nation-state (1991:2 cf. Zheng 1999:x; Ozkirimli 2000:58). This is where the symbolic-mythical content of nationalism, fundamentally the use of myths, symbols, and rituals, becomes essential in national identity creation, serving as both unification and divisive “markers” to cloak differences, while highlighting commonalities within a nation, and differentiate members of one nation from others<sup>3</sup> (Guibernau 1996:80-82; Farrands 1996:17; Van Evera 1994:30). Guibernau concurs that these “markers” are able to generate within individuals a feeling of extraordinary emotional intensity that emanates from their identification with the nation, a transcending entity that provides sentiment of belonging, from which they derive “strength and resilience”, and under whose name they participate in “heroic as well as barbaric actions” to defend its interests (1996:83). Crawford Young therefore, credibly asserts that nationalism is “an ideological formulation of identity”, of which the nation is stipulated as “a terminal community” with “transcendent moral sanction and authority”, to whom “active obligation” is mandatory, and “ultimate loyalty is owed” (1976:71 cf. Zheng 1999:x). In its radical manifestation, national identity is “the supreme loyalty for people who are prepared to die for their nation” (Kellas 1991:3 cf. Zheng 1999:x).

In the international context, nationalism legitimises the Westphalian “society of nation-states” doctrine, where the “state”, as the sovereign authority, represents and links nation/society to the international system (Zheng 1999:xi; Mayall 1990:Chp.2). According to Mayall, the principles of national self-determination and sovereignty espoused by nationalism recognise nation-states as independent, equal, and separate political entities

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<sup>3</sup> Guibernau concurs that national consciousness is created and sensitised through symbolism and rituals, i.e. flying the national flag and singing the national anthem, of which specific values and meanings serve as “markers” that unite members of a nation, while differentiating it from others (1996: 82). He argues that these “markers” masks the diversities within a nation, “transforming the reality of difference into the appearance of similarity, thus allowing people to invest the ‘community’ with ideological integrity”, and inculcating a sense of unity, despite their diverging economic, and socio-cultural backgrounds (1996:82). See also Van Evera (1994).

that interact on the basis of acknowledging each other's: i) sovereignty, ii) autonomy and monopoly of jurisdiction within their own political boundaries, iii) territorial integrity, and iv) non-interference in domestic affairs (1990:19-20). Indeed, its particularistic feature of defining the "self" from the "other" drives nations towards striving for, and maintaining "the political notion of territorial self-determination, the cultural notion of national identity, and the moral notion of national self-defense in an anarchical [nation-state system]" (Zhao 2000:3). Interestingly, these principles mirror the realist conception of the anarchic condition of the modern international system, which underscores "survival" as the overarching goal of nation-states, and the plausible utility of force/war to realise the national interests that are primarily defined in terms of national survival (Mayall 1990).

Nationalism is inherently "Janus-faced" (Guibernau 1996:45). Depending on expression, it "can be either a powerfully constructive or destructive force" (Nester 1995:74). Nationalism has been effervescent throughout modern history, playing a fundamentally positive role in the decolonisation and nation-building processes, and domestic economic development (Posen 1993:80). Then again, its malignant nature has often prevailed, fuelling numerous international conflicts and "human tragedies" (Zhao 2000:1). Presumably, its promotion of "particularism" tends to invoke ultra-nationalism, xenophobia, and chauvinism that become the driving force behind such belligerent behaviour (Zhao 2000:3; Van Evera 1994).<sup>4</sup> As history has repeated itself on many occasions, nationalism, when not prudently managed, always perpetuates violent outcomes.

To summarise, nationalism as a "modern" phenomenon with perennial roots attached to primordial elements (Smith 1986), is a profound force. It is socio-psychological and political, in both form and essence. Deriving intrinsically from members of particular social groupings who (perceive to) share distinctive dispositions, heritage, and sentiments of

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<sup>4</sup> Scholars generally agree that nationalism and national consciousness are intimately linked to the idea and experiences of war, and share a mutually reinforcing relationship (Fujiwara 2001:37; Howard 1991:39-43; Posen 1993; Van Evera 1994; Farrands 1996). Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, nationalism's malevolent and destructive manifestation was associated with imperialistic expansionism, the outbreak of two world wars, and violent "independence and separatist movements" (Chen 1995:4 cf. Zhao 2000:3). It was also blamed for precipitating an epidemic of ethno-religious and genocidal conflicts in the post-Cold War era (see Howard 1991). For a discussion on "particularistic nationalisms", see Greenfeld (1992:8-9).

belonging towards their collective identities, nationalism can be organised and emphatically expressed via the state to realise political ends. Its “particularism” and advocacy of the principles of self-determination, sovereignty, and equality between nations, underscore the basis of modern international relations. Meanwhile, its instrumental value allows state/elite manipulation for popular mobilisation towards various political goals, both domestic and international. Yet, nationalism, for all its instrumentality, is unpredictable, and has the tendency to undermine the agencies that promote it.

Stipulated in Chapter 1, this thesis’ triple-pronged definition of nationalism represents its fundamental underpinnings and multi-dimensional characteristics. The first reflects the cultural-ideational dimension, one which emphasises the socio-cultural and psychological attributes that intrinsically drive most, if not all forms of nationalist sentiments, and imbues the nation and its members with a “national identity”.<sup>5</sup> Focusing on grassroots-level national consciousness, this definition suggests a “bottom-up” view of nationalism that emphasises the role of ordinary people, non-state actors, and populist emotions/passion in shaping the nationalist discourse/agenda of a nation-state (Gries 2004:20). Conversely, the second and third meanings draw on the political notion and state-centric character of nationalism. Aforesaid, nationalism is political in essence and generally associated with the state. From its basic form, represented by individual and popular sentiment, nationalism can be remarkably political, when expressed through the state and its apparatuses. The second definition underscores the link, or “co-extensiveness” between nation and state (Guibernau 1996), where socio-cultural identity overlaps/interwines with political identity. Here, a “top-down” perspective of nationalism is emphasised, whereby the state, viewed as the embodiment and political representation of the nation, has the power to mould, although not dictate the content of domestic nationalist discourse (Gries 2004). Meanwhile, the third definition represents nationalism’s instrumental value that encourages its utilisation for political expediency (Brass 1991). To reiterate, nationalism’s utility function is not limited to

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<sup>5</sup> Here, I borrow Gries’ interpretation of “national identity”, which he loosely defined as “that aspect of individual’s self-image that is tied to their nation, together with the value and emotional significance they attach to membership in the national community” (2004:9). And, “nationalism”, he contends, refers to “any behaviour designed to restore, maintain, or advance public images of that national community” (2004:9).

the state/state-elite, as commonly but narrowly understood in mainstream IR literature. Non-state actors, namely nationalist pressure groups and the masses also politicise it to influence governmental policies and decision-making (Gries 2004).

Altogether, these definitions classify nationalism, commonly, into two distinctive yet correlated, and at times, mutually embracing typologies, namely i) official/state/elite-driven nationalism and ii) popular nationalism. Although nationalism is largely, seen as state-engendered, and under the government's purview, the state does not necessarily monopolise the domestic nationalist agenda (Gries 2004; Seckington 2005; McVeigh 2004; Stronach 1995; Guibernau 1996). In nationalistically effervescent countries, popular/mass-oriented nationalism may feature prominently in the domestic nationalist discourse. State/official nationalism tends to be pragmatic, rational, affirmative and instrumental (Zhao 2000; 2004; 2005; Downs and Saunders 1998/9). It is also moderate, national interest-driven (based on state's calculation of costs and benefits), and reactive rather than proactive (Zhao 2000:2). Meanwhile, popular nationalism is generally more diversified, robust, emotional, spontaneous, and potentially virulent, xenophobic and aggressive (Seckington 2005). It is, driven by the collective consciousness of individuals, who identify themselves as members of a nation, under whose name, they seek to defend its interests, and champion its causes. It draws strength from nationalism's intrinsic values, possesses a more critical intellectual debate (Seckington 2005:27), is largely independent of, and "should not be conflated with...official nationalism" (Gries 2004:20; Chen 2005; Deans 2000).

That said, popular nationalism is, to an extent, abetted by state nationalism, which arguably provides an environment conducive for it to flourish (Rose 2000:174). Also, popular nationalist discourse does overlap with official rhetoric and identifies with the state, when there exists a confluence of interests, like advocating for dynamic and assertive foreign/security policies, and more decisive actions in defence of the national interests (Seckington 2005:27), or against perceived external pressures/threats. Both types of nationalism may share certain objectives, while diverging in others. Popular nationalism forms the bulwark of support for the state's nationalist agenda, when their objectives are mutually

complementary. However, competition for dominance over the domestic nationalist agenda may prevail, if conflicting interests and nationalist goals arise between these two domains (Gries 2004). “Popular nationalism can be critical of official policy” (Seckington 2005:27), especially when the state is perceived as having failed to live up to its nationalist credentials. Aforementioned, popular nationalist pressure emanating from pressure groups and public opinion can effectively constrain state behaviour. It can be especially salient, if state-elites are politically dependent on nationalism, and strong elite-mass linkage characterises the domestic political system.

The incorporation of these definitions and typologies generates better understanding, compared to the conventional, mono-dimensional perspective that views nationalism as predominantly state-led, and merely a power instrument/political tool to bolster social cohesion and political legitimacy. Such a view, as Gries opines, is only partially correct, but it cannot fully grasp the depth of nationalism and the significance of “emotion and passion” in nationalist politics, which is by no means, under the state’s exclusive control, and presided by purely rational pursuit of national interests (2004:18-20; 87-90). Moreover, one should understand nationalism via a combination of definitions, and view it from both “top-down” and “bottom-up” perspectives, since state/state-elites and popular nationalists “participate in nationalist politics, and both emotional and instrumental concerns drive their behaviour” (Gries 2004:87). Simply put, nationalism’s rational-utility and emotive dispositions should be, simultaneously considered, since both “sense/passion” and “sensibility/reason” matter in international relations and foreign policy-making (Gries 2004:20; 87-90). Most importantly, these classifications are relevant to interpreting nationalism in Japan, and its impact on contemporary Japanese-Chinese ties. The following section demonstrates that Japanese nationalism professes most of these meanings, and exhibits the stipulated attributes.

#### **4.2. The Genesis, Evolution, and Meanings of Nationalism in Japan**

The Cold War’s passing and the burst of Japan’s “economic bubble” triggered socio-economic and political malaise that saw the crisis of national identity and purpose deepened

amongst Japanese in the so-called “Lost Decade” of the 1990s (McCormack 2000:247). Against this backdrop, the desire for “national regeneration” has led to the reckoning of a series of socio-political developments that is symptomatic of a new national mood in Japan (McCormack 2000:247-248), with nationalism apparently regaining currency after being a “taboo” for decades, following its dreadful manifestation in WWII (McVeigh 2004:3; Rose 2000).<sup>6</sup> Understandably, the nationalistic endeavours and expressions in recent times have raised both international and domestic concerns. Debates regarding its future direction have generated contrasting opinions; pessimists within and outside Japan perceive it as representing the potential resurrection of prewar ultra-nationalism, whereas optimists denounce such observations as misunderstandings out of ignorance, suggesting the so-called “neo-nationalism” as simply a benign and inevitable development as Japan seeks to re-establish a “normal” nation-state identity. An overview of prewar and postwar Japanese nationalism is thus necessary to comprehend as much, the contending debate, as the driving forces, characteristics, and international orientations of its contemporary manifestations.

#### 4.2.1. Overview of prewar nationalism

Generally, most scholars identify the roots of Japanese nationalism to the Meiji epoch, during which its reform-minded oligarchs borrowed the Western concepts of nationalism and nation-state, together with their institutional and technological efficacies to rebuild feudal Japan into a modern nation-state. They also largely agree that the essence of nationalism and national identity primarily derived from Japanese traditional culture and symbols, and perceived common ethno-religious bond that Meiji state-elites reinvented to inculcate the nationalist ideology, via education, media, military conscriptions, and other state apparatuses, under a centralised polity (Gluck 1985:17-23; Pyle 1971:11 Brown 1955:Chp.5; Conroy 1955; Stronach 1995; McVeigh 2004). Notwithstanding the “nativist-based”, pre-modern nationalistic expressions throughout Japan’s mediaeval history, i.e. “elitist-proto-

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<sup>6</sup> According to McVeigh, it is apparently normal for the mass media and the average Japanese to claim that “Japanese “nationalism” died in 1945”, which he believes is one of the myths of postwar Japan, especially since nationalism has continued to permeate Japanese daily life under the cloak of euphemisms such as “culture”, “tradition” or “custom” (2004:xi).

nationalism” (McVeigh 2004:42), and semblance of a centralised political system under the Tokugawa Shogunate, nationalism, as an organised socio-political movement espousing national identity and nation-statehood, was in Conroy’s opinion, non-existent in pre-1868 Japan, due to traditionally divisive “horizontal (feudal classes) and vertical [forces] (the fiefs)” that impeded its development (1955:821; Brown 1955).<sup>7</sup> That said, these nascent expressions/movements laid the ideological groundwork, which together with external pressure during the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, gave rise to modern Japanese nationalism (McVeigh 2004; Stronach 1995; Yoshino 1992).

Scholars generally acknowledge that Japanese national consciousness was fostered by external factors, namely the knowledge of China’s “Opium War” experiences, and more so, through Japan’s own encounter with foreign pressures after two centuries of isolationism (*sakoku*) (Matsumoto 1971:51), beginning with the arrival of Commodore Perry’s “black ships” (1853), and the subsequent imposition of “unequal treaties” and Western powers’ bombardment of Kagoshima (1863) and Shimonoseki (1864) (Pyle 1971; Hasegawa 1985; Nish 2000:82). Before this, Japanese had held an ethnocentric, Confucian-based “culturalist” worldview that regarded Japan as a culturally and morally superior entity, while dismissing the West as barbaric and culturally inept (Matsumoto 1971:51). This worldview was, nevertheless, discredited in the wake of Western imperialism in East Asia, which saw the Japanese re-evaluating and acknowledging their backwardness compared to the politically and militarily-advanced Western nations (Matsumoto 1971:51). According to Stronach, unlike the Chinese, who got “suffocated by the weight” of their great civilisation, the Japanese were more flexible in adopting foreign ideas, due to their past tradition of

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<sup>7</sup> Conroy concedes “there was at most “national consciousness” in Japan before 1868” (1955:821), while McVeigh suggests the existence of an “elitist proto-nationalism” promoted by “Nativist Studies (*Kokugaku*)” and “Mito School” intellectuals that sought to divorce Japan’s past from Chinese influences by emphasising “the uniqueness of the Japanese imperial lineage”, and which also initiated the nascent discourse on reform and defence against Western encroachment (2004:42). Similarly, Yoshino saw *Kokugaku* as “a prototype cultural nationalist ideology”, which was essentially a “nativist reaction” against “Sinophilism” in Tokugawa Japan, and “an affirmation of indigenous [Japanese] culture” by intellectual elites, who strove to revive the ancient literature, the practice of *kodo* or Shinto (the ancient way), and the centrality of the Emperor (1992:46; 49). These “proto-nationalist” elites were responsible for inspiring the domestic-oriented *sonno* (revere the emperor) movement, which, later on, incorporated the externally-directed and xenophobic *joi* (expel the barbarian) slogan that eventually led to the successful *coup d’etat* of the Tokugawa *bakufu* and the restoration of the Imperial political system in 1868 (Brown 1955:58-61, 76-90 ; Stronach 1995:36; McVeigh 2004:42).

borrowing from other cultures (especially from China), and therefore had lesser problems opening itself to, and vigorously learning from the West (1995:32-34). The fear of succumbing to Western “gunboat diplomacy” motivated the Meiji government to embark on an expansive modernisation-cum-westernisation programme, to reinvent the Japanese state and nation. During the initial stages, campaigns to eradicate Japanese feudal traditions were launched by Meiji oligarchs committed to the wholesale emulation of Western ideals, institutions, and know-how.<sup>8</sup> Whilst nationalism and nation-state-building of the Western genre were officially sanctioned, “culturalism” was vilified as the source of degeneration, and an obstacle to reinventing a modern Japan. A centralised bureaucracy in Tokyo, and the use of state instruments, i.e. national education system, military services, communication/transportation networks, an influential media, and bureaucratically-controlled local organisations, facilitated the mass-level penetration of the nationalist ideology (Conroy 1955:823; Pyle 1971:11).

However, the intensive state-led policy provoked a “nativist” reprisal, due to rising internal tension between Western-centred modernisation and nativist traditions that created deep social fissures and identity crises, while externally, continuous Western pressure and unequal treatment, despite Japan’s achievement of modern nation-statehood disenchanted many within the Japanese society (Stronach 1995:38-39, 41-42; Conroy 1955:827; Pyle 1971).<sup>9</sup> Calls for the revival of Japanese traditions and culture in the face of Western onslaught by intellectual groups and conservative elites stirred popular discontent. This prompted the embattled Meiji state-elites to, instrumentally, recreate the cultural component of the nationalist ideology, based upon key traditional symbols and myths, namely the

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<sup>8</sup> The development of nationalism and Japan’s national identity was undertaken by the *Sat-Cho* oligarchy, who besides intending to secure its domestic power position, realised that Japan had no choice but to develop at par with the Western powers, while maintaining a distinctive national identity, in order to survive and successfully compete under the Darwinian logic of the international system (Stronach 1995:36-39).

<sup>9</sup> Stronach construes that “By the late 1880s, the nativist nationalism began to manifest itself as a reaction against Westernisation and the control of Western powers over Japan” (1995:39). The Meiji oligarchy was becoming unpopular, accused of betraying the roots and essence of the Japanese people, and for its overly Western orientations and consistent capitulation to foreign demands (Conroy 1955:827; Stronach 1995:41-42).

“State-Shinto” religion and the *tennosei* (emperor) system,<sup>10</sup> while simultaneously sustaining the modernisation agenda as the basis for Japan’s national renewal, their own political survival, notwithstanding (McVeigh 2004:42-43; Stronach 1995:40; Tamamoto 2001).<sup>11</sup>

Imperial Japan’s successful initial experiments with expansionism, notably in the Japanese-Chinese and Russo-Japanese wars, boosted Japanese nationalism, and national pride and confidence, considerably (Nish 2000:84; Pyle 1971; Conroy 1955).<sup>12</sup> National consciousness was also heightened by the disproportionate recognition and increased external pressures from Western powers that accompanied the resulting peace treaties’ negotiations, namely the Triple Intervention in 1895 and the “lopsided” US-negotiated peace accord in the aftermath of the Russo-Japanese conflict (Stronach 1995:42; Pyle 1971:8). According to Stronach, the Western powers’ persistent disregard of Japan on equal terms aggravated popular anti-Western and anti-government sentiments that propagated the “siege mentality” and “nativist” resurgence in Japanese nationalist discourse (1995:42; 49-50). These attributes were, further strengthened by the outcomes of international events following the end of WWI, where Japan was again, pressured into accepting unequal terms under the Treaty of Versailles and several other international disarmament accords during

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<sup>10</sup> The Emperor became the divine embodiment of the Japanese nation and state, and was placed at the centre of Japanese life, serving as both spiritual and political leader that required ultimate devotion from, and undying loyalty of its subjects (Stronach 1995:40). The centrality of the emperor and the promulgation of state Shinto were formalised in the Meiji Constitution of 1889, indicating the nativist turn in the evolution of Japanese nationalism (Stronach 1995:40). Indeed, the “invented” mysticism surrounding the Emperor status and its preponderance in the Japanese consciousness was a vital element of modern Japanese identity, and “a key renovationist symbol” (McVeigh 2004:42-43) of the Meiji state that served as the rallying point for Japan’s emergence as a modern, powerful and yet distinctive nation-state.

<sup>11</sup> According to McVeigh, to mobilise the masses for political loyalty and national regeneration via a state-oriented nationalism (*kokka shugi*) (2004:34), the *Sat-Cho* oligarchs also introduced the mythical yet practical idea of *kokutai* (a continuous national historical essence) (cf. Najita 1980:47) to indicate Japan’s “immutable” and “national character” (cf. Goto 1988:32-33). It served along with other concepts and ideals like *minzoku* (nation), *tanitsu minzoku* (homogenous nation) (2004:28), *seikyo itchi* (unity of politics and religion), and *kokumin dotoku* (national morals) as “key conceptual building blocks” of prewar nationalism (2004:43).

<sup>12</sup> Kenneth Pyle suggests the first Japanese-Chinese war of 1894-95 as perhaps “the most impressive in this regard”, for the stunning Japanese victory not only “drowned the doubts and dissensions of the preceding decades in a flood of national exhilaration”, but equally ushered in a confident national mood and self-perception of Japan as the strongest East Asian state, and a rising power in the international community (1971:8). Indeed, the Meiji government enjoyed unprecedented popularity during the war, “as popular enthusiasm fired official nationalism” (Conroy 1955:826). The function of war in promoting Japanese national pride and consciousness could also be seen during the 1904-1905 Russo-Japanese war that followed, when Japan became the first Asian state to defeat a Western power (see Shimazu 2006:Chp.2). Besides quashing the perceived invincibility of the West, which inspired the birth of anti-colonial nationalisms across Asia, scholars agree that victory over Russia served as further testament to the viability of the government’s nationalist policy to build a strong nation-state, and as such, provided major latitude for the continuous mobilisation of the Japanese population under the banner of state nationalism (Shimazu 2006; McVeigh 2004; Nish 2000).

the interwar years.<sup>13</sup> The continuous perception of external bullying played a significant role mobilising national loyalty under an increasingly parochial Japanese state, and encouraging the rise of militarist ultra-nationalism (Stronach 1995:43; Matsumoto 1971:51).<sup>14</sup>

Ultra-nationalism in the 1930s, was likewise, driven by the radicalisation of the nationalist discourse in response to growing domestic socio-economic discontentment. Ultra-nationalists deplored the Western liberal-democratic values that corrupted the traditional mores of the Japanese society, and were critical of the government's incompetence in alleviating economic sufferings, and reducing urban-rural disparities, besides its failure to tackle corruption in the Japanese political economy and bureaucracy (Stronach 1995:43-44). Perceiving these appalling trends as signs of a Japanese nation in peril, radical ideologues and nationalist groups called for "a second revolutionary renovation, a "Showa Renovation""(McVeigh 2004:46), reminiscent to the all-encompassing Meiji-reforms, to reconstruct the domestic order and unshackle Japan from its malaise (Najita 1980:129-30 cf. McVeigh 2004:46; Large 2006). Yet, unlike the Meiji nationalists, they were more fundamentalistic and unabashedly xenophobic. McVeigh saw these so-called "Showa patriots" revolting "against interests politics and the industrial and bureaucratic elitism enmeshed in the constitutional system" (cf. Najita 1980:127) and advocating the return to "direct imperial rule" in place of democracy, and "a militarily-based, spiritual revival" (2004:46-47). As ultra-nationalism brewed in domestic politics, political *coups* were staged, culminating in the 1936 "February 26 Incident" that saw the beleaguered Japanese state succumbing to ultra-nationalist pressure, where parochial ideals were eventually incorporated, and radical figures like Araki Sadao and Tojo Hideki embraced as part of the "new bureaucracy"(Conroy 1955:828; McVeigh 2004:47).

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<sup>13</sup> For a discussion of these issues and attributes of Japanese nationalism, see Stronach (1995:43; 49-52).

<sup>14</sup> According to Matsumoto, not only did it make Japan acutely conscious of the "qualitative difference" between itself and the West, an awareness that became "an incurable source of the Japanese sense of crisis and threat vis-à-vis the Western world", such a negative perception of the "self" and "other" was also the central reason behind prewar nationalism's preoccupation with the quest of building a "'militarily powerful Japan" (*fukoku kyohei*)", and its inclination towards militarism (1971:51).

With the militarists/ultra-nationalists gaining political power, greater emphasis was placed on promoting national solidarity and reinforcing state-society linkage, as well as securing nationwide support for official political, economic, and military objectives, under the domestic-centred “New Order Movement” (McVeigh 2004:47). Externally, the state promoted Japanese-led Pan-Asianism under the “East Asia New Order”, which subsequently metamorphosed into the “Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere” (McVeigh 2004:47). Whether truly liberationist, or expansionist in essence, this external policy led the Japanese state to mobilise the populace under the aegis of an official nationalism that was skewed towards militarism. Japan’s colonisation of Manchuria and subsequent invasions of China and French Indo-China provoked serious Western retributions that exacerbated the Japanese “siege-mentality” and anti-western sentiment (Stronach 1995:44). It also led to the launching of the “National Spiritual Mobilisation Campaign” and the autocratic Imperial Rule Assistance Association (Kinoshita 1971:32-50 cf. McVeigh 2004:108), as Japan geared itself for general mobilisation towards its ill-conceived involvement in WWII.

In sum, nationalism in prewar Japan was primarily elite-inspired, fostered in reaction to *gaiatsu*, and manifested in the form of state-sponsored nationalism that aspired for national renewal and a unified, strong and prideful Japanese nation. Nationalism was also, inculcated to create a unique national identity, and enhance Japan’s competitiveness and survival in the international system (Stronach 1995:35). Although state nationalism was predominant, popular nationalist sentiment was equally effervescent. As Gluck suggests, “the strongest views – the hard line – often came from outside the government, from the *minkan* [people]” (1985:9-10). Popular nationalist discourse and activities were influential in constraining and, at times, even flavouring the official nationalist agenda. Yet, these populist movements were not genuinely grassroots, but elite-driven, often by individuals of noble descent (*samurai*), the intelligentsia, journalists, and public personalities (Gluck 1985:10; McVeigh 2004:48). Another noted element of prewar nationalism was its inclination towards militarism and expansionism. These characteristics were driven by Japan’s fear of foreign oppression that, according to Matsumoto, made the “preservation of national polity” through

“self-perpetuation and self-expansion” the ultimate national mission (1971:53), and by the wellspring of popular disaffection that saw state-elites advocating expansionist-cum-diversionary policies as a solution to domestic discontentment (Conroy 1955).

#### 4.2.2. The persistence and evolution of nationalism in postwar Japan

Japan’s traumatic WWII experience altered the Japanese view of nationalism and national identity. According to Sasaki, nationalism was blamed for precipitating the war, and Japan’s defeat saw a temporary hiatus in its development, only to subsequently reappear in distorted forms, as postwar Japanese struggled to re-embrace nationalism in a “natural”, open and “straightforward” fashion (2001). The common observation was that the Japanese were facing an acute identity crisis, since the symbols/markers and institutions they ardently identified with, and endeared themselves to, were no longer a source of national pride. Apparently, besides the rejection of prewar institutions, the traditional notions of nation-state, also dissipated, following the war defeat, American occupation, disarmament, and the embrace of pacifism, democracy and Westernisation/Americanisation (Matsumoto 1971:55; Stronach 1995:45). However, nationalism did not totally disappear, but instead, has permeated, albeit in different, and mostly “banal” forms (Billig 1995), i.e. cultural, economic, and peace nationalisms, among others (McVeigh 2001; 2004; Rose 2000). Even prewar ultra-nationalism has survived, manifesting in numerically fringed, non-official, ultra-rightwing movements that draw limited mass appeal (McVeigh 2001). Other notable characteristics of postwar nationalism include the perpetuation of discourses that sought national renewal and independence via different strategies, and its depoliticisation that saw the weakening of state-sponsored nationalism and state-society linkage, and the rise of political apathy (McVeigh 2004; Stronach 1995; Matsumoto 1971).

Scholars generally divide postwar nationalism into three defining periods; i) early Cold War decades; ii) between 1960s-1980s, when Japan enjoyed miraculous economic growth; and iii) “post-bubble” malaise from the early 1990s till present (Sasaki 2001; McVeigh 2004). Interestingly, these periods coincided with the aforementioned structural shifts in the international system that affected Japan’s foreign/China policy-directions and

Japanese-Chinese diplomacy, suggesting the influence of external imperatives on nationalism's manifestations. Like Gao (1997), Sasaki contends there were two diverging expressions of nationalism during the first phase (1945-1960); the first being the restoration of "official" nationalism and a conservative, rightwing-oriented polity that sought alliance with the Americans, while simultaneously harbouring the reinstatement of Japan's defence capabilities and diplomatic autonomy (Sasaki 2001). The second came in the form of promoting military pacifism, and an independent, neutralist position that opposed the subordination of Japan into the Western bloc, advocated mainly by the political left/centre-left, and popularly embraced by the Japanese society (Sasaki 2001; Gao 1997).

The reinstatement of official nationalism amid attempts to disengage Japan from its nationalistic-cum-militaristic past, was indirectly the result of what Chapter 3 described as the emerging Cold War security architecture that saw postwar Japan gaining strategic importance in Washington's regional containment policy (Dower 1996:155-156). Fearing the communist threat from within and outside Japan, the US ended its occupation, and encouraged the re-establishment of a conservative, rightwing Japanese government that was incorporated into its alliance framework, to fight a common enemy (Dower 1996:Chp.5; Kingston 2004). Not only did it hamper the pacification process, the American policy-shift sponsored the restoration of prewar nationalistic elements, which included, among others, an "Emperor-system democracy" (Dower 1999b), the military, albeit under a US-sponsored, limited self-defence framework, an entrenched bureaucracy, and wartime figures, convicted but eventually released and encouraged to revive their political careers within mainstream politics (McCormack 2000:250; Berger 2007:191). The establishment of the "conservative-rightwing" LDP in 1955 reflected the influence of rehabilitated ex-wartime politicians and bureaucrats, like Hatoyama Ichiro and Kishi Nobusuke (Pyle 1996:57-58), whose respective appointments to the premiership position indicated not only the continuities of prewar nationalism in postwar Japanese politics, but also the budding of an official nationalism that

was “dependent” on American encouragement and acquiescence.<sup>15</sup> Indeed, Washington was behind Kishi’s attempt to remilitarise Japan via a revision of the Article IX, and his resolve to renew the US-Japan security treaty in 1960, despite severe public backlash (Miyazawa 1997:12; Conachy 2001:5).

Conversely, leftwing political organisations, i.e. the JSP and JCP, promoted a so-called “peace nationalism” that sought to distance Japan from the Western bloc, and kept vigil against ultra-nationalism resurrecting within the Diet, considering the ominous presence of far-right LDP elements that intermittently wielded their influence in postwar politics (Orr 2001). Peace nationalism became influential, and synonymous with non-official nationalism embraced by the postwar Japanese society, who was generally suspicious of “official” nationalism, owing to the popular notion that the Japanese state was responsible for the war, and that the people were victims of its nationalist-cum-expansionist policies (McVeigh 2001; 2004:77; 207).<sup>16</sup> Despite the apparent official-popular dichotomy, there was a confluence between popular and state nationalism via depoliticised expressions, namely economic and cultural, which characterised Japanese nationalism between 1960s-1980s.

The second phase coincided with the period that saw a reduction of bipolar hostility and Japan’s accelerated economic growth (Sasaki 2001). A “new consensus” on a nationalist discourse centred on economic endeavours and culturalism, rather than defence and foreign policies, led to the convergence of state/official and popular nationalisms, and public acquiescence of state-sponsored nationalist agendas to promote economic advancement, and inculcate ideas of “Japanese-ness” (Sasaki 2001; McVeigh 2004:Chp.6). Postwar economic nationalism has its roots in prewar ideals of building a strong Japanese nation-state via national mobilisation, and implementations of state-guided “developmentalist” policies and economic projects, to amass economic power for national self-preservation and survival (McVeigh 2001). During the early postwar period, similar

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<sup>15</sup> The “dependent” nature of Japan’s postwar nationalism has been noted in several works, i.e. McCormack (2000; 2007), Kingston (2004), and Tsunekawa 2006). This term is utilised throughout the thesis.

<sup>16</sup> Popular “peace” nationalism is non-partisan, though often exhibiting an anti-state slant in postwar Japan, and “expressing itself as political apathy, dislike of explicit displays of national power...or a general suspicion towards the political authorities” (McVeigh 2004:77). For a discussion of peace nationalism, see Orr (2001).

nationalist agendas and practices “became the direct starting point for postwar recovery” (Nakamura 1994:124 cf. McVeigh 2004:110) as official nationalism was purposefully, redirected towards the reconstruction of Japan. With the US-Japan security framework guaranteeing national security, Dower saw the Japanese state concentrating its efforts on economic development, “mobilizing [the national] population and resources resolutely behind productivity and economic nationalism”, to transform a defeated nation-state into an economic powerhouse (1993:31). Predictably, the mutually reinforcing effect of state developmentalism and nationalism became the driving force catapulting the Japanese economy to miraculous heights in the 1960s-1980s (Sasaki 2001; Gao 1997:296). Japan not only emerged relatively unscathed from the global oil crises and economic recession, its admission into the G-7 epitomised the success of economic-centred nationalism that helped revitalise Japanese national pride and identity (Sasaki 2001). The so-called “GNP nationalism”<sup>17</sup> peaked in the 1980s, when Japan gained economic superpower status (McCormack 2000:248), and the Japanese “developmental state” model was widely borrowed and applied in the developing world (Hook et.al.2001:198-201; Vogel 1979; 1986).

This brand of confident economic nationalism also facilitated the development of ethno-cultural nationalist discourses, where a mounting desire existed to associate Japan’s economic achievements with Japanese cultural uniqueness and social system (Crawcour 1980:186-187 cf. Yoshino 1992:189). The proliferation of the *nihonjinron* (theories of Japanese) discourse in the 1970s-1980s clearly reflected this buoyant national mood, where the notions of cultural “exceptionalism” and homogeneity were popularly contrived to, as much, define Japanese identity, as explain Japan’s economic success (Chan and Bridges 2006:136). Like economic nationalism, *nihonjinron* nationalism has roots in prewar Japan, where the bureaucratic state and intellectual elites employed Japanese traditions and cultural distinctiveness to “reconstruct national identity [that was] threatened by Westernisation and rapid industrialisation” (Yoshino 1992:186; see also Crawcour 1980;

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<sup>17</sup> This is a commonly used term to describe Japan’s economic nationalism. See McVeigh (2001; 2004:40).

Befu 1992).<sup>18</sup> And, like prewar *nihonjinron*, its popular-oriented, postwar manifestation was, according to McVeigh, duly appropriated by the Japanese state as an “officially sanctioned ideology” (cf. Befu 1993:118), enmeshed into the national cultural policy to promote sentiments of community and myth of common descent among its citizenry, for the purpose of motivating the postwar society towards realising national objectives (2004:194; Morris-Suzuki 1998:156).

Indeed, cultural nationalism thrived at the height of Japan’s economic prowess in the 1980s. Scholars like Befu and Yoshino claim that national confidence and pride drove the Japanese to challenge the hegemony of Western/American culture and lifestyle that has significantly penetrated both “public” and “private” domains of the postwar society, by re-affirming the essence of Japanese identity through their supposedly unique “culture, society and national character” (cf. Yoshino 1992:187; Befu 1984:64-66). Economic affluence also stimulated political nationalism that saw the Nakasone administration advocating a review of Japan’s political and military roles commensurate with its economic strength (Pyle 1996:101-103; Rose 2000:171). Nonetheless, strong domestic anti-revisionist forces in the Diet, together with public apprehension and external pressures from Japan’s neighbours, stymied the agenda (Saeki 2001).

The confident nationalism underpinning postwar Japanese identity and pride permeated the “bubble economy” period. However, when the “bubble” burst in early 1990s,

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<sup>18</sup> The “cultural determinism” (McVeigh 2004:194) that *nihonjinron* espoused was, according to Yoshino, in many ways, “invented” to rescue the Japanese identity by defining the “symbolic boundary” between *nihonjin* (Japanese) and *gaijin* (foreigners), as well as “reestablishing and maintaining a sense of historical continuity with the traditions of Japan” (1992:186). Despite its elitist and statist-orientations in the prewar era, the *nihonjinron* genre, and to a wider extent, cultural nationalism originated as a popular-level expression (McVeigh 2004). During the early postwar years, it re-emerged as a popular ideology, serving as a flexible substitute for “primary nationalism” (McVeigh 2001) that permitted the Japanese notion of identity to persist, in times of significant socio-political and economic transformation (Crawcour 1980:186 cf. Yoshino 1992:187). According to McVeigh, being a form of “passive”, “secondary nationalism” consumed by the masses, the *nihonjinron* genre eventually became an “intellectual hegemony” (cf. Befu 1993:117), or what he construes as “a national-level meditation” with “trans-war continuities” (2004:193). Indeed, Befu confirms “What is common to the wartime *Nihonjinron* and postwar neo-*Nihonjinron* is that both rely heavily on primordial sentiments inherent in the presumed ‘ethnic essence’ of the Japanese – blood, purity of race, language, mystique – which are the basic ‘stuff’ of *Nihonjinron*, pre- and post-war” (1992:43-44 cf. McVeigh 2004:193).

the Japanese economy collapsed into a protracted recession.<sup>19</sup> Postwar nationalism met a similar fate, since it derived its vitality from Japan's economic success. Facing serious structural problems, the public again, query the Japanese-style political economy and bureaucratic-state system that symbolise the uniqueness of cultural traditions and societal norms, basically, the very tenets that personified Japan's postwar national identity (Sasaki 2001). The dramatic "reversal of fortune" saw the Japanese society suffering a general loss of confidence and bearing, leading to soul-searching for a renewal of the national "self".

### **4.3. Contemporary Japanese Nationalism: Driving Forces and Manifestations**

#### 4.3.1. Driving forces

The rise of "neo-nationalism" in contemporary Japan, in many respects, reflects the need to address the deepening national identity crisis resulting from socio-economic malaise and persistent political helplessness that have fed a desire for national renewal (McCormack 2000:247; Kingston 2004:251-252; Fujiwara 2001:40). For one, the debilitating conditions in the decade following the end of the "economic miracle" have had a demoralising impact on the Japanese psyche. Annual GDP growth throughout the "post-bubble" period staggered along recessionary rates, the Nikkei stock exchange suffered from prolonged lean spells, while corporate insolvencies and unemployment reached unprecedented levels (Matthews 2003:80; Kingston 2004:242-243). Public debts were the highest amongst industrialised nations following the cumulative effects of mismanagement of public funds, government bailouts, and spending to bolster structural reforms and public works packages (McCormack 2006:45; McNeill 2000; Conachy 2001; Bix 29/05/2001). The economic depression also aggravated social problems,<sup>20</sup> and endemic corruption was "eroding confidence in government and business alike" (McCormack 2000:248). Domestic political stability suffered from public disaffection, underscored by the rapid successions of state leadership, and the

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<sup>19</sup> As Jameson puts it, "By 1995, an economic machine that once produced incessant growth has sputtered to its fourth year of virtually no growth in the biggest, longest and broadest period of stagnation in Japan's post-World War II history" (1997:1).

<sup>20</sup> During this period, McCormack observes that "the ranks of the homeless grew, schools were rent by violence, rising levels of suicide and truancy, and social and spiritual unease in the society at large fed support for new religions and cults" (2000:247).

temporary loss of political power by the LDP, which had dominated Japanese politics since 1955 (Jameson 1997).<sup>21</sup>

The so-called “Lost Decade” not only saw Japan losing economic prosperity and political cohesion, but also its international status (McCormack 2000:248). In the politico-diplomatic dimension, the 1991 Gulf War “humiliation” reinforced its reputation as a “political dwarf” (Ito 2001; Miyashita 2002:144-145). Meanwhile, continuous subordination to the US has had Japan yielding to American pressure on various policy-matters, besides being marginalised on international issues (McCormack 2000:248), and increasingly subjected to “Japan bashing” and “Japan passing” by its “senior partner” and neighbours, alike (Shibata 19/09/1995; Kingston 2004:229-230). Furthermore, despite being a leading donor of international organisations, and having contributed substantially to East Asia’s economic dynamism through foreign investments and aid, Japan has rarely, been accorded the level of international/regional recognition and agenda-setting influence commensurate with its contribution, a status that has further dissipated with the recession-induced contraction of its economic resources (Matthews 2003:80-83). The domestic morass and fading international prestige have inevitably instigated calls for national regeneration (Cronin 2007). Neo-nationalism is thus, principally a reflection of the popular mood, and state/elite responses to alleviate the “psychological-emotional” distress of perceived Japanese weakness, and to reinvigorate national pride and reaffirm the Japanese identity (Sasaki 2001; Kase 09/08/2001). According to Kingston, it also reflects dissatisfaction with Japan’s “prolonged subordination” and “deferential adherence to the US”, and the desire to establish a more independent policy-stance, if not symmetrical US-Japan relationship (2004:229; Muto 2001:188). Such responses are, equally directed against China, to whom Japan has accorded deferential treatment that resulted in its “kowtow” diplomacy since normalisation. Likewise, the neo-nationalist agendas for rearmament and international pro-activism are, steadily accepted by the Japanese public as viable solutions to accrue the international respect that has thus far, eluded their country (Matthews 2003:83).

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<sup>21</sup> By 1997, Japan saw three changes of government, five premiers, and the sharing of power by eleven political parties, all since the LDP temporarily lost its power in 1993 (Jameson 1997:1)

Historical grievances and their impact on Japanese pride and identity is another factor fundamentally related to the flourishing neo-nationalist discourse. During the 1990s, Japanese were hounded by the excesses of war history, as information and records pertaining to atrocities and abuses committed by Imperial Japan were revealed by the archives, ex-servicemen, and the MOE/MEXT, via more “open” history treatment, following the demise of Emperor Showa (Kingston 2004:231; Benfell 2002). Compounding the revelation of this “national shame” was the sustained external pressure for the redress and proper accounting of Japan’s war responsibility, besides renewed domestic political efforts, i.e. by state-elites like Kono Yohei to PM Muruyama, to acknowledge, express remorse, and seek judicial resolution for war-related issues (Kingston 2004:231; McCormack 2000:250; Chung 2004). The sudden disclosure disconcerted many Japanese, who due to a “diluted” and “victim-oriented” postwar history education were largely unaware of the true extent of Japan’s disreputable wartime record (Ogawa 2000; Benfell 2002; Kitaoka interview). This unflattering past further dented national pride and identity, already undermined by socio-economic gloom. Neo-nationalism’s related agenda for historical revisionism is thus, another nationalist response to restore national pride through the promotion of a “less-masochistic” view of history (Mori 2007:57-58), and to engender a sense of unity, and strength against perceived national vulnerability and foreign pressure.

The neo-nationalist appeal is also closely associated with public perception regarding national insecurities, generational change, and the related domestic political transformation mentioned in Chapter 3 that have significantly affected Japanese-Chinese relations. Indeed, looming security concerns and “threat perceptions” vis-à-vis China and North Korea have fuelled Japanese public support for a more assertive foreign/security policy-orientation (Sasada 2006:115). They have led to Japan’s gradual remilitarisation and enhanced security cooperation with the US, and openness about the nuclear armament debate (McCormack 2007:Chp.8), all of which previously considered “taboo” issues, but now publicly accepted and regularly debated in the Japanese media (Sasada 2006:115-116; Cronin 2007). Specifically to this study, China’s rise has contributed significantly to Japan’s

growing insecurity. Japanese are aware of the shifting power distributions and economic fortunes between the two countries since the mid-1990s. Resentment of this power shift, coupled with strategic tensions and concerns over sustained Chinese military build-up have exacerbated their “China threat” perception (Matthews 2003:81). Meanwhile, fervent history quarrels and anti-Japanese-flavoured Chinese nationalism have triggered a nationalist backlash within Japan that fuelled negative perceptions/images and attitudes towards China in recent years (Cunningham 2005; Kaneko 2005). This aforementioned shift in the Japanese national psyche reflects a growing realism about national security in a fluid post-Cold War external environment (Green 2000: 42-43; Green and Self 1996; Tsunekawa 2006), a shift, which is interestingly, facilitated by Washington’s encouragement under the pretext of strengthening the US-Japan alliance.

Back at the domestic front, demographic and generational changes have subtly altered Japanese expression of nationalism. Aforementioned, nationalism became taboo after 1945 (Rose 2000:171), emerging in distorted forms and unrealistic expressions due to apprehension of the postwar generation. According to Matthews, “nationalism was relegated to the fringes of Japan’s popular debate”, as the postwar Japanese society suffered from the so-called “fear of itself” syndrome, namely the fear that nationalism may again mislead the nation towards militarism (2003:76). The war generation’s passing has since, diluted such apprehension, and together with it, the fear of nationalism’s perils (Matthews 2003:80). The present generation, raised in the era of economic success, is prideful and less encumbered by war-guilt, and hence, more prepared to express nationalist sentiment, without fear or favour. Contributing to the “aloofness” has been their superficial knowledge of Japan’s militaristic past deriving through history education, of which contents are subject to revisions and alleged “sanitisation” (Kingston 2004:230). To be fair, many Japanese are not ignorant, or in denial of the war history, an awareness deriving from as much education, as the periodic reminders by Japan’s neighbours and war victims. Yet, they also long for closure, and to become normal citizens that can freely express devotion to, and identify with their national state and symbols.

In the political realm, younger leaders more comfortable on the world stage and less retrospective of the national past have emerged, inspiring foreign/security policy-shifts that are geared towards national interests and enhancing Japan's role in the international community (Green 2000). These leaders also espouse a different external posture from that of their predecessors, when dealing with problematic interstate relationships. As previously described, Japan's diplomacy was passive, characterised by "deference" towards neighbours, like China and Korea (Drifte 2003; Ijiri 1996), a posture criticised by nationalists as humiliating, and lacking national self-assertion (Sasaki 2001). Today, however, the transfer of power to a generation spared from the traumas of history has led to present leaders becoming assertive and less-tolerant, especially toward foreign criticisms of Japan's imperial legacies, perceiving them as purposive acts "to unsettle the Japanese" (Sasaki 2001; Self 2002). The attitudinal change reflecting this new wisdom in the Japanese society is also apparent amongst ordinary folks, who are increasingly defensive/resentful towards *gaiatsu* and foreign interference on issues they considered as Japan's domestic affairs.

Another correlating factor refers to the decline of pacifist/leftwing forces in Japanese politics, which had previously constrained and neutralised nationalistic-rightwing overtures that periodically challenged the postwar pacifist norms (Sasada 2006). The change in national mood has seen pressure groups like the *Nikkyoso* fading,<sup>22</sup> and the popularity of the JSP/SDPJ and JCP concurrently diminishing with their Diet representations since the mid-1990s. These so-called "neutralising forces" have not only weakened, but also suffered a loss of political will and direction that even saw the JSP/SDPJ accepting a "political marriage of convenience" (Miyashita 2002:154) with the LDP in 1994, and relocating to the "centre-right" on previously divisive issues (Sasada 2006:117-118). Consistently dismal election results marginalised their influence as these leftwing parties failed to muster sufficient political support to prevent "the drift towards accommodation with the right on an axis of nationalism, or neo-nationalism" (McCormack 2000:262; 2005).

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<sup>22</sup> The *Nikkyoso*, or Japan Teacher's Union, once the staunchest opposition against nationalist indoctrination in the postwar education system and curriculum, has seen its influence gradually weakened, especially in the battle for control over textbook content and the national flag and anthem issue (McNeill 2001; Itoh 2001; Rose 2006).

Lastly, according to Sasada (2006), the “conservatisation” of Japan’s mainstream media and intellectual community, together with the emerging popularity of alternative channels to foster and disseminate the neo-nationalist message, i.e. internet, *mangas*, and international sporting events, have contributed to rising nationalism, especially among Japanese youth (see also Tanimichi 2005:33-34).<sup>23</sup> Indeed, most observers, including senior Japanese officials see Japan’s ideologically-slanted media as a driver of nationalistic sentiments, especially via biased/“sensationalised” reportings and sustained criticisms on “nationalist” issues that fuel pre-conceived/stereotyped (mis)perceptions and images vis-à-vis states like China and North Korea (Takahata interview; Anonymous interviews B and D; Johnston 2007). These factors have affectively shaped political views that are facilitating Japan’s contemporary ideological shift from pacifism towards nationalism (Sasada 2006).

#### 4.3.2. Fault-lines and manifestations of the neo-nationalist discourse

Changes are evident with regard to nationalism, as Japan inches towards a more “nationalistic/normal” outlook. Most notable has been the drift of the political debate and public consensus to the right, and growing support for the neo-nationalist cause (Kingston 2004; Kaneko 2005). Observers generally agree that the fault-lines of Japanese nationalism have remained relatively unchanged, although the power balance has (Samuels 2007a:128). The contemporary nationalist discourse on history and security has drifted according to the prevalent trend, where the leftist-oriented, “peace” nationalism’s advocacy of historical responsibility and military pacifism is being gradually, overshadowed by the rightist/neo-nationalist’s revisionist history and remilitarisation agenda. Samuels (2007a) construes that agenda-setting within the neo-nationalist camp is shaped by the “neo-autonomist” (ultra-nationalist) versus “normal nation-alist” debate that generally converges on history revisionism and the reintroduction of the “use of force” as a foreign policy instrument (see

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<sup>23</sup> The cyberspace has become a major disseminator of neo-nationalist ideas, especially among Japanese youth, whereby “revisionist” websites like *Channel-2 (ni-channeru)* (see <http://www.2ch.net/>) score an average 7 million monthly hits (Tanimichi 2005:35), while *Channel Sakura* is another popular site for nationalistic bloggers (Johnston 2007:114). *Manga* or Japanese comic are also hugely popular and influential. Among the revisionist manga included *Sensoron (On War)* by Kobayashi Yoshinori, which sold more than 700,000 copies, George Akiyama and Huang Wen-Hsiung’s *Chugoku Nyumon (Introduction to China)* that sold 180,000 copies, and Yamano Sharin’s *Kenkanryu (Hating the “Korean Boom”)* 450,000 copies (Sasada 2006:118).

also Tamamoto 2005a:14), but diverging on their support for the US-Japan alliance. Neo-autonomists like politician Ishihara Shintaro, academics Nishibe Susumu and Nakanishi Terumasa, and *manga*-artist Kobayashi Yoshinori, among others, advocates a remilitarisation independent from the US, while “normal nation-alists” prefer one that remains under a strengthened US-Japan alliance (Samuels 2007a:128-129;138). Samuels, however, sees a split between “realists” and “neo-conservatives” within the “normal nation-alist” camp regarding “history”; leading realists like ex-premier Nakasone, politicians Ishiba Shigeru and Ozawa Ichiro, and opinion leader Okazaki Hisahiko espouse a moderate-pragmatic view aimed at reconciliation with neighbours to advance Japan’s broader national interests, while Cabinet members, Abe Shinzo, Aso Taro, Hiranuma Takeo, Nakagawa Shoichi, Machimura Nobutaka, and Koizumi himself to an unclear extent, are amongst “mainstream” neo-conservatives, whom are more ideologically/revisionist-inclined, and less apologetic about history (2007a:144-145; Taniguchi 2005:451; Mori 2007).

Several of my Japanese interviewees, who seem to equate nationalists with ultra-rightwing personalities, have questioned Koizumi’s nationalistic disposition. They saw Koizumi as a progressive, and believed that his Yasukuni policy was due to personal convictions, political gamesmanship, and disinterest in diplomacy, rather than nationalism (Sasajima interview, Soeya interview, Anonymous interview H). Conversely, Rozman opined that although Koizumi may be less nationalistic compared to the ultra-nationalists, his actions and policies actually made him no different from them, since he was as much a protagonist that helped advance the “revisionist/nationalist” agenda in Japan (Rozman interview). This thesis shares Samuels (2007a) and Takahata’s (interview) categorisation of Koizumi as a “normal nationalist”, but locates him in between the “realist” and “neo-conservative” camps because of his ambiguous/non-committal stance on the more hardcore “history” issues.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> I borrow Samuels’ categorisations of Japanese nationalists, eg. “neo-autonomists”, “normal-nationalist”, “neo-conservatives” and “realist”, all of which will be used intermittently, throughout the thesis. I, however, query his classification of Okazaki Hisahiko as a moderate-realist, whose views appears to be quite “China-unfriendly”, based on his past remarks (see DY 04/03/2001; Okazaki interview). The rise of neo-conservatism in Japanese politics is also noted by Wu (2005/6) as key to Japan-China problems.

Indeed, the neo-conservatives and Koizumi have consistently provoked controversy with their nationalistic posture, exemplified by their support for Yasukuni pilgrimage, acquiescence to historical revisionism, and advocacy for constitutional reform of the Article IX. Expectedly, their political influence has broadened under his premiership, prevailing in attitudinal and policy-shifts that affected Japan's regional relations. The Koizumi administration definitely unnerved Japan's neighbours, particularly China, for its assertive stance on nationalist-flavoured bilateral issues, and its effort to redefine Japanese security outlook has had many observers citing this administration as among the most nationalistic since prewar Japan (Kaneko 2005; Matthews 2003; Clark 18/01/2005).<sup>25</sup> Their brand of "revisionist-ideological nationalism" (Cronin 2007; Dean 2007) became more overt under the administration led by Koizumi's protégé, Abe Shinzo. Renowned for his nationalistic disposition, Abe's policy-pledge to create "a beautiful Japan" by restoring patriotism indubitably helped advance the neo-nationalist agenda, despite his short-lived premiership (Cronin 2007:1).

Neo-nationalism has also gained support within the National Diet, manifesting, among others, in efforts to reinterpret history, promote constitutional, educational, and security policy reforms, and restore national pride and prestige based on the archetypal Japanese identity (McCormack 2000:251, 253; Cronin 2007). Japan watchers opine that Diet support for the neo-nationalist cause has flourished under groups like the Diet-members League for a Bright Japan and the Diet-members League for Passing on Correct History (McCormack 2007:10; Rose 2006:139-140). Meanwhile, over 200 Diet-members were affiliated to the influential rightwing-nationalist "umbrella" organisation, *Nippon Kaigi* (Japan Council), via the Japan Council Diet-members Group, established in 1997 to promote these agendas (Rose 2006:139; Mori 2007:57-58). Their active presence and support have influenced the course of events that saw postwar taboos gradually lifted, laws enacted, and national symbols reinstated, all without the usual Diet encumbrance (Itoh 2001). One can

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<sup>25</sup> Former premiers, like Obuchi and Mori are considered by Western observers as other nationalistic-oriented post-Cold War Japanese leaders, the former notably responsible for lifting nationalist taboos during his tenure that saw the passing of the national flag-anthem legislation and defence bills in 1999, while the latter was infamously known for his "divine nation" gaffe (Green 2000:42; Symonds 1999).

infer the neo-nationalist influence from the quick passage of defence bills to expand Japan's security role, and overwhelming support for the official sanctioning of the *Hinomaru* and *Kimigayo* in July 1999, both "taboo" issues that could have previously "paralysed the Diet" (Itoh 2001).<sup>26</sup> Yet, McCormack claims that these legislations were "bulldozed" through together with other "apparently innocuous" bills that "subtly shifted the boundaries of private and public, individual and state, in favour of the state", not mentioning the reinstatement of constitutional reforms on the political agenda (2000:248).<sup>27</sup> Similarly, bi-partisan support and solidarity among Diet-members on Yasukuni visits, underscores this nationalistic drift.<sup>28</sup>

Outside the Diet, nationalist forces have reorganised from a primarily fringe pressure group movement to becoming popular-based in recent years, as the neo-nationalist cause gained the interest of, and support from the professional middle-class, intellectual, artists, business elites, and even powerful corporate, publishing and media groups (McCormack 2000:251-252). During the postwar period, nationalist causes were championed by rightwing organisations, like *Jinja honcho* (National Shrine Association), *Nihon Izokukai* (Japan Association of War-Bereaved Families), *Shinto seiji renmei*, *Seicho no ie* (McCormack 2000:251; 2007:10-11; Shibuichi 2005:200), *Seirankai* (Blue-Storm Group), and *Nihon Seishensha* (Japan Youth Federation) (Chung 2004:36-41), among others. Most *uyoku* (ultra-right) outfits also overlapped with the *yakuza* (Japanese mafia) (Greenfeld 1994:206; Shibuichi 2005:201), and were allegedly connected to political-elites and LDP factions, through which their influence was imposed, and interests advocated in the Japanese body politics (McNeill 2001:4). However, since the mid-1990s, a more articulate, ideological-driven, and politically committed movement has flourished, represented by the likes of *Tsukurukai* and *Nippon Kaigi* that draw strength from popular resentment towards the relentless external vilification of Japan's wartime record, and Tokyo's "apology diplomacy" to

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<sup>26</sup> For a comprehensive analysis on the flag-anthem legislation, see Itoh Mayumi (2001).

<sup>27</sup> Ozawa Ichiro referred to the 145<sup>th</sup> Regular Session of the National Diet in 1999 as a "bloodless revolution" (quoted in Takada 17/09/1999:32-33; cf. McCormack 2000:248)

<sup>28</sup> See Chapter 6 for the details of popular nationalist and Diet support for Koizumi's Yasukuni visits.

entertain such “Japan bashing” (McCormack 2000:251; Rose 2000:175; McNeill 2005).<sup>29</sup> It also taps into the deep-rooted, popular fear of a waning Japanese state and debilitating national economy, and driven by the “nostalgia for a strong Japan” (McCormack 2000:252). The movement enjoys corporate sponsorship and endorsement from leading Japanese companies, while major media groups, like *Yomiuri*, *Fuji-Sankei*, *Bungei Shunju*, and media/internet sources, i.e. *Shokun!*, *Seiron*, *Sapio*, *Spa*, *Brutus*, *Channel-2*, *Channel-Sakura*, among others, actively promote its causes (McCormack 2000:252; Yoshimi 1998:195-212 cf. Rose 2000:175; Johnston 2007:113-115). Interestingly, a confluence of interests in promoting “healthy” nationalism and the “national cause” also saw some Japanese liberal/progressive intelligentsia acquiescing to the neo-nationalist discourse (McCormack 2000:253).<sup>30</sup>

The “nationalistic” drift in public mood is equally conspicuous, albeit one that is more emotionally reactive-defensive rather than ideologically driven. This is observable from recent public reactions towards perceived external threats, pressure, and slight, which arouse their defensive mechanism vis-à-vis the “perpetrators”, and encourage acquiescence towards neo-nationalist agendas concerning Japanese identity and national security. For example, despite the controversy surrounding their symbolism and meanings, PM Koizumi’s visits to Yasukuni-*jinja* received favourable public support, not for his, or Yasukuni’s ideological convictions, but predominantly a defensive-reaction against external/Chinese pressure.<sup>31</sup> The prevailing mood has also stimulated interest in, and facilitated the circulation/access of “revisionist” publications/media/internet sources that project neo-nationalist views to the ordinary Japanese (McCormack 2000; McNeill 2005).<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Nationalist intelligentsia like Fujioka Nobukatsu and Nishio Kanji, were behind the formation of the “Liberal View of History Study Group” and *Tsukurukai* (Japan Society for History Textbook Reforms) that campaigned for the “correct view” of history to rejuvenate Japanese national pride.

<sup>30</sup> This is exemplified by the recent “neo-nationalistic” writings of prominent liberal/progressive scholars like Kato Norihiro, that were published by liberal-oriented publishers i.e. *Iwanami*, *Kodansha* and *Heibonsha* (McCormack 2000:253).

<sup>31</sup> See Chapter 6 for the case-study on the Yasukuni Shrine dispute.

<sup>32</sup> Besides the spread of neo-nationalist views via alternative media sources mentioned earlier (i.e. internet, *manga*), efforts to promote the use of the controversial New History Textbook (*Kokumin no rekishi*) in junior high schools have regained ground since its initial failure in 2001, with more neo-nationalist sympathisers elected to district education boards, lobbying for its acceptance, including the Tokyo Metropolitan government’s recent sanctioning of its usage in Tokyo schools (McNeill 2005). The history textbook, together

Public pacifism has likewise, eroded on national security matters. In 1999, Japan launched a first-ever “unilateral exercise of force” against a North Korean *fushinsen*, a constitutionally infringing action that ironically received popular approval of over 80% (Midford 2002:13; McCormack 2007:59). The repeat of a similar incident in 2001, ultimately led to the Japan Coast Guard's (JCG) historic sinking of a foreign vessel (Samuels 2007/8:96). Similarly, there was a distinct lack of public uproar over the gradual expansion of Japan's security role, via legislations in 1999 and the aftermath of “9/11” that saw Maritime-SDF (MSDF) ships sent to foreign waters on active duty for the first time since 1945, and peacekeepers to Iraq, in the US-led war on terrorism (Samuel 2007b:119). The public was also relatively mute on other defense-related issues, i.e. controversial debates for a nuclear-armed Japan, the right of pre-emptive attack, plausible revision of Article-IX, and the JDA's upgrading to ministry status.<sup>33</sup> These developments suggest that neo-nationalism has become a pervasive force, “which seems steadily to weigh with both left and right of Japanese politics” (McCormack 2000:256), and is embraced by a broad spectrum of the society. Interestingly reminiscent of the 1950s, its contemporary manifestation is again dependent on, and facilitated by American support/acquiescence of such agenda, following their mutual need to strengthen the alliance in anticipation of the shifting external security environment (Rozman interview). Some observers have come to define this as Japan's “dependent nationalism” (McCormack 2000:263; 2007; Tsunekawa 2006).

More importantly to this study, the neo-nationalist discourse brewing in Japan has an essentially “anti-China” manifestation (Hanai 24/10/2005; cf. Samuels 2007a:133; Tamamoto 2005b; Togo 2006:14), shaped by as much, Japanese desire for national self-assertion, as their pride and prejudices over the changing power relations vis-à-vis China, and indignation towards perceived Chinese arrogance, bullying, and pressure (Anonymous

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with its companion, The New Civic Textbook (*Atarashii komin kyokasho*) were also commercially available in bookstores nationwide, where both have since sold 700,000 and 200,000 copies, respectively (McNeill 2005).

<sup>33</sup> Opinion polls by *Asahi Shimbun* and *Yomiuri Shimbun* show public opposition towards constitutional revision (especially Article IX) has fallen to less than 40% since 1995, while those supporting have gradually risen to over 50% (Iokibe 2006:108 cf. Mori 2007:46-47). The January 2000 establishment of Constitutional Research Committees and formal debate of the issue in the National Diet, which ended in 2005, suggests the plausibility of constitutional revision becoming a reality in the not too distant future (see Matthews 2003).

interview F). Elaborated in Chapter 5, these dynamics have triggered a perceptual and attitudinal shift towards China, which enhances nationalism's efficacy in Japan's China policy-making.

#### **4.4. State and Popular Nationalism in Contemporary Japan**

The above analysis highlights Japanese nationalism's state/elite-centric nature, and populist drive behind its discourses, agenda, and manifestations. State-oriented nationalism, discredited since 1945, may be "the weakest form of nationalism in Japan" (Stronach 1995:166), whilst popular modes of nationalism have flourished. Indeed, the "official" nationalist discourse no longer exudes the kind of "prewar" popular influence, and the state does not appear to dictate the highly diffused nationalist forces in postwar Japan (Morris 1960:40; McVeigh 2004:10). Yet, it is also evident that state nationalism has continued to subtly permeate, and indirectly affect the Japanese daily life, via innocuous state-society channels. McVeigh construes that although the state does not determine popular modes of nationalism, "it certainly has enough institutional points of contact with them [to challenge] the nation/state dichotomy" in contemporary Japan (2004:84). This suggests the Japanese state's persistency as a "primary agent" behind nationalism's omnipresence (2004:180). It also illustrates the "state-popular" axis, where the former remains stealthily influential in engendering and abetting the popular nationalist discourse, through education, ethno-cultural-historical mythmaking, "media cartelisation", and "developmentalist" economic policies, among others (McVeigh 2004:90-91; Chp.6-7). Conversely, popular nationalism, while appearing to be either apolitical and/or periodically anti-state, does find a convergence of interests, and identify with the official nationalist aspirations on the agenda of national regeneration/renaissance (McVeigh 2004; Rose 2000).

Contemporary state/elite-inspired nationalism is pragmatic, national interest-driven, instrumental, and meant for domestic consumption.<sup>34</sup> Similar to the Meiji and postwar eras, the present official nationalist discourse has been, pragmatically centred on the neo-

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<sup>34</sup> These features of state/official nationalism are noted in Zhao (2000) and Chen (2005), in their descriptions of Chinese nationalism. They are equally applicable to explaining state/official nationalism in Japan.

nationalist agenda of rebuilding a strong, affluent nation-state, and reinstating the Japanese identity, amid denigrating internal adversities, and mounting external pressures. Core to these aspirations is none other than a return to “normal” statehood after decades of postwar identity discrepancies/incongruities. Externally, state nationalism has a reactive, assertive, and yet adaptive international orientation geared towards defending and maximising the broader national interest (see Zhao 2000; 2005; Matthews 2003). Whilst Japan has begun projecting a more reactive-cum-assertive external disposition, diplomatic and decision-making prudence remain generally, the *modus vivendi* of Japanese foreign policy, especially when managing bilateral quandaries with key regional states like China and both Koreas. Tokyo has also sought to redefine the national security outlook and expand Japan’s international role, albeit under the US-Japan alliance framework. Overall, the official nationalist discourse remains moderate, yet steadfastly advocating the assertion of a prideful Japanese history and identity, constitutional revision, and the rearmament of Japan (McCormack 2000:262). Undoubtedly, the quest for national security, “healthy” nationalism, and the possession of an indigenously crafted constitution to resurrect a “normal state” identity, belie the Japanese state’s/state-elites’ cajoling of these neo-nationalist causes (Tamamoto 2001:39; interview).

State nationalism is instrumental. Like its predecessors, the contemporary Japanese state has promoted nationalism as the unifying and motivational force behind the public support for its implementation of demanding structural reforms to revive the country’s ailing economy (Matthews 2003; Tamamoto 2001). It is also, meant to provide psychological-emotional support, or what Kingston (2004) calls “feelgood nationalism” for the Japanese nation, during such testing times. Likewise, nationalism functions as a tool to bolster the legitimacy of, and restore public confidence towards the Japanese bureaucratic-state, eroded by endemic corruption, inefficiency, and malpractices. Its instrumentality is equally, represented by state manipulation of its fluid content, where state-elites have sought to reinstate the military and past national symbols, and acquiesce to neo-nationalist advocacy of a “revisionist” history, to facilitate the restoration of national pride and prestige. Its utility-

function is, perhaps, most vividly reflected by Japanese state-elites' manipulation/politicisation of its symbolism for personal political expediency.

Popular nationalism identifies with the official nationalist discourse on key national goals, although they may differ in the approaches/strategies to realise them. The diversity of popular expressions, from "peace" and "cultural nationalisms" to ultra-rightwing and contemporary neo-nationalist discourses, means that some forms are bound to dovetail with the official line, while others critical of the state on issues of nationalist persuasions. However, McVeigh sees most non-official nationalist movements as having linkage with, and receive the support of the officialdom through various state-society channels. These popular-based organisations also seek to exert pressure, and political influence, by providing financial backing to established "power-cliques" and state-elites (McVeigh 2004:53). Notwithstanding their differences on specific issues, this intricate matrix concurs with Rose's assertion of the "symbiotic relationship" between state-oriented and popular nationalisms (2000:174); the former attempts to establish common grounds by appropriating the richness of the popular discourse, for mass-mobilisation behind state endeavours; the latter finds the state a "vehicle" to channel its manifestations and institutionalise its causes. The "neo-nationalist" undercurrent highlights this state-official/popular-non-official linkage, where common interests have seen both nationalisms mutually reinforcing each other.

That said, the popular neo-nationalist discourse, passionately driven by an enduring sense of "victimhood" and/or indignation towards external pressures, and a longing for independence, prestige, and international recognition, can be critical of the Japanese state's pragmatic convictions (Rose 2000:174).<sup>35</sup> Popular "neo-autonomists" have often chastised the state's inability to sever its postwar dependency on the US, while others have been critical towards its inadequate responses in defending Japanese interests pertaining to territorial, history, and other nationalist-flavoured issues, particularly when dealing with

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<sup>35</sup> I share this opinion of popular nationalism in Japan with Gries' observation of popular Chinese nationalism.

China (Samuels 2007a; Fujiwara 2001).<sup>36</sup> Although not incessantly radical in their views, these neo-nationalists have demanded an autonomous and more forceful foreign policy that runs counter to Tokyo's calculated considerations. Similarly, the Japanese government has been, "reluctantly" dragged into occasional diplomatic disputes vis-à-vis China over Senkaku/Diaoyudao by the provocative actions of ultra-nationalist groups. However, the evolving domestic power dynamics and political ascendancy of mainstream neo-nationalists, e.g. neo-conservatives/realists suggest that the state may remain pragmatic, yet more willing to pander to nationalist ideals (Samuels 2007a/b), and thus increasingly constrained by related pressures to embrace a nationalistic-assertive external orientation, albeit under American auspices. This aforementioned mainstream manifestation of "dependent nationalism" is theoretically consistent with the NCR dictum espoused by this thesis, whereby nationalism's salience in Japan's China policy is relatively dependent on state-elites' perception/calculation of a favourable "allied resolve/commitment" via the US-Japan alliance.

#### 4.5. Conclusion

Nationalism remains salient, permeating and manifesting in various, albeit atypical forms in postwar Japan. The advent of neo-nationalism is largely, seen as the re-embracing of a more orthodox nationalism, where after decades of self-doubting behaviour, a broad consensus has emerged that Japan should reassert its national interests and priorities, and move from its past to embrace the future as a "normal" nation-state (Muto 2001:187). The present manifestations have not exuded the virulence/malevolence that typified prewar nationalism, and appear unlikely to do so, considering the different external-domestic conditions that perpetuated them.<sup>37</sup> Besides the ageing demographics<sup>38</sup> (Green 2001:43; Ito

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<sup>36</sup> According to Fujiwara, popular neo-nationalist movements like the *Tsukurukai* are "not some conspiracy of the state...to manipulate public opinion", but borne from "popular call to resurrect – in defiance of the government", the supposedly marginalised "story of the Japanese nation" (2001:36)

<sup>37</sup> According to Pyle (1996:62-64), the external-domestic conditions that shaped prewar and contemporary nationalism are fundamentally different. They include differences in the level of development/modernisation, limited tendency of contemporary state/elite in fostering narrow political nationalism, generational change and detachment of contemporary Japanese from traditional institutions i.e. cultures/religion/symbols that fuelled prewar nationalism, transformation of the postwar social structure, and "internationalisation" and increased international exposure of ordinary Japanese (Pyle 1996:62-64). See also Muto (2001:184-186).

2001), Japan's embrace of liberal democracy, in many respects, has made it a transparent, liberal, and civil society, which in principle, does not warrant overreactions, unscrupulous decision-making or indiscriminate actions, on the part of the Japanese state, when handling issues of nationalistic persuasions. Finally, the US-Japan alliance and economic interdependence remain the major external constraints against the rise of chauvinistic-aggressive nationalism, although both may abet the current mainstream manifestations.

Nonetheless, this "neo-nationalist" renaissance has generated unease. Internationally, the efforts of Japanese state-elites and popular nationalists, alike, to foster nationalism, by encouraging historical revisionism and reviving past national symbols, as well as advancing a more dynamic and assertive external/security orientation are driving a wedge between Japan and its Asian neighbours (McCormack 2000:263; Kaneko 2005). This division has been compounded by resurgent nationalism in countries like China and Korea, where Japan is a key ingredient flavouring their nationalistic sentiments. The deteriorating Japanese-Chinese ties are a particular case in point. Specifically, the dynamics of both state and popular nationalisms are reinventing Japan's policy-behaviour vis-à-vis China. Against the backdrop of rising Chinese nationalism, this apparent "clash of nationalisms" (Chan and Bridges 2006) has spawned misperceptions, negative images and attitudes that magnify their differences, perpetuating mutual animosity and mistrust that threaten to destabilise the bilateral relationship. The crucial questions of how, when, and to what extent nationalism affects Japan's China policy and Japanese-Chinese ties are therefore, the undertakings of the following chapters.

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<sup>38</sup> According to the government census as of November 1, 2007, citizens aged 65 and above constitute 21.5% of the total Japanese population, while those aged 14 years and below have shrunk to 13.5% (JT 22/11/2007).

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **NATIONALISM, JAPAN'S CHINA POLICY-MAKING, AND JAPANESE-CHINESE RELATIONS**

Resurgent nationalism has ostensibly contributed to Japan's increasingly assertive external behaviour, especially when managing problematic bilateral ties and issues of nationalist persuasions. Japanese-Chinese diplomacy is undoubtedly among the most affected, given the burden of their unsettled past, unresolved disputes, and unrelenting mutual enmity that have periodically undermined relations. This chapter explicates nationalism's causal role in defining Japan's China policy, via a neoclassical realist perspective. It undertakes to shed light on whether rising nationalism necessarily indicates a nationalistic policy vis-à-vis China, and how, and under what conditions it affects Japanese policy-making. An examination of how nationalism exacerbates the problems of perceptions, images, and attitudes, and the corresponding impact on the bilateral relationship, sets the overtone of the chapter. This is, followed by a brief overview of Japanese foreign policy-making, namely the actors and process involved, with emphasis given to exploring the linkage between domestic nationalist pressure and these policy-making apparatus/actors. The chapter concludes with a general observation of the reality of nationalism's impact on Japanese attitude vis-à-vis China concerning "history" and security, and Tokyo's policy-orientations that affected Japanese-Chinese diplomacy.

#### **5.1. Nationalism and the Problems of Perceptions, Images, and Attitudes in Japanese-Chinese Relations**

As previously elaborated, nationalism has seemingly reorientated Japan's China policy that underscores their declining bilateral relations. This unfavourable development is expected, since nationalism promotes "particularism" and accentuates the differences between the "self" and "other" (Greenfeld 1992; Zhao 2000), and when the kind of nationalism evolving in Japan, is reactive, and driven by popular angst and threat perceptions (Stronach 1995). Furthermore, nationalism tends to invoke xenophobia, and/or chauvinism that target other nations (Zhao 2000). Such nationalistic expressions, compounded by the act of "demonising" the "other", not only widen the perceptual chasm and aggravate distrust, they

reinforce stereotypically negative images and unconstructive attitudes (Druckman 1994:50-52; Van Evera 1994) that may detrimentally affect one's policy vis-à-vis the "other". If the policy-action is perceived to be provocative, a vicious cycle of reactive nationalism could manifest policy-responses that may escalate, and ultimately, cause bilateral tension to spiral out of rational control (Deutsch 1983 cf. Druckman 1994:53).<sup>1</sup> Simply put, nationalism commonly aggravates the problems of perception, images, and attitudes that can undermine international relations.

Although the "burden of history" (Miller 2002; Shirk 2007:153)<sup>2</sup> has not subverted a functional relationship from materialising, contemporary Japanese-Chinese ties appear to have worsened during a time when nationalism is regaining currency in Japan (and China). Diplomatic rows have become frequent amid nationalism's debilitating impact on how one perceives the other (Rozman 2002).<sup>3</sup> At the grassroots level, opinion polls cited in Chapter 3 suggest that nationalism has adversely affected the mutual images and attitudes of both citizenries. The statistical trend largely reflects nationalism's influence on the changing public mood and opinions that are reinventing their intergovernmental ties. Especially in Japan, generational change, and the appeal to nationalism to redefine a national identity that typifies a "normal state", have gradually altered Japanese perception/opinion regarding their relationship with neighbouring states, and role as citizens of the international community (Wan 2006:161). It has undoubtedly affected Japanese public opinion of China, which has swung from a previously superficial and over-enthusiastic outlook, to a more sceptical/cautious view over the last decade. Also, "Sinophobia" is permeating the contemporary Japanese psyche, with the conservative-rightwing media and neo-nationalists "demonising" China amid fears of a Chinese economic and security "threat" to Japan (Clark 18/01/2005; 2006; Chan and Bridges 2006:139-140; Johnston 2007).<sup>4</sup> Indeed, Self

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<sup>1</sup> According to Rozman, the Chinese leadership's stoking of anti-Japanese nationalism, though boosting their legitimacy, has "come at a cost to Japan's image in China and China's image in Japan" (2002:108), fuelling reactive Japanese nationalism that in turn, has led to a "vicious cycle" that is spiraling out of control.

<sup>2</sup> This term derives from the title of Miller (2002).

<sup>3</sup> Whiting (1989; 1998) is noted for his pioneering works on perceptions and images in Japanese-Chinese relations. For a contemporary account of China's changing images of Japan, see Rozman (2001; 2002).

<sup>4</sup> Johnston (2007) provides an analysis of contemporary Japanese media perceptions of China.

construes that “agitated reporting” about China’s military modernisation, maritime encroachments, and anti-Japanese education, coupled with concerns over Chinese triads and illegal workers operating in Japan at the expense of public security, “have collectively produced a tinderbox of irritation” (2002:80). Recent anti-Japanese demonstrations in Chinese cities have further damaged Japanese public opinion, fuelling reactive, popular anti-Chinese nationalism to unprecedented levels. Since neo-nationalism derives its strength in reaction to perceived internal weaknesses and external bullying, such unfavourable public images and attitudes are likely to exacerbate as China continues to outpace Japan politically, militarily, and economically, whilst maintaining its anti-Japanese attitude.<sup>5</sup>

Meanwhile, the aforementioned generational change in Japan’s leadership saw the so-called “friendship” generation replaced by a more nationalistic cohort of state-elites, whom are less willing to appease China. These leaders, including Koizumi and some of his cabinet members, presumably suffer from “apology and kowtow diplomacy” fatigue, and resent the Chinese government for insisting on Japan’s continuous deference (Austin and Harris 2001:58; Miller 2005/6:41). Indeed, revelation by a former top Japanese diplomat to China that Koizumi had personally told him that Japan “has to do something...and cannot always say “yes” to China”(Anonymous interview I), indicate this prevalent attitude, shaped by their changing images of the Chinese. There are also opinion leaders, (i.e. Tokyo Governor Ishihara) who are unabashedly anti-Chinese in their outlook (Samuels 2007a; Hood 1999; Chau 2001).<sup>6</sup> Although most Japanese may not share their extreme sentiments, their rhetorical antics during a time of depleting goodwill, tend to fuel popular “Sinophobia”.

Interestingly, there are observations that the recent shift in Japanese perception of China reflects the restoration of a “normal” mode of viewing the Chinese. It is arguable that past Japanese public affection ratings were unrealistic due to limited grassroots-level interactions during the earlier periods. Such favourable perceptions were partly the product

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<sup>5</sup> This opinion is, commonly shared by scholars/observers, and my Japanese interviewees.

<sup>6</sup> Ishihara Shintaro, renowned for his anti-China stance, has blamed Chinese citizens for Tokyo’s rising crime rates, and used the derogatory terms *Shina* and *sangokujin* to refer to China and Chinese residents in Japan. His explicit “pro-Taiwan” position, denouncement of the Nanjing massacre as a Chinese historical fabrication, and calls of “China threat” also underline his anti-Chinese sentiment (Hood 1999:4; Chau 2001).

of intergovernmental efforts to promote “friendship”, and Japan’s over-exuberance in embracing the so-called “China-boom” sentiments (Kokubun 2003). It was also plausibly a manifestation of Japanese war-guilt complex, which prompted the war generation to be more sympathetic and receptive towards the Chinese. However, generational shift and intensified popular-level exchanges have produced new dynamics that expose their flawed images. Nationalism has cultivated awareness amongst the current generation of Japanese regarding the need to redeem national pride and self-assertion, when dealing with the Chinese. This “return to normalcy” has, inevitably brought Japanese opinion of China back to more “realistic” levels. Unfortunately, this “new realism” in Japanese perception also indicates the worsening of China’s images. According to Self, “stronger warning signals have emerged in Japanese political circles and popular opinion than they have in China, but shifts on both sides indicate that change – more likely for the worse – is building” (2002:78).

With Japan becoming less responsive towards China’s demands, it has made the Chinese even more forthright in professing their instinctively anti-Japanese sentiment. This “perceptual readjustment” has been, further complicated by what observers labelled as “the burden of double-expectations” (Glosserman 10/09/2003; Konishi 2003). Because of their socio-cultural similarities, both Chinese and Japanese expect each to behave like, and even over-compensate the other for the differences that emerge, and, when that fails to materialise, the sense of indignation becomes deeper (Glosserman 10/09/2003). According to Glosserman, Chinese over-expectation of Japan to continue assuaging their demands as a form of “moral redemption” has made them incensed towards perceived Japanese insensitivities. Meanwhile, Japan’s over-expectation of the Chinese to “exorcise the ghost” of its past aggression has made Japanese weary and annoyed towards perceived Chinese ungratefulness, and their taking advantage of Japan’s previously obliging attitude (Glosserman 10/09/2003). Their lack of “intersubjectively shared” ideas, norms and values” (Yang 2005:7) is another drawback, which has subverted a confluence of understanding that could help bridge differences. Most obvious is their contrasting political norms and culture, with Japan, largely a liberal democracy, while China, an authoritarian state. This “ideological

gulf” has obstructed the promotion of mutual trust (Glosserman 10/09/2003). It has also apparently encouraged an ideologically-centred superiority complex amongst ordinary Japanese that made them reluctant to trust, or comprehend, less negotiate with the Chinese (Matsuda interview; Wan 2006:163).

Ultimately, the clashing nationalisms evolving in Japan and China are widening differences in interpretations of their past, present, and future (Gong 2001b:41; Chan and Bridges 2006). According to Gong, “divergence between domestic pressure for Japan to establish itself as a “normal country” and domestic pressures for China to replace a faded ideology with rising nationalism” that targets Japan, is fostering a potentially destabilising scenario (2001b:41). Since Beijing has fanned anti-Japanese sentiment as a partial strategy to sustain political legitimacy, Chinese nationalism is bound to react to shifts in Japan’s China policy. The Chinese would preferably deal with the Japan that was “penitent over the war and basically distrustful of itself” (Self 2002:82). However, neo-nationalism that calls for a prideful national identity has had the Japanese distancing themselves from the self-imposed, postwar pacifism and deferential attitude (Self 2002:82), a development that runs counter to Chinese penchant and expectations. Hence, an assertive and less remorseful Japan is bound to fuel Chinese nationalism. Conversely, a “wounded” Japanese nationalism caused by the aforementioned degenerations, is reactive and apprehensive towards a rapidly rising China, whose rejuvenated national confidence has made the Chinese more nationalistic and feisty in advancing their national interests, some of which are at Japan’s expense (Self 2002:82). Their “diverging fortunes” (Pei and Swaine 2005) have certainly accentuated Japanese insecurity and distrust, which, against the backdrop of such “reactive-confrontational” nationalisms, are widely believed to be straining recent bilateral relations.

This study therefore, raises important questions regarding the extent to which nationalism, real or perceived, is shaping their deteriorating relationship, notably from the Japanese side, and also how, in what manner, and under what conditions domestic nationalist pressure affect Japanese foreign policy-making. This warrants an analysis of the actors and processes, and an examination of the linkage between nationalism and policy-

making, as well as the constraints/opportunities arising from domestic nationalist sentiment and other external-internal restrictions that concomitantly influence Japanese policy-options pertaining to the bilateral relations.

## 5.2. Japanese Foreign Policy-making: An Overview

This section provides a general idea of Japanese foreign policy-making, focusing particularly on the basic framework for Japan's China policy, and the actors involved in the decision-making process. This includes an analysis of the connection between nationalism and policy-making, notably the manner and conditions in which it exerts influence, in the presence of other variables that equally matter, as perceived/calculated by state-elites.

### 5.2.1. Actors and process<sup>7</sup>

Japanese foreign policy-making is, commonly noted for the “elitist” and/or “pluralist” nature of the principal actors and structures involved in its process. Various terminologies have been coined to describe the Japanese model, according to the number and emphasis of key actors, which includes “elitist” (Johnson 1995), and “pluralist” (Curtis 1995; Zhao 1993), to the more elaborate “elite-led pluralist” (Lehmann 1997; Hughes 1999) and “patterned pluralism” (Muramatsu and Krauss 1987) (cf. Hagstrom 2003:84). Notwithstanding the differences, scholars tend to identify a similar cohort of principal actors constituting the policy-making structure, and share a common description of their interwoven relationships, which have been metaphorically described as an “iron triangle” (Collignon and Usui 2001); a “tripartite elite model” (Hook et.al 2001:41); or “tripartite power elite” (Fukui 1977a:22); a “tripod” (Zhao 1993:22); and the “Japan Incorporated” thesis (Abegglen 1970:35 cf. Collignon and Usui 2001:867). These metaphors illustrate a network of interdependent, and generally collaborative relationship between the principal actors, namely the central bureaucracy, incumbent ruling party (predominantly the LDP), and the *zaikai* (Tanaka 2000). Whilst collaboration for exclusive political influence has been their prevailing *modus operandi*, it is widely acknowledged that these policy-making elites are “subject to infighting and factionalism within themselves as well as between each other” (Hook et.al 2001:41).

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<sup>7</sup> This section's elaborations are mainly inspired by Hagstrom (2003), Hook et.al (2001), and Tanaka (2000).

Although earlier studies mostly portray Japanese policy-making as inherently elitist, monolithic, and coherent, contemporary works seem to highlight its pluralistic and fragmented feature, where decision-making is subjected to, not only intense competition amongst policy-making elites, but also pressure from other relevant domestic and external actors/factors, as well as informal policy-making mechanisms (Zhao 1993; Hughes 1999:161-162). Furthermore, Japan's policy-making regime has been deemed "enigmatic", "highly diffuse" and indeterminable, in terms of power distribution and actor dominance in decision-making (van Wolferen 1993; Drifte 1996:5,28; cf. Hagstrom 2003:84-85). Regardless of the contending debate, it remains credible to view contemporary Japanese foreign policy-making as essentially "elite-led", yet "increasingly pluralistic, with various groups exercising different degrees of influence" (Hughes 1999:162), depending on the specific time context and issue addressed (Hook et.al 2001:42; Calder 1997). Hence, according to Hook et.al, rather than over-emphasising the "tripartite elite" structure, and the supremacy of one elite vis-à-vis another, i.e. bureaucracy (Pempel 1979; Johnson 1995); *zaikai* (Samuels 1987; Calder 1993); or the ruling LDP (Sakakibara 2004:xiii; Park 2001); present analytical models should simultaneously account for a compendium of political actors/determinants that directly/indirectly influence the policy-making process (2001:42).

The following is a description of the principal actors and mechanisms identified as influential, to varying degrees, in Japanese foreign, and specifically, China policy-making. As stipulated, the "tripartite-elite/iron-triangle" forms the core of the general foreign policy-making structure. However, a specific analysis of the executive role of the PM and the cabinet, which are intertwined with the bureaucracy and ruling LDP, serves as an important starting point, to address a key question regarding the prevalence of state-elites' (central decision-makers) domestic political resolve and nationalistic disposition in shaping foreign policy-choices.

*Prime Minister and the Cabinet.* As the head-of-government, the PM wields significant foreign policy influence, though "executive power" is, constitutionally "vested in the Cabinet", which is "collectively responsible to the Diet" (cf. Tanaka 2000:4). Theoretically, the PM has

the authority to appoint/determine the Cabinet line-up, allowing him the prerogative to form an Executive branch that unanimously, or at least in principle, agree with his policy-directions (Tanaka 2001:4). Yet, in practice, there are structural/politico-institutional limitations that tend to curtail the power of a Japanese premier (Mulgan 2004:7; Tanaka 2000:4-5). This include, among others, the traditionally-entrenched and divisive ruling party politics that usually makes him comparatively weaker than his counterparts, in exerting influence over party members in the Diet, and the organisational constraint of a relatively small support staff under the PMO, often seconded from key ministries (Tanaka 2000-4-6; Hook et.al 2001:49; Drifte 1998:21-22). Another related and well-known shortcoming is the rapid premierships changes that undermine “continuity in executive leadership in Japan’s international relations” (Stockwin 1998 cf. Hook et.al 2001:49). These politico-institutional constraints and their ambiguous power position suggest that Japanese PMs tend to put more emphasis on domestic politics, where securing domestic political support/leverage often outweighs their interest in foreign policy-making (Hook et.al 2001:50).

Despite such limitations, Tanaka sees the PM wielding enough power to mobilise/channel bureaucratic resources for common/national goals, and officially serving, under the cabinet’s auspices, as the final arbiter of policy-decisions (see Rose 1998:164), making him “the single most important player in the game that is Japan’s domestic politics, and particularly in the [‘two-level’] games of complex domestic/foreign policy interaction” (2000:7). This is especially so, when managing key bilateral relationships and/or foreign policy crises (NCR’s assumption), during which the PM’s role becomes paramount, a position in which he can “make a difference both positively and negatively” (Tanaka 2000:7; see also Hagstrom 2003:86; Taliaferro 2000/1). Perhaps, crucially, Japanese premiers also command what Hook et.al calls sufficient “moral authority”, which enables them to mobilise the domestic political apparatus and public towards specific foreign policy objectives (2001:50). Moreover, prime ministerial powers have grown since the administrative reforms in 2001, enabling him to circumvent cumbersome bureaucratic constraints in decision-

making.<sup>8</sup> Indeed, Hagstrom, in citing Tanaka (1991:191), sees the PM playing a central role with regard to the formulation of Japan's China policy, where "no important decision is taken, and no substantial policy is implemented, without his consent" (2003:86 *fn.*191). Sasajima shares a similar view, suggesting that political decision-making at the PM-level has "tremendous influence on diplomacy with China", especially under the leadership of a strong-willed premier (2002:83), i.e. Tanaka, Nakasone, Takeshita, and Koizumi (Hook et.al 2001:54; Lam 2005).<sup>9</sup>

Next, cabinet members, specifically the FM, and others, to varying extent, affect decision-making at the apex. The Cabinet secretariat (*naikaku kanbo*) also plays an increasingly important, albeit mostly supportive and coordinating role in policy-making (Shinoda 2005). Among the protagonists are the CCS (*kanbochokan*)<sup>10</sup> and his deputies,<sup>11</sup> who serve as higher-level mechanisms of foreign policy coordination and decision-making, notably when the process is stifled by unresolved disputes and inter-ministerial "turf battles" (Ahn 1998:53). There are also the Cabinet Councilors' Office for External Affairs<sup>12</sup> (*naikaku gaisei shingishitsu*) and the Cabinet Security Affairs Office (*anzen hoshoshitsu*), established in 1986 to improve foreign and security policy coordination between the Cabinet and ministries (Drifte 1998:22; Hook et.al 2001:49). Apparently, the former plays a key role in

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<sup>8</sup> The Diet passed the Basic Law for the Reform of Central Government Ministries and Agencies in March 1998 that carried out the restructuring of ministries and agencies, and strengthening of executive powers of the prime minister and cabinet secretariat (Tanaka 2000:7). The law officially came into effect on January 1, 2001.

<sup>9</sup> PM Tanaka's leadership was instrumental in the rapid normalisation of Japan-China relations in September 1972, while both Nakasone and Takeshita have devoted years to building up "pro-China" support within the LDP, and establishing formal and informal networks with Chinese state-elites (Hook et.al 2001:54; Zhao 1993). Conversely, Koizumi was arguably a key factor to the deterioration of contemporary Sino-Japanese diplomacy (Lam 2005; McCormack 2005; Kaneko 2005).

<sup>10</sup> Tanaka sees the CCS as the most important figure in the PM's support staff, usually appointed from the same LDP faction as the presiding PM. Although assign with primarily domestic-oriented tasks, the likes of Gotoda Masaharu, Fukuda Yasuo and Abe Shinzo have been influential in foreign policy (2000:5; Lam 2005).

<sup>11</sup> There are three deputies, one for administrative affairs, and two others for political affairs. The latter two do not normally assume an important role in foreign affairs, but recent appointees have acted as general advisors of external affairs to the PM, i.e. Yosano Kaoru and Nukaga Fukushima in the Hashimoto Cabinet, Suzuki Muneo in the Obuchi administration (Tanaka 2000:5).

<sup>12</sup> The Cabinet Councilors' Office for External Affairs (CCOEA), usually headed by a senior MOFA official is "essentially a MOFA branch in the Cabinet" (Tanaka 2000:6). It functions as a coordination mechanism that manages foreign policy-related issues involving other ministries, a role similar to the regular inter-ministry mechanism for foreign policy coordination, invoked when "an issue transcends the jurisdiction of one single organisation" (Hagstrom 2003:86). Ahn, however, argues that the secondment of staff from other ministries encourages the replication of "existing forms of interministry competition and sectionalism...within the CCOEA" (1998:44).

China policy-making; the unit head, together with the MOFA, are responsible in furnishing the PM with information on China (Sasajima 2002:83). Moreover, officials previously appointed to that position were mostly from the so-called “China school” cohort, and usually former director-generals of the MOFA’s Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau (AOAB) (Sasajima 2002:83), giving their information and advice much credibility. However, ex-North American Bureau officials have seemingly taken over these offices during Koizumi’s premiership, which explains his Administration’s increasingly “pro-US” policy-direction, at the expense of Japanese-Chinese ties.<sup>13</sup>

*Bureaucracy.* The bureaucracy, comprising ministries (*sho*) and agencies (*cho*), is traditionally influential, and remains crucial in the formulation and implementation of contemporary Japanese foreign policy, despite its subordinate position to the Cabinet, and the LDP’s growing role in policy-making (Ahn 1997:379; Nester 1990:167; cf. Hagstrom 2003:85; Hughes 1999:162). The MOFA is the chief bureaucratic protagonist responsible for Japan’s foreign policy-making and diplomatic affairs, while other regular actors include the METI,<sup>14</sup> the Ministry of Finance (MOF), and the JDA/MOD. Among others that occasionally get involved over specific issues in China policy-making are the MOE/MEXT and the JCG.<sup>15</sup> Within the MOFA framework, the AOAB, and the China and Mongolia Division are central in the formulation of China policy. Both sections are traditionally headed, and/or dominated by “China school” bureaucrats that staunchly believe in “good-neighbourly friendship” (Sasajima 2003:83), and advocate policy of appeasement and low-posturing, when dealing with China (Takamine 2006:79). However, a younger generation of less-partisan, (or pro-US)<sup>16</sup> officials now forms the MOFA core, bringing an inevitable shift to its China policy-

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<sup>13</sup> This is an opinion shared by several interviewees. Also, for instance, former MOFA Director of North American Bureau, Okamoto Yukio, was promoted from his position at the CCO for External Affairs to being Koizumi’s top diplomatic aide in April 2003. See “Koizumi promotes Okamoto Yukio to top diplomatic aide,” *Japan Policy & Politics*, 21 April 2003.

<sup>14</sup> The METI was formerly Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) before the 2001 reform.

<sup>15</sup> The JCG, formerly the Japan Maritime Safety Agency (J-MSA) gets directly involved in the Senkaku/Diaoyudao dispute with China (Samuels 2007/8), while the MOE has been implicated in the textbook rows since 1982, notably for its alleged acquiescence to historical revisionism (Hook et.al 2001:48; Caroline Rose 1998; 2005).

<sup>16</sup> As opined by Murata Koji, Sasajima Masahiko, and a senior MOFA official (Anonymous interview C) in their respective interviews. Indeed, even the China Division is no longer headed by “China school” bureaucrats, i.e. Akiba Takeo is American-trained and served previously in the MOFA’s North American Affairs Bureau.

orientation that prioritises Japan's (pro-American) national interests (Sasajima 2002:83; Murata 2006:45). Furthermore, the MOFA's China policy-making influence has been gradually eroded by the ruling LDP since mid-1990s, following "structural-functional" adjustments that shifted the power balance in policy-making between the two actors, not mentioning the latter's enhanced foreign policy expertise (Takamine 2006:80).

Generally, the key bureaucratic-level personnel in China policy-making are the China Division director (*kacho*), and the AOAB's director-general (*Ajia kyokuchō*), both of whom can make decisions that "directly influence the course of policy" (Sasajima 2002:83; Hagstrom 2003:85). However, decisions over specific/major bilateral issues may require the deliberations of higher-ranking "political" actors, i.e. the MOFA vice-minister, and cabinet members, such as the CCS, FM, and ultimately the PM, during which policy-making assumes a more "top-down"-orientation (Tanaka 1991:194-96 cf. Hagstrom 2003:86; Sasajima 2002:83). This means that MOFA bureaucrats exercise more independent decision-making on routine and general affairs, but their influence becomes restricted, when critical bilateral issues/problems arise (Hagstrom 2003:86). Even so, policy decision-making at the highest level remains relatively dependent on information/advice deriving from the MOFA, or other ministries (Tanaka 1991:192 cf. Hagstrom 2003:86-87), underscoring the bureaucracy's fundamental role in the overall policy-making structure.

*Political Parties and Diet.* The LDP, as the largest and most dominant political party in postwar Japan, is a principal foreign policy actor, owing to its political control over the executive and legislature. Previous studies have asserted the influential role of LDP politicians in the policy-making process, in view of growing (foreign) policy expertise deriving from the Policy Affairs Research Council (PARC) and other intra-party committees (Takamine 2006:83; Hughes 1999:162), as well as the LDP's dominance in Japan's political system (cf. Hook et.al 2001:42). Despite a temporary lost of power between 1993-1995, the LDP has survived, rebounded, and restored its political clout through power-sharing and decisive electoral majorities in recent years. The LDP foreign policy-making initiative is,

engendered by formal and informal actors. The president,<sup>17</sup> secretary-general, and chairpersons of the PARC and Executive Council, respectively, constitute the former, whereas the latter comprises top-level *kuromaku* (i.e. former senior bureaucrats/politicians), *habatsu* (party factions),<sup>18</sup> *zoku* (policy tribes/caucuses with specialised interests in particular issue-areas), and *koenkai* (constituency-based/decentralised organisations) (Hagstrom 2003:86-87; Hiwatari 2005:35; Zhao 1993). These internal decision-making mechanisms are particularly influential, when the LDP commands comfortable majorities in both Houses of the Diet, notably on important foreign policy initiatives and management of controversial issues (Tanaka 2000:11).

The deliberations within the LDP have profound bearing on Japan's China policy.<sup>19</sup> There exists an intra-party division/polarisation of interests and attitude towards China, along the line of the so-called "pro-China" and "pro-Taiwan" groups (Zhao 1993:67; Hagstrom 2003:87). Membership within these contending groups derives from across political factions, and apparently does not coincide with factional politics, making *habatsu's* influence on China policy, or foreign policy in general, minimal/negligible (Tanaka 1991:200, 202; cf. Hagstrom 2003:87). Similarly, informal actors, i.e. *zoku* and *koenkai* tend to focus predominantly on domestic issues, hence their presumed limited interests in external affairs, especially before the 1990s (Takamine 2006:84). However, such presumptions are deceptive since Japanese-Chinese relations have been quintessentially shaped by domestic issues, suggesting an under-estimation of these informal actors' influence on China policy-making. In fact, certain factions (i.e. *keisei-kai*, *kochi-kai*) have exhibited profound influence in promoting good relations with China, although their clout is presently diminishing (Hook

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<sup>17</sup> The LDP president normally assumes the PM position, when the LDP serves as the dominant ruling party.

<sup>18</sup> Among the current LDP factions are *Seiwa Seisaku Kenkyukai* (*Seiwa-kai*), *Keisei Kenkyukai* (*Keisei-kai*), *Shisuikai*, *Kochikai*, *Kinmirai Seiji Kenkyukai*, *Taiyukai*, and a few smaller factions. The *Seiwa-kai* (ex-Fukuda/Mori and now, Machimura faction) is known to be more hawkish, rightwing and pro-US/Taiwan and anti-China. It has replaced the moderate and "pro-China" *Keisei-kai* (ex-Tanaka/Takeshita/Hashimoto and now, Tsushima faction) as the most powerful/influential LDP faction. See "Liberal Democratic Party", *Wikipedia* [[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liberal\\_Democratic\\_Party\\_\(Japan\)#Seiwa\\_Seisaku\\_Kenkyukai](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liberal_Democratic_Party_(Japan)#Seiwa_Seisaku_Kenkyukai)]. See also Park (2001).

<sup>19</sup> This observation is confirmed by a senior "pro-China" LDP politician, Kato Koichi, who contends that the LDP's influence in Japan's China policy-making is especially significant due to the special nature of the bilateral relationship (Kato interview/1).

et.al 2001:53-54; Lam 2002:5). Conversely, the “Fukuda-Mori”(seiwakai) faction that Koizumi belongs, and headed before his premiership appointment, has been traditionally sympathetic to Taiwan. Its political ascendancy is not unrelated to the decline in Japanese-Chinese ties, thus challenging suggestions regarding *habatsu's* negligible influence. Also, the rise of *gaiko-zoku* (diplomatic tribe/caucuses), whose membership includes MOFA's ex-ministers/vice-ministers deeply knowledgeable on Japanese-Chinese relations underscores its prominence in China policy-making (Takamine 2006:84).<sup>20</sup> It is nonetheless, commonly agreed that *kuromaku's* “behind-the-scenes” role has been traditionally vital, especially in mediating and seeking diplomatic resolutions via informal/personal channels during crisis period (Sasajima 2002:84; Zhao 1993). Taken together, these LDP policy-making actors/apparatus can profoundly influence the China policy-direction, especially considering the bi-partisan split, and overall hardening of attitude towards China. Since mid-1990s, “anti-China” LDP hardliners have often criticised the government and MOFA's “soft” policy towards China, and successfully pressured Tokyo for more assertive management of their bilateral affairs (Sasajima 2002:85; Murata 2006).

The foreign policy-making influence of other political parties has been noted, especially in exerting domestic political pressure, and *gaiatsu* on the government, via unofficial and personal diplomatic channels to improve relations with specific countries. Relations with China have traditionally received significant attention from Japanese political parties, where the likes of the JSP/SDPJ, JCP, and notably Komeito (presently called Shin-Komeito), played key roles in Japanese-Chinese normalisation (Zhao 1993:19-40; Hughes 1999:163; Hook et.al 2001:166). Although the transformation of Japan's political landscape in the 1990s has weakened their political convictions and influence, not mentioning, their acquiescence to the general drift to the right, these parties, together with the DPJ remain important mitigators in contemporary Japanese-Chinese relations. That said, bi-partisan

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<sup>20</sup> According to Takamine (2006), the LDP foreign policy expertise has been enhanced by LDP Diet-members who previously served as foreign minister/vice-ministers. Specifically, ex-Upper House and *gaiko-zoku* member, Takemi Keizo, was arguably amongst the most influential LDP politician during the Koizumi era in the area of China policy-making, due to his vast knowledge on China and Taiwan, and strong influence/personal connection with MOFA bureaucrats (Takamine 2006:84). Other influential *gaiko-zoku* members include Kono Taro, Shiozaki Yasuhisa, Eto Seishiro, Aso Taro and Abe Shinzo (cf. Takamine 2006:85).

treatment of China also exists within the opposition, specifically amongst the DPJ members, and indeed, across the Diet. At the Diet-level, the Japan-China Parliamentarians' Friendship League,<sup>21</sup> whose members span across party divides, advocates for amicable Japanese-Chinese ties, while “pro-Taiwan” organisations established by both LDP and DPJ members serve to sway Diet influence on China policy (Sasajima 2002:86). Although the Diet's foreign policy-making role is generally passive considering Japan's parliamentary system, where the PM, theoretically, has majority support (Tanaka 2000:11), ongoing power shifts have risen its profile, notably in directing policy towards major powers/issues, including China policy (Cooney 2007:95, 181-183).

*Business Organisations.* The *zaikai* comprises the *Keidanren* (Federation of Economic Organisations), *Nissho* (Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry), and *Keizai Doyukai* (Council for Economic Development).<sup>22</sup> Amongst the most influential of non-governmental entities, *zaikai* is renowned for its informal foreign policy-making role, and even conducts its own diplomacy (Calder 1997:2, 17; cf. Hagstrom 2003:88). Lobbying is essentially its *modus operandi* to affect the Japanese state's foreign policy direction, although they also commonly utilise informal channels of communication to promote relations with foreign states. According to Tanaka, the *Keidanren*, especially, has long been influential due to its “close formal and informal relations with political leaders” (2000:14) and its function as “a conduit for the distribution of funds to political parties” (2000:13). Similarly, *Doyukai* has become vocal on foreign policy issues under the stewardship of Ushio Jiro (1995-99) and Kobayashi Yotaro (1999-) (Tanaka 2000:14). In the era of economic interdependence, they assume an important role in mediating Tokyo's foreign policy, and mitigating relations with countries like China to protect Japanese business interests. Chapter 3 has described the *zaikai*'s historically crucial roles in advancing Japanese-Chinese relations (Hughes 1999:181).

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<sup>21</sup> The league is one of the seven “Japan-China friendship” organisations, which include the Japan-China Friendship Association, the Japan-China Society, and the Japan-China Friendship Centre, Japanese Council for the Promotion of International Trade, Japan-China Cultural Exchange Association, Japan-China Association on Economy and Trade (Sasajima 2002:86 Xinhua Online 30/03/2006).

<sup>22</sup> The *zaikai* previously included the *Nikkeiren* (Japan Federation of Employees' Association), which officially merged with *Keidanren* in May 2002, and is now a part of the “new” *Keidanren* (Japanese) or Japan Business Federation (English) (Hagstrom 2003:87; see also Hook et.al. 2001:55).

Recently, it has been noted for pressuring against prime ministerial Yasukuni visits, and helping sustain the informal channels of economic diplomacy with China against the decline in political relations.

Other actors. There are other actors in the domestic context that influence policy-making, albeit mostly indirectly, through “agenda-setting and/or participation in various formal and informal settings” (Hagstrom 2003:88). They include, among others, the mass media, academic community and think-tanks, sub-national governments (SNGs), pressure groups, and public opinion (see Hook et.al. 2001:61-65).

The mass media significantly influences the domestic discourse on, and the agenda of Japanese foreign policy, due to the avid consumption of newspapers and other media products by the domestic society (Pharr and Krauss 1996 cf. Hook et.al 2001:61; Johnston 2007:113; Sasajima interview). However, its influence on the policy-making process is limited by the exclusive and heavily regulated *kisha* system (press club), which challenges the impartiality of the news information provided (Takahara 30/01/2007; Shimoyachi 2007).<sup>23</sup> In general, the major national newspapers are politically opinionated and lopsided to a degree, with the *Yomiuri*, *Sankei*, and *Nikkei* holding the pro-establishment, conservative and nationalistic line, while the *Asahi* and *Mainichi* tend to align with discourse from the opposite of the political divide (Tanaka 2000:14). With regard to media opinion towards China, the latter two are generally more sympathetic, and pro-China, while the former group, especially *Sankei*, has been “poisoning the atmosphere” with its vocal criticisms of the Chinese and Tokyo’s generally conciliatory policy towards Beijing (Johnston 2007).<sup>24</sup>

Additionally, government/non-government think-tanks and the intellectual/academic community also affect foreign policy-making, notably through the furnishing of information and expertise, as well as in generating debates on general and specific issue-areas. Prominent scholars sitting on the government’s special advisory committees are especially,

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<sup>23</sup> Press members normally obtain heavily regulated news information via attachment to a particular government agency/political party, thus potentially undermining the impartiality of the news (Hook et.al 2001:61).

<sup>24</sup> The media’s role in “poisoning the atmosphere” of contemporary Japanese-Chinese ties was also noted in my interviews with Tamamoto Masaru, Gilbert Rozman, Shimoyachi Nao, Takahara Akio and Takahata Akio.

well positioned to exert influence through policy briefings and advice to policy-makers (Hook et.al 2001:62). For instance, the joint research efforts of Japanese intellectuals within the New Japan-China Friendship Committee for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century play a crucial role in seeking a reconciliation of their bilateral history (Kokubun interview/2). Meanwhile, SNGs are considered emerging foreign policy actors, through their external relations and activities with counterparts abroad (Jain 2000; 2006). In the realm of Japanese-Chinese ties, Japanese SNGs are actively promoting economic cooperation zones, sister-city programmes, and other cultural exchanges with their Chinese counterparts, which are beneficial to improving overall bilateral relations.<sup>25</sup> Conversely, their actions/remarks can challenge the national government's diplomatic position and undermine ties, i.e. strident criticisms and "anti-China" remarks by the Tokyo governor, Ishihara Shintaro, have intermittently dented bilateral goodwill (Jain 2000:26).<sup>26</sup>

Pressure groups, or non-profit organisations (NPO), are another credible civil society channel to exert political pressure on the government's foreign policy position, especially on specific issue-areas that overlap with domestic interests (Hook et.al 2001:64). Among the issue-areas that draw their interests include agriculture, fisheries, and the environment, to the more contentious issues of anti-militarism, constitutional revision, and nationalist education reforms. Their *modus operandi* and ability to affect the policy-making process can be best summarised by Hook et.al, who opine that:

Whatever the case, these actors will try to influence the policy-making process through a wide range of tactics, such as financial contributions to political parties, personal contacts, appeals in the media and grassroots education, although their success...is dependent on the timescale and nature of the issue addressed (2001:64).

In China policy-making, some pressure groups are relatively capable of exerting political pressure on a range of domestic issues that remain as barriers to genuine improvement in Japanese-Chinese ties. From Yasukuni to textbook rows, "nationalist" groups like *Izokukai*,

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<sup>25</sup> Accounts of SNG's "bridge-building" role in Japanese-Chinese ties can be found in Hook's article on Kyushu's role in forging the so-called pan-Yellow Sea Zone with Dalian, and SNGs from the two Koreas, and Jain's works on Japan-China cooperation at the sub-national level (see Hook 2006; Jain 2006).

<sup>26</sup> Apparently, under Ishihara, the Tokyo Metropolitan government has substantially scaled down activities of its sister-city relations with Beijing (Jain 2006:129).

*Tsukurukai*, and *Nippon Kaigi* have relentlessly pursued the rewriting of a “positive” national history, venerating the war dead, and rebuilding a “normal” Japan (McCormack 2000). Similarly, *Nihon Seishinsha* has actively exerted Japan’s claims over Senkaku/Diaoyudao that periodically triggered diplomatic rows with China. The occasionally uncompromising stance exhibited by recent Japanese administrations on these issue-areas, imply the salient, albeit indirect influence of such pressure groups on the policy-making apparatus.

Lastly, public opinion on foreign policy issues is, regularly gauged via surveys conducted by government agencies and mass media, i.e. the PMO’s related annual polls. Public opinion reflects the interests of the Japanese people, which the democratic government of Japan is accountable for, and required to take into consideration in policy-making. Indeed, public opinion has been significant in shaping what Miyashita calls the “core values” or “opinion moods” that define the “parameters” within which postwar Japanese policy-makers have operated, such as Japan’s pacifist, anti-militarist norm in international and security affairs (2002:155). However, its influence is essentially indirect, and restricted to establishing “the general background against which policy-making agents reach decisions on [foreign policy issues]” (Hook et.al 2001:65). Previously described, the shift in Japanese public opinion of China has concurred with shifts in Japan’s China policy and the overall mood of their bilateral relations, reflecting its “ambiance-setting” role in China policy-making.

### 5.2.2. Nationalism and foreign policy-making in Japan

The above description identifies areas where nationalism can intersect and influence Japanese policy-making. For a start, nationalism can influence top-level decision-making through the cohort of state-elites, namely the cabinet headed by the PM. Since they act as the final arbiter of policy decision-making, the personality and political dispositions/affiliations, and perceptions of these key elites, especially the PM, tend to shape their policy-preferences, and influence their decisions. Previously mentioned, generational change has seen the arrival of more nationalistic-oriented Japanese leaders, who are eager and prepared to pursue both domestic and external policies that further Japan’s national interests, even at the cost of aggravating traditionally sensitive bilateral relations. Post-Cold

War Japanese premiers, i.e. Hashimoto, Obuchi, Koizumi and, especially Abe, have exhibited nationalist dispositions, and their alleged political affiliations with nationalist groups within and outside the government, not mentioning the LDP's conservative slant underscore nationalism's potential salience in affecting decision-making at the apex of Japanese foreign policy apparatus (Shibuichi 2005:200-1). Concomitantly, nationalism's influence pervades the LDP-dominated Cabinet of the respective administrations, whose membership would have derived from related factions, and/or had a convergence of ideological/political outlook and interests with the presiding premier.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, with the LDP's policy-making clout, nationalism can exert its influence through *habatsu*, *zoku*, and increasingly, the new group of non-faction legislators dubbed the "Koizumi Children" that has emerged dominant in the LDP following the 2005 election (Hiwatari 2005:34). Notwithstanding their personal political preferences, nationalism's salience in top-level policy-making is also determined by the domestic political resolve of these principal elites vis-à-vis nationalist and moderate forces in domestic politics, where increased dependence/vulnerability on either side for political power/survival could plausibly lead to lopsided decision-making (Anonymous interview D).<sup>28</sup>

At the bureaucratic-level, nationalism can in similar ways, affect policy-making, via power-wielding individuals and related institutional interests. At the MOFA, the new generation of bureaucrats is expectedly more confident in their external outlook, and in advancing Japanese national interests in the international arena. Although MOFA's policy-direction/approach has been traditionally moderate rather than nationalistic, its assertive diplomatic posturing in recent times suggests nationalism's gradual redefinition of its policy-making structure and process. Institutionally, the MOFA's operational behaviour is essentially pragmatic and "rational-utility"-oriented, when managing Japan's diplomacy. However, its jurisdiction tends to be affected by the political affiliation/disposition of the

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<sup>27</sup> Aforementioned, observers deemed the Koizumi administration as amongst the most hawkish and nationalistic in postwar Japan, with many cabinet members such as CCS Abe Shinzo, FM Aso Taro, Defence chief Nukaga Fukuhiro, and METI ministers, Hiranuma Takeo and Nakagawa Shoichi., among others, identified as nationalist-inclined, or sympathetic towards domestic nationalist movements, due to their common political stance, and/or familial background.

<sup>28</sup> With these forces at work, and even more significantly, the related public sentiment, a former Senior Vice-Minister went as far to assert that efforts by Japanese politicians that run counter to the prevailing public opinion, i.e. defending China's position, would be "some sort of a political suicide" (Anonymous interview D).

presiding FM, not mentioning decision-making at the higher-level, as demonstrated by the overarching PMO, which may ultimately determine its diplomatic options.

Likewise, the JDA/MOD, JCG, METI, and MOE/MEXT, among others, may share a more nationalistic outlook owing to similar impetus, as well as their respective institutional interests, the former two on national security, while the latter two on national economic interests and patriotic society-building through education, respectively. Despite their domestic-oriented interests, these institutions have occasionally found themselves entangled in foreign policy-making due to the “internationalisation” of related issues, and thus, were required to advance their interests within the policy-making framework. Understandably, it would be in the interests of the JDA/MOD and MOE/MEXT to support neo-nationalist goals, i.e. constitutional revision of the Article IX, and the promotion of revisionist history/patriotic education, respectively, two domestic issues that constantly impinge on Japan’s foreign policy towards neighbour-states, generally, and China, specifically. Moreover, in the JDA/MOD’s case, strong nationalist pressure in foreign policy-making would expectedly transpire through its institutional interests in defending Japanese sovereignty and territorial integrity, besides competing for policy-making influence on security matters vis-à-vis MOFA, and justifying for a larger budgetary allocation.

Domestic nationalist pressure can equally affect foreign policy-making, via non-state actors described earlier. The key protagonists are the nationalist-oriented mass media, pressure groups, intellectuals, and public opinion. The intimate ties between nationalist-rightwing groups and the ruling LDP, where their “patron-client” relationship serves to secure political support/votes for the latter, and where group-party membership tends to overlap, underscore their capacity in affecting the LDP-state’s external policy related to domestic nationalist concerns (Shibuichi 2005:200-1). Meanwhile, media agencies/sources mentioned in Chapter 4 are convenient “mouthpieces” and advocates of neo-nationalist goals that, together with “revisionist” intellectual support, can set the nationalist discourse and agenda in Japan’s international relations (Hook et.al 2001; Kato interview/1). Similarly, nationalism’s influence have been exerted through the activities and *modus operandi* of aforementioned

pressure groups, while the general drift in public opinion towards the right is another avenue, which increasingly has to be accounted for in Japanese policy-making. In fact, both the media and public opinion have gained extended policy-making influence under recent Japanese administrations, as contemporary leaders, especially Koizumi, and Abe, to a lesser extent, are widely perceived to be “populist” and “image-dependent”, making them responsive to media and public pressure (Iida 2003).

### 5.2.3. Other variables in foreign policy-making

The above section infers the plausible agency connecting nationalism and foreign policy-making. However, nationalism is just one of the several key variables influencing Japan’s policy-making, particularly its China policy. In Chapter 3, it is argued that contemporary Japanese-Chinese relations have been consistently defined by a combination of interrelated, external-domestic determinants. Besides factoring into the key policy-makers’ calculation, these variables are also areas that intercede with the interests of other mentioned actors, who can exert their moderating influence vis-à-vis domestic nationalist forces in foreign policy-making. For instance, the significance of interdependence to Japan’s economic agenda means that Japanese policy-makers are inclined to demonstrate pragmatism and restraint in managing their difficult relationship with China, to safeguard their economic ties. To this end, domestic pressures from *zaikai* could constrain Japan’s China policy. Moreover, the purported “politics-business linkage” also possibly influences state-elites’ decision-making, pertaining to advancing their vested interests in the bilateral relationship. Meanwhile, “moderate” forces participating in domestic political competition, i.e. opposition parties, and pacifist pressure groups, like *Heiwa izokukai zenkoku renrakukai* (National Organisation of Pacifist Bereaved Families) etc., and leftwing media, i.e. *Asahi Shimbun*, *Shukan Kinyobi*, and *Sekai*, may curtail nationalistic tendencies within the foreign policy decision-making circle (Shibuichi 2005:203-204). Externally, powerful levers like the US and the US-Japan alliance, can pressure Japan (and China) into adopting moderate policy-options, although US policies can equally exacerbate nationalist impulses. Simply put,

nationalism's policy-making salience is mediated by, and dependent, to an extent, on its interactions with other determinants.

Hence, the extent to which nationalism becomes dominant in Japan's China policy-making generally boils down to conditions related to state-elites' domestic political resolve vis-à-vis nationalist and moderate forces, and Japan's relative power position vis-à-vis China, as perceived/calculated at a particular time context. Subscribing to this thesis' NCR framework, domestic nationalist pressure may likely influence Japan's China policy-making, under conditions of relatively favourable/ambiguous structural/external pressure, and suppressed, when Japanese state-elites perceive the external condition to be unfavourable. Particularly, nationalist-assertive policy-options could prevail, when Japan enjoys favourable "allied resolve/commitment" (US support) and diplomatic leverage vis-à-vis China. Conversely, a Japanese state suffering from perceptively unfavourable relative power position (i.e. alliance commitment and diplomatic leverage) may opt for a moderate-conciliatory/non-action policy-option, when managing nationalist-flavoured bilateral disputes. By the same token, nationalism may manifest under the condition, where state-elites, weak in domestic political resolve and susceptible to nationalist pressure, find it necessary to adopt nationalist-assertive policy-options to enhance political survival/standing. Then again, nationalism would be less significant, when state-elites enjoy favourable domestic political resolve, which allows them to risk moderate-conciliatory policies without fearing the brunt of domestic nationalist backlashes.<sup>29</sup> In sum, although not discounting the potential irrationality of nationalist passion, these assumptions are based on; i) "rationality" of Japanese state-elites' perception of the external-domestic nexus, at a specific time context, and ii) Schweller's aforesaid NCR notion that states respond (or not) to constraints/opportunities in ways determined by state-elites' consideration of this nexus, against the backdrop of a dynamic, competitive, and decentralised political process (2004:164; Gideon Rose 1998).

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<sup>29</sup> Aforesaid in Chapter 2, these NCR assumptions, though sharing similarities with Bong's (2002) "two-level-game"-oriented hypotheses, or other mid-range theories of FP, do differ in terms of i) its espousal of the primacy of external factors; ii) nationalism's "intervening" role on state-elites' intersubjective perception of the external-domestic conditions; iii) assumption regarding the potential irrationality of state behaviour; iv) the ontological positioning of the "external" as environment-based rather than process-based variables; and iv) conceptualisation of analytical framework. See Bong (2002:18-23).

### **5.3. Balancing between Nationalist and Pragmatic Goals in Contemporary Japanese-Chinese Diplomacy**

The analysis of Japanese policy-making highlights the linkage between domestic nationalist pressure and foreign policy behaviour, emphasising nationalism's interaction with other external and domestic imperatives in the decision-making process, which the policy-making protagonists have to consider, when managing Japan's problematic relations with China. Particularly, their political dispositions/affiliations and outlook towards nationalist and pragmatic foreign policy-goals, their domestic political resolve vis-à-vis nationalist/moderate elements, and dependence on nationalism as a power instrument, not mentioning, the "alliance" factor, and Japan's diplomatic position vis-à-vis China, all serve to formulate, to various degrees, their policy-options. This begs a further answer as to whether rising nationalism necessarily leads to a distinctively nationalistic China policy and its consequential impact on current Japanese-Chinese affairs.

The following overview of the manner Japan has thus far, managed "history" and security-related issues, generates a somewhat different impression from that of the conventional wisdom regarding nationalism's efficacy in post-Cold War Japanese-Chinese diplomacy. Nationalism has certainly prevailed in sensitising and engendering the diplomatic ambiance that made the resolution of these issues difficult. It has also prevailed under less deterministic conditions and mainly on symbolic issues, to satisfy domestic passion and safeguard state-elites' political incumbency and parochial interests. Yet, pragmatic considerations for their deepening economic interdependence, the mitigating roles of moderate elements in both government and private spheres, and external pressures from Washington, have appeared to carry equal, if not more weight in determining Japan's actual foreign policy-options. This impression concurs with the thesis' central arguments, which state that nationalism's salience in affecting foreign policy-choices, i.e. choosing between assertive-nationalistic or moderate-conciliatory policy-options, is dependent on state-elites' perception/calculation of its interaction with other "power" variables that concurrently affect foreign policy-making, during a given time/situational context. It also depends on their ability to balance, or trade-off between achieving nationalist and pragmatic goals (Bong 2002).

### 5.3.1. Nationalism and the “history” problem

“History” has become the major irritant in recent Japanese-Chinese relations, against the backdrop of rejuvenated nationalism<sup>30</sup> and “elite historical mythmaking” (He 2006:69). According to Gong (2001b/c), the “selective remembering and forgetting” of the war history has as much, reinforced nationalism, as the conscious efforts to foster nationalist sentiment have made “history” an intractable bilateral impasse. Undoubtedly, Japan’s flourishing neo-nationalist movement for history revisionism has contributed to magnifying differences, and intensifying the “history” row since the mid-1990s. Notable disputes over “war apology” and sequels of the history textbook and Yasukuni debacles, as well as a series of unresolved war legacies, were, related to, and partly perpetuated by neo-nationalism’s influence on Japanese changing attitude towards history, and their relations with China. This has resulted in Beijing frequently reprimanding Tokyo for allegedly acquiescing to the revisionist agenda, and chastising neo-nationalists, especially those of neo-autonomist and neo-conservative leanings (Samuels 2007a), for their reluctance in accepting the war judgment<sup>31</sup> and downplaying of Japan’s military role in China and Asia (Okabe 2001:57; Ogawa 2000).

The fundamental problem concerning history is that both countries appear to promote contending interpretations of what happened in the past. Underlying this conundrum in contemporary Japan has been the popularisation and gradual mainstreaming of the (neo-) nationalist war history discourse that exacerbates “the unresolved problems of historical responsibility” (Morris-Suzuki 2006 cf Samuels 2007a:130). According to Samuels, neo-autonomists and, to an extent, normal-nationalists, have demonstrated disdain towards the so-called “victor justice” handed by the Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal (He 2006:77), which underscores their contestation of the conventional wisdom regarding Japan’s war responsibilities found in the “victor narrative” (2007a:139, 144-146) subscribed by the Chinese, and their resultant agenda for history revisionism. Neo-nationalists/revisionists generally share the view that Japan was fighting a war of liberation, on behalf of the

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<sup>30</sup> Miller sees the “clash of rival nationalisms” as the “principal driver of the history quarrel” (2002:1).

<sup>31</sup> For a description of Japanese neo-autonomist and neo-conservative elites, and their views of history, see Samuels (2007a). For an account of Japanese-Chinese’s divergent views, see Austin and Harris (2001:47-66).

colonised Asian nations, to free them from the yoke of Western imperialism (Gluck 1993:84). They also contend that the “Pacific War”<sup>32</sup> was, essentially a war in which the Japanese were compelled to fight for national interests and survival, against ominous US/Western encroachment in the Asia-Pacific, where Japan was inasmuch a victim, as America were the perpetrator (Hasegawa 1985). Henceforth, many are neither prepared to internalise, nor acknowledge Japan’s war guilt, which explains their opposition against apologising to countries like China (Austin and Harris 2001:52), and sentimentalism towards what their Asian/Chinese neighbour deemed as “whitewashing”, or “glorification” of Japan’s war past. Although previously marginalised, this “revisionist” view has regained currency under neo-nationalism’s auspices, and the political empowerment of mainstream neo-conservative elites, which therein, underlies the perpetuation of the Japanese-Chinese history quarrel.

Another related problem is their conflicting interests in, and treatment of the war history. Austin and Harris construe that China for various reasons, prefers to remember, and in doing so, obtain an apology and/or other concessions from Japan. Conversely, the Japanese, for reasons of national pride and identity, yearn for closure, and look to the present and future (2001:61). Also, Japanese “cultural tradition/norms” are cited as reasons,<sup>33</sup> although the neo-nationalist agenda for a prideful national history appears to be the driving force behind the “selective amnesia” and revisionist treatment of Japan’s war history (Rose 2005; Samuels 2007a). Furthermore, the current generation of Japanese tends to view the (re)interpretation of history from one’s national perspective as normal, and in accordance to Japan’s national interests and sovereign rights (Miller 2002:3). Indeed, “revisionist” neo-nationalism has partly made them feel less responsible for, or reflective of their country’s past conduct, besides detachment from, and what Drifte opines as their “astonishing degree of insensitivity and ignorance about the [increasingly distant] past” (2003:16). Expectedly, such developments have led to Chinese accusations of Japan’s enduring reluctance to face history squarely, and insincerity in acknowledging historical

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<sup>32</sup> It was also known by Japanese as the Fifteen Year War, Greater East Asia War, and recently the Showa War as renamed by the *Yomiuri Shimbun* (Hosaka 2006; cf. Samuels 2007a:130).

<sup>33</sup> See Chapter 2 for the discussion on Japanese cultural traditions/norms in treatment of history.

responsibility, not mentioning failure to atone for past atrocities in China. Conversely, the Japanese perceive China's obsession with history as amounting to self-indulgence, and a self-serving act to unsettle them (van Kemenade 2006:42; Sasaki 2001). Moreover, Japan's leaders are acutely aware of, and no longer willing to play to China's "history card", although they themselves manipulate it for domestic expediency (Soerensen 2006:114).

Additionally, major nationalist-rightwing pressure groups have wielded indirect influence over LDP politicians/policy-makers, through a complex nexus of politico-business funding and networking that helps keep such nationalist agendas alive. Others resort to activities, ranging from booming martial anthems/nationalist rhetoric on *gaisensha* (sound van/trucks) around Tokyo, to more extreme measures like political intimidation and violence, which are the *uyoku's* quintessential *modus operandi* (McNeill 2001; Prideaux 22/10/2006). Although ultra-nationalism remains unappealing to many Japanese, McNeill finds extremist political violence in Japan carrying distinctive features, owing to its high ratio that ranges from general intimidations, to attempted "high-profile assassinations of political figures",<sup>34</sup> besides the alleged connections of these *uyoku* groups with the "underworld" (*yakuza*), and power brokers (2001). He even suggested that "the relationship between the *yakuza-uyoku*, the neo-nationalists, and established political figures is a complex matrix of financial, political, and personal ties, with conflicting and contradictory elements" (2001), while Stronach (1995:101) identifies this "special relationship" as the "Black Nexus". Such activities and linkages, together with an obliging media sympathetic to the neo-nationalist causes, undoubtedly contribute to the persistency of historical revisionism, and the enduring reluctance of some quarters in Japan to reconcile with the conventional interpretation of the war history, let alone accepting China's "moral judgement" (Austin and Harris 2001:65).

The "war apology" issue offers a sterling example of nationalism's propensity in undermining Japanese-Chinese historical reconciliation.<sup>35</sup> When diplomatic relations

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<sup>34</sup> Recent examples include the Molotov cocktail attack on the residence of *Doyukai's* head, Kobayashi Yotaro, and the arson attack on "pro-China" LDP politician, Kato Koichi's house by *uyokus*, following their respective criticisms of Koizumi's Yasukuni visits (McCormack 2007:24; AS 19/08/2006 cf. van Kemenade 2006:39).

<sup>35</sup> For an insightful discussion on Japan's reluctance to apologise for the war, see Benfell (2002).

resumed in 1972, the “Tanaka-Zhou” joint communiqué noted a statement from Japan expressing responsibility and remorse for its role in the Japanese-Chinese war (Kawashima 2005:17). Since then, the Japanese government has periodically conveyed numerous expressions of “apology” to promote reconciliation, but apparently to no avail, as the Chinese continued demanding for a more “sincere apology”, which in their opinion, has yet to be offered by Japan (Shambaugh 1996b:91). However, the arrival of nationalistically motivated Japanese leaders have made it difficult for Beijing to keep drawing the “history card” as levers over bilateral negotiations, let alone, demanding for more apologies. Contemporary Japanese political elites are decreasingly prepared to subscribe to the conventional wisdom of Japan’s war responsibilities, as they are psychologically, feeling less burdened by the need to apologise. For instance, Abe Shinzo and other Koizumi allies staged a walk-out from the Diet chamber in 1995, in protest against the issuance of what critics deemed as a “diluted” apology to Japan’s neighbours, in conjunction with the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of WWII<sup>36</sup> (Samuels 2007a:145). Interestingly, these neo-conservative elites have gone on to dominate the apex of Japanese policy-making, which explains the salience of nationalism and history in recent Japan-China diplomacy. Apart from the power-wielders, politicians championing the “just war” perspective and firmly opposing “apology diplomacy” derive from the Diet-groups mentioned previously.<sup>37</sup>

Other related reasons for the reluctance to apologise to China include the view that Japan’s policy-behaviour resembles that of other imperialist powers of that era,<sup>38</sup> and that the atrocities committed were “collateral damage” of a protracted campaign in China (Austin and Harris 2001:53), which were obscured in postwar Japan’s narrative of the Pacific War (Satoh 2006a:7-8). Likewise, the Japanese have reasons to believe that “history” is often,

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<sup>36</sup> PM Muruyama’s intention to obtain a Diet resolution of a “clearly-worded” formal war apology was not only staunchly opposed by half of his coalition cabinet (Austin and Harris 2001:51), but also five million Japanese and a quarter of Diet-members who petitioned against the resolution (Yang 2002:18). Although he made the apology personally on August 15, 1995, he failed to persuade the Diet to adopt it as a resolution. Instead, a “watered down” version was motioned (Austin and Harris 2001:51; Miller 2002: 3; Dower 1996).

<sup>37</sup> According to Benfell, the persistency of the ‘revisionist’ view is due to “a specific set” of post-1945 institutions, i.e. a redefined emperor system, Tokyo war tribunal, cultural institutions of commemorating the war dead, and history education, all of which have kept the alternative discourse alive (Benfell 2002).

<sup>38</sup> Japanese neo-nationalists claim that Japan was merely imitating the imperialist policies of great powers of Europe in Africa and Asia (Austin and Harris 2001:53; Miller 2002:3).

manipulated for political purposes (He 2006; Nakanishi 2005). For instance, both Japanese and Chinese see each other fiddling with the China war casualty statistics, particularly and most contentiously in the Nanjing Massacre, where the overwhelming variances in their reported figures have hindered any realistic judgement of the issue (Austin and Harris 2001:54; McNeill 06/12/2007).<sup>39</sup> Although an anticipated norm in such politicised issues, nationalism has more often than not transformed such distortions into national myths (He 2006) that subverted reconciliation. Expectedly, the commonly held view that “history” is simply an instrument the Chinese government uses to exert pressure on Japan, has not only made Japanese decreasingly sympathetic, and unsupportive of any concessions to their neighbour (Austin and Harris 2001:55),<sup>40</sup> but also induces a nationalist backlash regarding the apology issue, and generally, the war history (Miller 2002:8).

Neo-nationalism’s influence on the shifting Japanese discourse on history is likewise, responsible for the outbreak of other history issues, and related rhetorical *faux pas* by political-elites that marred contemporary Japanese-Chinese diplomacy. Among the controversies, include history textbooks revision that allegedly “sanitised” Imperial Japan’s wartime actions. The first such allegation triggered the 1982 textbook row mentioned in Chapter 3. The following incident in 1986, saw the high-school Japanese history textbook, *Shinpen Nihonshi*, edited by the rightwing group *Nihon o Mamoru Kokumin Kaigi* (National Conference for Defending Japan) passing the MOE textbook screening to become the first such publication in postwar Japan (Nozaki 2001:178; Rose 2005:56). The controversy re-emerged in April 2001, when China accused *Tsukurukai’s Atarashii rekishi kyokasho* (New History Textbook) of portraying Japanese imperialism as a liberating force in Asia (Rose 2006:138). Especially, the original draft’s attempt to downscale the Nanjing Massacre by defining it as an “Incident” not amounting to a holocaust, infuriated the Chinese (BBC 03/04/2001). Although the MOE/MEXT-approved version referred to the “Massacre”, the textbook’s content doubted its reality, and the validity of the Tokyo Tribunal’s verdict (Yang

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<sup>39</sup> For a recent except of the “Nanjing Massacre” debate, see McNeill (06/12/2007).

<sup>40</sup> There are, however, analysts who consider Japan giving a formal apology as the better option, since it would close the issue indefinitely by negating accusations of insincerity on Japan’s part, and making it more irrelevant for China to persist with such accusations in the future (Mochizuki 07/12/1998; cf. Austin and Harris 2001:55).

2001:182). Beijing responded belatedly by seeking specific changes to the textbook (BBC 10/07/2001). The Koizumi administration, however, refused to bow to Chinese (and Korean) pressure, prompting the Chinese MFA to express “regrets and strong outrage”, and denounce Tokyo’s position as “unacceptable” (BBC 10/07/2001). In 2005, the MOE/MEXT’s passing of a revised edition of *Tsukurukai’s* textbook reignited the controversy.<sup>41</sup>

Undoubtedly, the textbook issue occurred against the backdrop of rising nationalism in Japan. The first two incidents were unmistakably an outgrowth of the undercurrents of confident-economic nationalism during the 1980s. Meanwhile, *Tsukurukai’s* textbook reflects the contemporary neo-nationalist revisionist agenda, which has manifested in a variety of other media, including films, *mangas*, and magazines.<sup>42</sup> Not surprisingly, its publication triggered Chinese outrage. Although China probably used it to manipulate Japanese politics and foreign policy, its criticism of Japan’s attitude towards history has also much, if not more, to do with nationalistic impulses in Chinese domestic politics (Miller 2002:8).

Further dampening relations are the prime ministerial visits to Yasukuni, which will be case-studied in the following chapter, the bio-chemical warfare research of the Unit 731 and abandoned weapons of the Imperial Japanese Army, “comfort women”, and the Nanjing Massacre. Likewise, one-off incidents related to the war legacy include the alleged Zhuhai sex-orgy involving Japanese tourists, and the insulting play by Japanese exchange students in Xian. It is not this chapter’s intention to discuss each of these incidents/issues, but rather to extrapolate the complexity and sensitivity of history in Japanese-Chinese relations, and the reality of nationalism fuelling such incidents into diplomatic impasses. Indeed, “history” may continue to subvert a genuine reconciliation between the two states and societies, despite mutual efforts to subordinate war memories for more wide-ranging goals of “peaceful cooperation” (Austin and Harris 2001:64). With nationalism gaining currency, it is equally hard to see mutual public opinion reconciling over history. Rather more obviously, it reveals

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<sup>41</sup> Its passing of the screening process together with other “revisionist” books plausibly indicated MOE/MEXT tacit acquiescence, and political support from the Diet, notably the Diet-members League for the Passing on of a Correct History, led by the likes of Nakagawa Shoichi and Abe Shinzo (McCormack 2000:250, Mori 2007).

<sup>42</sup> See Sasada (2006) for examples of mass media channels promoting the revisionist history agenda.

the Japanese (and Chinese) government's "vulnerability to nationalist pressures of any attempt at a comprehensive settlement of the history quarrel" (Miller 2002:8).

The perpetuation of "history" disputes in post-Cold War Japanese-Chinese diplomacy reflects the NCR assumption regarding domestic variables gaining salience in foreign policy-making, especially under low-pressure/ambiguous international conditions/structural pressures. The Cold War's demise induced such an environment, which permitted domestic political calculus to feature more prominently in Japan's (and China's) external decision-making, and hence, the constant resurrection of, and nationalism's exacerbating role in the history quarrel.<sup>43</sup> Also, internal pressures, namely the need to foster nationalism for domestic objectives, and the parochial motivations of nationalistic elites and/or institutions appear to have greater leverage in shaping Japanese external behaviour. Since Japanese-Chinese relations have been, traditionally most affected by domestic issues (Tanaka 2000:3), the deteriorating trend is somewhat anticipated in light of rising domestic nationalist pressures and prevailing structural conditions.

Retrospectively, however, nationalism's impact on the "history" problem, though intermittently triggering bilateral tensions, has not totally derailed overall ties. According to Wang Jianwei, the history quarrel "has seldom caused substantial damages to the relationship since 1972. While both sides could be quite emotional and vocal on the issue, in practical policy, they rarely let the animosity over history carry the day" (2002:116). It is true "history" has affectively dented politico-diplomatic ties. Yet, the "cold politics, hot economics" dialectic suggests that there are determinants, besides nationalistic considerations, which "rational" policy-makers in Tokyo have to consider, when managing their bilateral affairs. More importantly, rising domestic nationalist pressure does not necessarily translate into a nationalist foreign policy *per se*, where "sense and passion" override "sensibility and reason"<sup>44</sup> in the pursuit of Japan's broader national interests.

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<sup>43</sup> He Yanan opines the Cold War's demise as having "weakened the political incentive for both nations to cap private memories and restrain disputes over history" (2006:76).

<sup>44</sup> Aforementioned, the terms "sense and passion" and "sensibility and reason" are taken from Gries (2004).

Indeed, Japan's overall management of the aforementioned history-related disputes offers an indication of how substantial nationalism is, or otherwise, in shaping its China policy, notwithstanding the hardline posture and rhetoric that dominated the initial stages of the controversies. For instance, Japanese nationalism's manifestation in both the war apology and textbook debacles is indisputable, and Tokyo's obstinacy in not mollifying Chinese demands may well be the makings of a nationalistic-assertive China policy. Yet, it has not prevented Japanese leaders from exercising "post-crisis damage control" to stabilise the bilateral relationship (Roy 2005:191). Among them were PM Obuchi's July 1999 summit meeting in Beijing with China's leaders, and Premier Zhu Rongji's Japan visit in 2000, where mutual efforts to bring a diplomatic thaw were apparent after the 1998 "war apology" fiasco. They included the planned establishment of a leadership hotline, bilateral security talks/exchanges, elaborate celebrations to commemorate the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of diplomatic normalisation, and using "partnership" to describe the new direction of Japanese-Chinese relations, with the Chinese going even further by unilaterally advancing the term "strategic partnership" to emphasise their fresh approach towards the bilateral ties (Sasajima 2002:101; Rozman 2002:117).

Similarly, the Koizumi administration's defiance on the textbook and Yasukuni rows that undermined China's "smile diplomacy" (Rozman 2002), was arguably, offset by Koizumi's subsequent efforts to revive communication between the two countries (Wang 2002).<sup>45</sup> This suggests Tokyo's balancing act between realising nationalist and pragmatic goals under the perceived external-internal conditions, and the plausibility of both leaderships' tolerance and willingness to make allowances for each other's domestic nationalist agenda (Down and Saunders 1998/9:123). The following chapter's empirical study of Japan's management of the Yasukuni controversy helps gauge nationalism's impact vis-à-vis other determinants in shaping its policy-options, when managing this highly symbolic "history" issue in Japanese-Chinese affairs.

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<sup>45</sup> See Chapter 6 for Koizumi's conciliatory gestures after the 2001 history debacles.

### 5.3.2. Nationalism and shifting security perceptions and policies

Nationalism's saliency can also be seen in the manner Japan manages its security relations with China. Amidst shifting power dynamics, rising nationalism has instigated one another's re-evaluation of strategic perceptions, and security concerns in recent years. Specifically, Japan's neo-nationalist agenda for a "normal nation", which "stripped to its essence... simply means a nation that can go to war" (Samuels 2007a:128), has fuelled Chinese concerns about Japan's ever-expanding security role, and occasional paranoia regarding the revival of Japanese militarism. Conversely, neo-nationalism, borne from feelings of insecurity, has made Japan wary of China's spectacular economic and military development (Soerensen 2006:117), with Japanese defence planners increasingly echoing, albeit subtly, the "China threat" notion, popularly contrived by their hawkish Western counterparts, media, and commentators.<sup>46</sup> One can construe that China's military modernisation plausibly reflects vigilance, and counter-balancing against Japan's evolving security agenda, while Japanese security policy-shifts are, partly driven by growing concerns over the emerging Chinese security challenge. Compounding their caginess are the unresolved ECS territorial/maritime disputes, the "Taiwan" dilemma in US-Japanese security arrangements, and nationalism's exacerbation of mutual mistrust. Regionally, their rising defence budgets and renewed rivalry are increasing the stakes in East Asian security, as they could undesirably escalate into a Japanese-Chinese arms race (Christensen 1999:69-71). As Green noted, these are "ingredients for a classic defense dilemma" between Japan and China (2001:93).<sup>47</sup>

Again, such developments echo NCR's assumption that domestic-ideational variables, i.e. historical grievances and nationalism, have the potency of aggravating security dilemmas under changing relative power dynamics and fluid external environment, such as the case of Japan's post-Cold War relations with China (Christensen 1999). As highlighted, neo-nationalism's impact on the shifting Japanese security discourse and policies have brought a reconceptualisation of mainstream Chinese strategic thinking that

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<sup>46</sup> The so-called "China Threat" theory refers to China's potential "rise", and "fall" as a destabilising factor to regional security. For a detailed discussion, see Gurtov (1994); Roy (1996); and Bernstein and Munro (1997).

<sup>47</sup> For a recent opinion regarding the possibility of a Sino-Japanese security dilemma, see "Will Beijing's military spending lead to 'security dilemma'?", *Japan Times*, 7 February 2008.

perceives Japan as China's chief future security concern (Shambaugh 1994:6; Whiting 1996:609-611).<sup>48</sup> Indeed, the Chinese are aware that contemporary Japan has become more powerful and militarily prepared than it appears to be, or project, despite the constitutional constraints (Yang 2003:308). This include having among the world's largest military budgets, notwithstanding the SDF's disposition as a strictly self-defence force, and its reputation as a modern, highly sophisticated military boasting top-of-the-range hardware that technically allow Japan to project power far beyond its constitutional rights<sup>49</sup> (Yang 2003:308; Wang 2002:110-111). Aforementioned in Chapter 3, the SDF's continuous redefinition under a strengthened US-Japanese security alliance (Drifte 2003; Singh 2002; Soerensen 2006) has aggravated Chinese security analysts' suspicion regarding Japan's intention to resurrect its military power status (Wang 2002:110). The Chinese also saw the US "war on terror"<sup>50</sup> as an event that has facilitated Japan's rearmament and pursuance of a "normal state" identity (Yang 2003:309; Gill 2002:43-44). They perceive Japan's rising security profile, and recent joint restructuring of US-Japanese forces as a move that ultimately targets China, with Tokyo becoming what Yu (1999:10) contends as the fulcrum of Washington's "containment by stealth" policy and grand strategy in East Asia, via their revitalised alliance (Christensen 1996:41; Wu 2005/6; Tamamoto 2005/6).

Conversely, the Japanese saw their renewed security orientation as inevitable in view of the challenges imposed by the fluid post-Cold War environment. From the more

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<sup>48</sup> Indeed, over 60% of China's security planners foresaw Japan to be a potential major rival, as noted by David Shambaugh, back in the mid-1990s (1994:6; cf. Yang 2003:307).

<sup>49</sup> Japan's defence budget of over USD41 billion in FY2006 was "one of the five largest in the world" (Samuels 2007b:63). The SDF also possesses power-projection capabilities that include what essentially is, a blue-water navy comprising submarines and Aegis-class destroyers at Yokosuka, Sasebo and Kobe, and an airforce of medium/long-range air-superiority fighter-aircrafts and airborne refueling capabilities (Roy 2003:2; Drifte 2003). Observers see such offensive-based weaponry as contradicting the SDF's definition as a "self-defence force", and the Article IX (Wu 2000; Roy 2003; Yang 2003). For analyses of Japan's gradual "remilitarisation", see Hughes (2005) and Lind (2004).

<sup>50</sup> Japan's security role has expanded unprecedentedly since the "9/11" incident. This includes the introduction of so-called "emergency legislations" like the "Anti-Terrorism Special Measures Law" and the "Bill to Respond to Armed Attacks", which give Japan the flexibility to participate in military activities in conjunction with the US, and to initiate the use of force in respond to armed attacks (NIDS 2003). The subsequent dispatch of MSDF refuelling vessels to the Indian Ocean under *Operation Enduring Freedom* represented Japan's active participation in overseas military operations, for the first time since WWII (Gill 2002:43-44). Tokyo also dispatched Ground-SDF (GSDF) personnel to support the US "coalition of the willing" in the postwar reconstruction of Iraq.

immediate North Korean “threat” factor<sup>51</sup> and global terrorism, to growing concerns regarding China’s military development, and related ambitions in the Taiwan Strait and ECS, these uncertainties have driven Japan to rethink its national security, not mentioning, the relentless “allied” pressure to assume a more prominent international security role (Drifte 2003:43-60; Soerensen 2006:111). Another reason is that Japan seeks to become a “normal state”, not only because of the need to be able to act normally in defending its national security interests, but also domestic nationalist pressure to redress national identity and international prestige, which have galvanised the transformation of the Japanese security agenda towards “normalisation” (Singh 2002:88; Tamamoto 2005b: Soerensen 2006:114-115). However, the issue is not so much about Japan becoming a “normal state”, but whether China can accept a “normal”, rearmed, and internationally pro-active Japan that would directly challenge its emerging regional influence, and possibly lead to power competition and rivalry for regional dominance (Wu 2000). Some Chinese observers even perceive Japan’s drive towards “normalcy” as a nationalist pretext for reviving Japanese militarism (Roy 2003:4). Ideally, the Chinese would prefer Japan to be continuously “abnormal” (Tomoda interview), or what Yahuda observes as a Japan that is, “politically and strategically quiescent until such time as presumably it would be overshadowed by China” (2006:169).

While Beijing worries about a nationalistic and assertive Japan, Japanese security analysts are wary of China’s rise<sup>52</sup> and emergence as “the security issue of the 21<sup>st</sup> century” (Glaser and Garrett 1997; JFIR 1995; Sato 1998). Tokyo’s interest, according to observers, is to devise an adequate strategy to manage a rising, but unpredictable China. This includes developing durable ties, and helping the Chinese, avert potential domestic instability that could be detrimental to Japan’s own security (Roy 2003; Drifte 2003). Indeed, “China threat”

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<sup>51</sup> North Korea’s security “threats” to Japan include its nuclear weapons programme, missile tests that expose Japan’s lacklustre and inadequate security measures, incursions of *fushinsen*, and the emotionally-charged abduction issue, not mentioning Pyongyang’s reputed anti-Japanese stance, belligerence, and lack of conformity to international norms and practices.

<sup>52</sup> China’s rise has generated debates regarding its implications for East Asian security, with observations ranging from moderate assumptions like the emergence of a strong, status quo observing superpower China, to hawkish views of “China threat” in the form of a revisionist power (Bernstein and Munro 1997; Roy 1996).

to Japan is as much about China becoming a strong military anti-status quo power, as a weak China spawning regional instability<sup>53</sup> (Shirk 2007; Segal 1994; Roy 2005:206). Hence, Japan's contemporary China policy has been to engage, while maintaining sufficient hedging measures to facilitate its emergence as a responsible power and stakeholder in regional security (Drifte 2003).

Nonetheless, domestic support for a policy of engagement has weakened following the worsening of Japanese perceptions/attitudes towards China resulting from rising nationalism, and apprehensions regarding Chinese emerging capabilities and intentions. Specifically, heightened anxiety over Chinese power, influence, and ambitions have elicited vocal complaints from nationalists/politicians regarding Japan's overly accommodative posture, and decreased Japanese confidence on the logic of economic interdependence engendering improved politico-security relations with the Chinese (Roy 2003:3; Yahuda 2006). According to Samuels, Japanese neo-nationalists of all hues, commonly view China as a "potential threat"; the realists focusing on the PLA's rising military challenge, whereas the neo-conservatives and neo-autonomists spice up the debate with a distinctively anti-Chinese flavour (2007a:146). Underpinning their security concerns have been the steady augmentation of Chinese military capabilities, marked by sustained double-digit annual defence expenditures,<sup>54</sup> and the related lack of transparency in military decision-making and tendency to under-report actual spending (Drifte 2003:43; Bitzinger 2003:2-3; JT 07/02/2008). Bitzinger notes that most US assessments share the view that "China's official defense budget greatly under-represents actual military expenditure by a factor of two to three" (2003:1).<sup>55</sup> The Chinese argue that their defence budget is comparatively lower to

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<sup>53</sup> Japanese observers are generally concerned with the prospect of China's unsustainable economic growth under an authoritarian political system (Shirk 2007:18) triggering serious internal socio-political and economic upheavals that may undermine the CCP regime's survival (see also Breslin 2007b:Chp.6). The collapse of the PRC could spawn regional instability reminiscent of the Soviet disintegration, i.e. emergence of more unstable, anti-Japanese states, and exodus of refugees, etc. (Shambaugh 1996b:86; see also Segal 1994). Similarly, a weak Chinese state may manipulate anti-Japanese nationalism, and adopt an aggressive posture in the Senkaku/Diaoyudao dispute and Taiwan, to bolster national unity and political legitimacy (Roy 2005:206).

<sup>54</sup> In 2002, China reported annual increase in military expenditure of approximately 19.4% compared to the defense budget the year before, marking the highest jump in recent years (NIDS 2003:185). In 2006, the annual budget is set to increase by another 14.7% (PD 05/03/2006; Shirk 2007:73)

<sup>55</sup> According to the US Department of Defense estimates, China's annual military spending totals around USD65 billion, over three times more than the Chinese government announcement (Bitzinger 2003:3).

other developed countries, including Japan, and that the annual increase is mainly for the replacement of outdated hardware, and basic operating expenditure of its sizeable standing army (PD 05/03/2006). However, Japanese and US defence planners, alike, are aware that China is gradually shifting the military balance with its mass purchasing of sophisticated, power-projection weaponry and defence technologies from Russia, ranging from fighter-aircrafts, to submarines and destroyers, besides the development of indigenous defence production capacity (Drifte 2003:41-48; Bitzinger 2003; NIDS 2003). Complemented by the world's third largest nuclear arsenal (Moore 2000:1-3) and a rapidly advancing aerospace industry, China's defence spending trajectories have raised concerns regarding its intentions, as consistently noted in recent Japanese defence white papers (JDA 2004; 2005; 2006). Ironically, Japanese concerns, as Drifte contends, "would have been much less pronounced", if not for China's rapid economic growth (2003:43).

China's propensity to use force to advance its security interests, i.e. Vietnam (1979), the South China Sea archipelagos of Paracel (1975) and Spratly (1995), and most glaringly, during the 1996 Taiwan Strait crisis also fuelled Japanese anxiety regarding potential Chinese belligerence, when managing their territorial/maritime disputes in the ECS. Beijing's forceful handling of the 2002 "Shenyang" incident further aggravated such concerns (Fouse 2003:3). Additionally, Japan is wary of China's intention to control sea-lanes crucial to its economic prosperity (Roy 2003:3). The PLA-Navy's metamorphosis into a blue-water navy and increased naval activities indicate Chinese ambition to achieve operational capacity in the South and East China Seas, where it may be able "to interdict shipping inbound to, or outbound from Japanese ports" (Roy 2003:3). Besides prioritising the development of its submarine force (Golstein and Murray 2004), the PLA-Navy's repeated vessel incursions into Japanese territorial waters for maritime/oceanographic research and alleged naval intelligence gathering operations since the late 1990s were, plausibly related to such ambitions (Roy 2003:3; Drifte 2003:56-57; NIDS 2002). Japan's security transformation is therefore, as much a response to alleviate anxieties about the strategic uncertainties posed by China, as to counter North Korea's cavalier attitude (Funabashi 2000:136). Japanese

nationalists are also drumming up “China threat” to justify remilitarisation, and even the prospects of a nuclear-armed Japan to counter Chinese security challenges (Oros 2003:51; Nakanishi 2003 cf. Samuels 2007a:fn.51).<sup>56</sup>

Equally fuelling Japanese unease is the brazenly anti-Japanese nationalism flourishing in China. Tokyo is aware of Beijing’s conspicuous promotion of anti-Japanese sentiment through education (Kawashima 2005:19-21) and other propaganda channels for domestic political expedience. Although the Chinese regime is prudent and pragmatic in stoking nationalism, and has had occasionally reined in popular sentiments, the decades of indoctrination and reminder of Japanese misdeeds have cultivated virulent anti-Japanese passion among China’s younger generations. Such sentiment has manifested in popular anti-Japanese discourse, and demonstrations, like those in April 2005. Indeed, contemporary Chinese public opinion reflects a zealously nationalistic generation, whose frustrations are predominantly directed against Japan (Shirk 2007:151-152), exacerbating Japanese concerns regarding the perils of unrestrained Chinese nationalism, and Beijing’s ability to maintain a pragmatic Japan policy. It is rather ironic that contemporary Japanese insecurities vis-à-vis the Chinese mirror that of the Chinese towards their neighbour. While the Japanese are concerned about the potential security challenges of resurgent Chinese nationalism and a militarily powerful China, the Chinese are paranoid about the revived threats of Japanese nationalism and remilitarisation to their security interests (Roy 2003).

The Chinese have taken measures to soothe Japanese and neighbouring concerns, especially regarding the “China threat” perception. Besides publishing defence white papers,<sup>57</sup> Beijing has actively recited the mantra of “peaceful rise” to reassure neighbours of its intention (Zheng 2005; Guo 2006). Chinese officials and media also fervently refuted

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<sup>56</sup> Ozawa Ichiro typified this back in April 2002, when he argued that China’s burgeoning military development could possibly drive Japan towards nuclear armament (Roy 2005:197). Ozawa, who is now the DPJ leader, allegedly said “Japan can easily have thousands of nuclear warheads....In fact, we have enough plutonium in use at nuclear power plants for three to four thousands warheads. If that should happen, Japan would not lose [to China] even in military terms” (SS 07/04/2002:2; quoted in Oros 2003:51, cf. Roy 2003:5). Nakanishi Terumasa also advocates acquiring nuclear weapons to defend Okinawa and Senkaku/Diaoyudao against a credible Chinese naval threat (2003: 35, 36-37; cf. Samuels 2007a:fn.51).

<sup>57</sup> China started publishing defence white papers, biennially, since 1998. For example, see State Council Information Office (SCIO) (2004) *China’s National Defense in 2004*, Beijing: SCIO, Government of the PRC.

Japanese perception, claiming that Japan's defence white papers are misleadingly portraying China as a source of regional instability by exaggerating its military strength/spending (CD 18/07/2001; PD 03/08/2005; Wang 2002:115). Many of China's "Japan" scholars/commentators perceive it as Japanese intention to sidetrack international attention from, and provide excuses for their own military development. They also place the blame of Japanese fixation with the "China threat" notion mostly on the workings of nationalists (CD 18/07/2001). There is an element of truth to such claims, as Japanese nationalists have indeed, sought to exploit worsening images of China in Japan to advance their agendas (Rozman 2002; Whiting 1998), and that contemporary Japanese nationalism is directed mainly at China. Such developments have undoubtedly encouraged a policy-shift vis-à-vis China "from commercial liberalism to reluctant realism" (Green and Self 1996:36).

The above analysis demonstrates nationalism's aggravation of mutual security (mis)perceptions and concerns that encourage the reassessment of one another's security policy, which serves to accentuate mutual suspicion and tension. However, it has not led Tokyo (and Beijing) to ruthlessly, pursue narrow, nationalist-oriented security goals irrespective of the broader national interests, or at the expense of the bilateral relationship. Moreover, in the age of interdependence, the traditional notions of security have broadened to include more holistic definitions, i.e. economic and environmental security, both of which are crucial to their respective conceptualisation of comprehensive national security (Drifte 1990:29-31; SCIO 2004).

Japan, specifically, has sought to promote Chinese confidence, regarding its shifting security orientation. Although domestic nationalist demands have made Japan's transformation into a "normal" state inevitable, rational Japanese policy-makers are cautious about letting nationalist agendas dominate their foreign/security policy deliberations, to the detriment of Japanese-Chinese ties. Understandably, pragmatic considerations for Japan's economic vitality, and China's moderate posturing in the regional security equation, and cooperation in both conventional and non-traditional security issues (i.e. environmental security) are high on Japanese comprehensive security calculus (Drifte 2003:70-76; Arase

2007). Additionally, domestic pacifist forces, though relatively weakened, remain sound in checking against, and moderating ultra-nationalist/militarist tendencies within the government. Furthermore, despite their apparent nationalistic dispositions, Japanese state-elites have exhibited political will to balance and maintain a degree of pragmatism in their management of sensitive bilateral security issues. Lastly, Japanese security policies remain constrained by the US-Japan alliance, and Washington's overarching security agenda, a position that Beijing is, perhaps, more willing to countenance than a unilateral Japanese re-militarisation. Hence, Japan has been treading cautiously, pushing the national security reform agenda incrementally, while simultaneously reassuring China of its intentions. Tokyo has also been prudent in its official statements regarding China's security developments, and has not openly subscribed to the "China threat" notion, as reflected by the "non-committal/carefully-worded" texts found in Japanese defence documents. Indeed, notwithstanding longer-term concerns, the overall Japanese perception of China is more of caution than actual fear, and security assessments consider the prospect of conflict with China as "entirely unlikely" in the immediate future" (Austin and Harris 2001:94).<sup>58</sup>

Japan's cautious optimism, however, does not render the negative implications of domestic nationalist pressure on Japanese-Chinese impassable, especially when it comes to the ECS territorial/maritime disputes, and more so regarding Taiwan. It is also uncertain as to how long such pragmatism could last against the backdrop of confrontational nationalisms that are expected to widen differences in their security interpretations, perceptions, and interests.

#### **5.4. Conclusion**

This chapter has highlighted the impact of rising nationalist impulses in Japan (and China) on mutual perceptions/images and attitude that correspondingly affect bilateral relations. It has also exhibited the "nationalism and foreign policy-making" linkage by identifying the principal policy-makers and other actors that provide nationalism the agency to influence

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<sup>58</sup> According to Austin and Harris, Japanese security assessment of China has been cautiously optimistic, citing that "China has not contemplated, or is likely in the near future to contemplate preparing its military forces for conflict with Japan or for large-scale military operations against Japan" (2001:94).

Japan's China policy. However, nationalism's salience is mediated by other variables that Japanese state-elites have to account for under particular external-domestic environs and processes, which reflects the NCR schema. Japan's overall management of the issues of history and security vis-à-vis China, reveals a plausible fallacy in the conventional wisdom regarding nationalism's efficacy in shaping its actual policy-options/responses that underscore their worsening relationship. Notwithstanding the reality of nationalism's influence on Japanese attitude, Tokyo's apparent balancing act, and noted efforts to ameliorate ties following periodic diplomatic rows highlight the propensity of other determinants appearing equally, and at times more prevalent in affecting Japanese decision-making pertaining to the bilateral ties. By utilising the NCR framework, nationalism's salience vis-à-vis other external/domestic imperatives shall be systematically assessed via the Yasukuni-*jinja* and ECS disputes, in the following chapters.

## CHAPTER SIX

### **CASE STUDY I: NATIONALISM, IDENTITY POLITICS, AND THE YASUKUNI SHRINE DISPUTE IN JAPANESE-CHINESE RELATIONS**

The decline in post-Cold War Japanese-Chinese relations has been associated with rising nationalism, which has apparently exacerbated their “history” enmity and undermined efforts to seek a genuine reconciliation of their shared past. Amongst the history-related grievances, prime ministerial visits to Yasukuni-*jinja* have become a major impasse, perpetuating as much domestic popular indignations in China, as debate in contemporary Japan regarding the need to address crucial questions concerning Japanese national identity and wartime history. Specifically to this thesis, the debacle has raised concerns regarding nationalism’s salience in undermining a fragile and historically tainted relationship, as Japan seeks to reconcile its national past with its present aspirations to become a “normal” state and fully-fledged player in international politics. Yet, as pointed out in the preceding chapter, Tokyo’s ability to maintain a functional relationship, seeking timely and calculated diplomatic measures to prevent a free-fall in overall bilateral ties, while promoting dynamic economic interactions, suggest the potentiality of other determinants vis-à-vis nationalism in affecting Japanese-Chinese diplomacy and Japan’s China policy-making.

This chapter draws on their diplomatic dispute over Yasukuni visits by Japanese premiers against the backdrop of rising domestic nationalist undercurrents, particularly during the Koizumi administration. A brief background of the contentious Shrine and the origins of the dispute are addressed before elaborating on Koizumi’s annual pilgrimages, which sent Japanese-Chinese political relations to arguably its lowest point since 1972. The following sections delve on the bilateral dynamics involved during the periods of contention, paying particular attention to the interactions between domestic nationalist pressure and other external-internal variables, via the NCR framework, to assess the extent to which nationalism saliently constrained Tokyo’s management of the dispute, and the consequential impact on its relationship with Beijing.

## 6.1. Background of the Yasukuni Issue

Before examining the origins of the Yasukuni debacle, a brief exploration of the historical background, politico-religious meanings and pseudo-ideological connotations, or the *raison d'être* of this institution, is essential to understanding the controversies it has courted, both domestically and internationally, for postwar Japan.

### 6.1.1. The origins of Yasukuni Shrine

Yasukuni-*jinja* is a Shinto establishment, located in Tokyo's Kudan district, near the vicinity of the Imperial Palace. It was formerly known as *Tokyo Shokonsha*,<sup>1</sup> founded in June 1869, under the auspices of the Imperial Meiji government, originally to commemorate "patriots", who died serving the Emperor and the Imperial cause, during the tumultuous period of power transition from the Tokugawa *bakufu* to the Meiji Restoration of 1868 (Gardner 2002:666-669; Tokita 2003:48; Hashizume 2001:54). The present name "Yasukuni", was conferred by Emperor Meiji in June 1879, during which the Shrine gained its official designation as *bekkaku kampeisha* (Special Government Shrine) (Deans 2007:271), and its consequential role as the "central custodian of national memory and mourning commemorating Japan's war dead" (Harootunian 1999:144).<sup>2</sup> Prior to WWII, Yasukuni-*jinja* was a state institution, jointly managed by the Army, Navy, and Home ministries (Hashizume 2001:55). As the official ritual epicentre of the State-Shinto ideology, the Shrine, via the ministries' screening process, was responsible for enshrining fallen military personnel and "those who died in the service of their country" (Curtin 2005b).<sup>3</sup> Following Japan's war surrender, the US Occupation forces abolished State-Shintoism and Yasukuni-*jinja* for their

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<sup>1</sup> *Tokyo Shokonsha*, meaning "shrine for inviting the spirits" (Tokita 2003:48), was originally established to console the souls of those perished during the crucial Boshin civil war, which paved the way for the birth of modern Japan under the Meiji Restoration (Gardner 2002:666). It eventually included the enshrinement of those who died devoting their lives for the nation, since 1853, notably during engagements with external forces to prevent foreign encroachment, and domestic revolts in the immediate post-Tokugawa period, i.e. Saga incident, Seinan War, and Satsuma rebellion (Gardner 2002:669; Breen 2007:13). For a comprehensive discussion of the Yasukuni Shrine, see also "Yasukuni: Behind the torii/From government-run shrine for war heroes to bone of contention," *Yomiuri Shimbun*, 15 June 2005, and the edited volume by Breen (2007).

<sup>2</sup> According to Hashizume, at its inception, *Yasukuni-jinja* was not meant to be a war-shrine honouring Japanese military servicemen, but "a shrine to the heroes of the revolution", namely the Meiji restoration of 1868 (2001:54). Yasukuni was also classified as a "*gokoku-jinja*" meaning "protector of the nation shrine" (Harootunian 1999:148). For a historical account of *Yasukuni-jinja*, see Murukami (1971) and Hardacre (1991).

<sup>3</sup> They included non-military personnel, i.e. those who died in the line of duty, such as nurses, volunteers, and those drafted through the National General Mobilisation Law to serve directly and indirectly in Japan's war machinery, as well as children that died in the line of fire. (Breen 2004: 82; Gardner 2002: 669-670).

ideological role in fostering militarism, but the latter was subsequently reinstated, albeit as a private, religious organisation, under the new postwar Constitution (Deans 2007:271).

It may seem ironic that “Yasukuni”, literally meaning “for the country’s peace” (Tokita 2003:48), has unwittingly emerged from its inception more than a century later, as a major source of Japan’s diplomatic contention with her East Asian neighbours. This predicament has much to do with the Shrine’s widely acknowledged prewar function as a vital instrument of the Imperial Japanese state to foster nationalism for nation-building, and symbolic driving force behind the national mobilisation for the propagation of its much maligned, military “adventurism” and “empire-building in Asia” (Lam 2006b:3; Wan 2006:235-236; Breen 2004:76; Harootunian 1999:144). Even more controversial is the fact that Yasukuni’s ideological disposition has remained relatively unchanged, not mentioning, its continuous linkage with, and influence on domestic politics, despite the pacific transformation undertaken by postwar Japan, and the repudiation of its “official” status under the constitutional provision regarding the separation of state and religion. It is due to such legality, and its manifestation of elements of prewar continuity that have politicised Yasukuni into becoming a domestic and diplomatic issue, where “official visits” and patronage by Japanese heads-of-state are deemed unconstitutional and perceived as a beacon of Japan’s unrepentant attitude towards its role in WWII. Simply put, the Yasukuni issue is intricate in that it represents what Mikuriya sees as a “simultaneous equation” of correlated and conflicting problems, ranging from religion and ideology, to perceptions of history, identity, and foreign relations (Matsumoto, Mikuriya and Sakamoto 2005:3).

#### 6.1.2. Nationalism and the politics of identity: the “Yasukuni problem” defined

One needs to explore the “sociology/genealogy” of Yasukuni,<sup>4</sup> its ideological disposition, and their correlations with nationalism and Japanese identity to understand the “Yasukuni problematique”. For a start, Yasukuni-*jinja* is primarily “a ritual site” (Breen 2004:77), where the spirit of Japan’s war dead are reposed, presumably based on the traditional Shinto practice of venerating the dead, of which influence can be traced back to ancient Japanese,

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<sup>4</sup> These terms derive from Breen (2004; 2007). See both for a detailed sociological investigation of Yasukuni.

Buddhist, and Confucianist customs (Breen 2004:77-82; Yamaori 2003:45). To date, it has enshrined approximately 2.47 million souls, the vast majority comprising fallen servicemen during the Pacific War.<sup>5</sup> Against such a religious and cultural backdrop, pilgrimage to, and mourning the dead at Yasukuni would naturally, be seen as normal and common practice to ordinary Japanese. As highlighted in Chapter 4, observations of such traditions and rituals are considered an integral part of the cultural uniqueness that forms the crux of Japanese national identity, prewar and postwar. Indeed, Yasukuni played a substantial role in promoting such traditions during the prewar era. It was commonly, acknowledged back then, that Japanese soldiers went to battle believing they would be, eventually venerated and worshipped at the Shrine as “national gods of the ancestral land (*sokoku kuni*)”, if they sacrifice their lives for the Emperor’s cause (Harootunian 1999:149). Meanwhile, family members were consoled by the belief that they would be reunited with their perished loved ones, who would be honoured as “national heroes” at Yasukuni (Harootunian 1999:149; Shibuichi 2005). Such beliefs are still held mainly by war-bereaved families in contemporary Japan and herein, underlie one of the main issues concerning the Yasukuni problem.<sup>6</sup>

Additionally, the concept of a “national war memorial” is a universally accepted norm, and as such, Yasukuni Shrine, according to its advocates, fulfills such a role for Japan, as the Arlington cemetery,<sup>7</sup> or the Cenotaph does for the US and Britain, respectively (Tamamoto 2001:34; Breen 2004:90-91). In this regard, official Shrine visit to commemorate the war dead is not only a cultural matter, but also a moral duty ought to be fulfilled by Japanese state leaders. To the Japanese rightists/nationalists who hold a romantic view, Yasukuni is, in Shibuichi’s words, as much an embodiment of Japanese tradition, religion, and culture, as a “heartwarming symbol of self-sacrifice and patriotism” that represents the essence of “Japan’s historical identity as a modern nation-state” (2005:199). Such quixotic perceptions are fundamentally behind their passionate calls for Japanese state-elites to pay

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<sup>5</sup> There were 2,466,427 war dead reposed at Yasukuni, based on the official list as of October 17, 2002, those who died in the Pacific War accounting for the vast majority (more than 80% or approximately 2.1 million) (Tokita 2003:49; see also Breen 2004: 82; Kingston 2004:236).

<sup>6</sup> See Fukuda and Yamaori (2004) for a detailed discussion on the spiritual aspect of Yasukuni to Japanese.

<sup>7</sup> For a comparative observation of Yasukuni and Arlington National Cemetery, see McGreevy (2005).

tribute and recognise Yasukuni's position at the heart of Japanese national consciousness. Another reason for their unbridled support relates to Yasukuni's symbolism in Japan's war history. The "revisionist" logic behind Japanese nationalists' unwillingness to compromise to the leftist and Chinese demands over Yasukuni is very much similar to their reasons for rejecting the conventional interpretation of Japan's role in the Pacific War, namely the fear of undermining modern Japan's historical identity, and castigating their forebears as war criminals<sup>8</sup> (Tamamoto 2001:35; Shibuichi 2005:200; Deans 2007).

Furthermore, some Japanese scholars argue that under the constitutional provision of Article 20, freedom of expression of one's religious belief/sentiment should also be accrued to state leaders, and henceforth, prime ministerial visits in his private capacity should not be defined as unconstitutional (Hashizume 2001:51; Matsumoto, Mikuriya and Sakamoto 2005). Nationalist intellectuals also see Yasukuni as emblematic to Japan's national identity, of which the Japanese people can, and should rightfully assert, befitting a sovereign nation (Hashizume 2001). Ultimately, ordinary Japanese regard the Yasukuni issue as a domestic concern, and thus perceive the unrelenting emotional outburst and diplomatic pressure by foreign governments, namely China and Korea as liable to interfering in Japan's internal affairs (Takashina 2004:35).

Nonetheless, from the perspective of Japan's neighbours and war victims, as well as its own pacifist-oriented citizenry, Yasukuni remains a contentious institution, a remnant of the prewar system that continues to exude ideological aura and political influence in the postwar Japanese society. According to Matsumoto, the problem with Yasukuni Shrine is

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<sup>8</sup> In my interview with Noda Takeshi, the senior LDP Diet-member opines that Yasukuni is important for Japan, because of its relations to the acceptance and denial debate regarding Japan's war responsibility, and the results of the Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal. According to him, despite Japan's official acceptance of the Tribunal's judgment, many ordinary Japanese cannot fully do so, because, to them, the US was also, in some ways, responsible for the war. Such popular perceptions are, closely related to the sentiment over Yasukuni, where the executed war criminals are criminals because of the Tribunal's "lopsided" judgment. Since the judgment is perceived to be unfair, the so-called "war criminals", in the eyes of these cohort of Japanese are not criminals after all, and therefore, not a problem to be enshrined at Yasukuni. Indeed, those executed, were eventually enshrined because of such opinions in Japan. In this sense, their enshrinement is symbolic of the challenge against the conventional logic of the war (Noda is the former secretary-general of the New Conservative Party (Hoshuto), who together with his LDP and Shin-Komeito counterparts, Yamasaki Taku and Fuyushiba Tetzuo, visited China in July 2001, where they were believed to be heavily involved in the diplomatic negotiations, prior to Koizumi's first trip to Yasukuni).

that it “still retains a distinct flavour of State-Shinto, the official cult of prewar Japan”, and that “the element of political ideology is too strong”, which makes it “inappropriate for a religious institution”, even without strong external criticisms (Matsumoto, Mikuriya and Sakamaoto 2005:25). Not only is it the symbol of militaristic-nationalism synonymous to the “belligerent” Japan of the prewar and wartime eras, Yasukuni is controversial precisely because of its continuous propagation of such ideals, and its infallible advocacy of Imperial Japan’s wartime actions as “just” and “divine”, notions that are backed by strong domestic political support, notably from the ruling LDP (Harootunian 1999). This can be observed from the Shrine’s “notorious” role in eulogising Japan’s war past, as reflected in its *Yushukan* “war museum”, and perhaps, even more so, by its decision to secretly enshrine fourteen Class-A war criminals in October 1978, allegedly with the tacit acquiescence of the Japanese authorities.<sup>9</sup> In fact, their enshrinement has become arguably the centerpiece of the Yasukuni debacle, since its revelation, back in spring 1979.

There are also scholarly opinions that the “unique” Yasukuni enshrinement rituals are not genuinely rooted to ancient Japanese traditions, as commonly and superficially understood by ordinary Japanese.<sup>10</sup> Instead, such practices were mostly an “invented tradition” undertaken by the Meiji administration to cultivate nationalism through pseudo-religious beliefs, to meet the political needs of the modern Japanese state (Breen 2004; Hashizume 2001; Harootunian 1999). Fukuda and Yamaori see the Yasukuni dispute as being “inextricably caught up with the design of Japan’s transformation...in the nineteenth century”, where the Meiji oligarchs “invented” the State-Shinto ideology, based on traditional folklores, beliefs, and customs, to provide a spiritual foundation for the sustenance of Japanese identity, as they strove to transform Japan into a modern nation-state (2004:37-

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<sup>9</sup> According to new documents on the Yasukuni Shrine problem released by the National Diet Library on 28 March 2007, the Japanese government did conduct discussion on the enshrinement of Class-A war criminals with Yasukuni officials in 1969, some nine years before the “secret” enshrinement. Among the documents released, include lists dated from 31 January 1969 presented during a meeting between the then Health and Welfare Ministry and Shrine officials, containing names of Class-A war dead eligible for enshrinement, highlighting the common view between the government and Yasukuni on this matter. Both the ministry and the Shrine also agreed not to publicly reveal the idea, a decision apparently linked to the constitutional issue regarding the separation of religion and state (KN 29/03/2007; JT 29/03/2007).

<sup>10</sup> Although it is a Japanese custom to mourn the dead, the Yasukuni rituals, concepts, and doctrines are apparently, qualitatively different from those observed in traditional Shinto shrines (Breen 2004:82).

38). Yasukuni thus, unmistakably represents the essence of modern Japanese prewar identity, and nationalist ideology that was employed by the State to mobilise the “unsuspecting population” (Harootunian 1999:144) towards war and conquests in the Asian continent. In this light, its conspicuous presence in postwar Japan, and more significantly, official visits by Japanese leaders and senior government personnel have drawn both domestic and international criticisms, condemning such homage as inappropriate, due to the Shrine’s historical legacy and parochial ideals. Some critics associated such visits to the revival of chauvinistic nationalism and Japanese militarism (cf. Shibuichi 2005:198), while others perceived them as a sign of “historical amnesia” representing Japan’s enduring inability to reflect on its wartime responsibility and actions (Dolven 2002:60-61; Miller 2002).

According to scholars, the Yasukuni problem is double-edged in that it involves contending participants from both Japanese domestic politics and foreign relations, with the nationalist-rightists vying against their leftwing counterparts in the domestic arena, and China and two Koreas as the external disputants (Shibuichi 2005:199; Wan 2006:236; Deans 2007). Domestically, the staunch supporters of prime ministerial visits derive mainly from three broad nationalist groupings, namely major nationalist-rightwing pressure groups, smaller *uyoku* organisations, and nationalist intelligentsia that disseminate their ideas via the mass media (Shibuichi 2005:200-203). The former is commonly acknowledged as the most powerful and influential, politically, with key organisations, like *Nihon Izokukai* wielding financial and electoral clout via its sizeable membership (Shibuichi 2001:200; Breen 2007:5). Together with *Jinja Honcho*, *Nippon Kaigi*, *Issuikai*, and veterans’ associations like the Military Pension Federation (*gunjin onkyu renmei*), Association to Commemorate the Spirit of Fallen Heroes (*Eirei ni kotaeru kai*)<sup>11</sup> and the Yasukuni Worship and Tribute Society,<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> There are different English translations of the name of this Organisation, i.e. Shibuichi (2005) calls it as above, while it is known as “Society for Answering the Heroic Spirits” and “Glorious War Dead Society” in Harootunian’s (1999) and Breen’s (2004), respectively. This organisation claims a 1.2 million-strong membership across Japan (Breen 2004: 87).

<sup>12</sup> According to Breen, the Yasukuni Worship and Tribute Society was established in 1999 to mark the 130<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Yasukuni Shrine. Membership derives mostly from other rightwing organisations. The society is responsible for several Shrine development projects, deemed crucial to its long-term strategy of “laying the foundation of new believers, and ensuring the transmission to successive generations of the lessons of the war

these “nationalist” organisations have employed sustained pressure on Japanese politicians to pay tribute at, and restore state patronage of Yasukuni-*jinja* (Shibuichi 2005:200; Breen 2004:85-87; Harootunian 1999:157). Shibuichi (2005:200-201) opines that their political influence lies in the fact that these groupings have close ties and overlapping memberships with the LDP, with some serving as LDP Diet-members, while senior LDP politicians often chair these organisations. Since the LDP is widely noted as a “catchall party” for conservative/ultra-nationalist groups and individual politicians, the intimate connection and dependence on electoral support, compel LDP politicians/state-elites to satisfy the demands of these organisations (Shibuichi 2005:200-201; Lam 2006b). Indeed, Japanese premiers from the LDP are, like any LDP politicians, susceptible to domestic nationalist pressures to visit Yasukuni<sup>13</sup> (Shibuichi 2005:201).

Conversely, the domestic participants from opposite ideological spectrums comprise leftist political parties, i.e. JSP/SDPJ, JCP, and pacifist NGOs and leftwing media mentioned in Chapter 5. The leftists/pacifists repudiate the idea of Yasukuni’s relationship to Japanese identity, perceiving it as the symbol of a militaristic, Imperial Japan, responsible for the war sufferings of its neighbours and its own people, which was, ultimately buried in the ashes of WWII defeat (Tanaka, Tanaka and Hata 1995 cf. Shibuichi 2005:203). Meanwhile, China and Korea represent the key external disputants. From the viewpoint of the Chinese government and people, specifically, Yasukuni-*jinja* induces memories of past humiliations and sufferings under the yoke of Japanese imperialism and military aggression, which conceivably provoke popular resentment and official displeasure towards the Shrine (Deans 2007:285-289). With a nationalistic Chinese population fed on decades of patriotic education of distinctly anti-Japanese colouration, and the ideologically defunct CCP state’s

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dead” (2004:87). Among the key development projects included the refurbishment and expansion of the *Yushukan* museum that was completed in 2002 (Breen 2004:87).

<sup>13</sup> Japan’s postwar premiers who paid homage at Yasukuni were Shihedara, Yoshida, Kishi, Ikeda, Sato, Tanaka, Miki, Fukuda, Ohira, Suzuki, Nakasone, Hashimoto, and Koizumi (see Deans 2007:273; Table 1). All LDP PMs before 1985, from Kishi to Nakasone visited the shrine (Shibuichi 2005:205). Following strong international protests, Nakasone’s successors from the LDP, i.e. Takeshita, Uno, and Kaifu shied away from Yasukuni. The post-Cold War era has seen three LDP premiers (Miyazawa, Hashimoto, and Koizumi) visiting the Shrine. Those who did not visit were mainly non-LDP premiers, i.e. Hosokawa, Hata, and Muruyama (Shibuichi 2005:205). For an analysis of the number, frequency, trends, and patterns of PM visits to Yasukuni, see Deans (2007:272-276).

dependence on nationalism as a legitimisation tool, one would expect popular Chinese indignation, accompanied by strong diplomatic protests from Beijing, in reaction to Japanese prime ministerial visits to Yasukuni.<sup>14</sup>

Obviously, Yasukuni evokes contending meanings and images to the actors involved in the dispute. With each disputant's identity defined by the respective image and meaning held by them of this Shrine, Shibuichi concurs that Yasukuni unavoidably serves as "a catalyst for a clash of identities", which is fundamental to understanding the problem itself (2005:199; Tamamoto 2001; Satoh 2006a). Scholars also stress the need to consider the Shrine's instrumentality in the context of domestic ideological and political competition, and its worth as a diplomatic card in Japan's relations with the disputant-states (Rose 2007; Deans 2007). As shall be demonstrated, the Yasukuni debacle in Japanese-Chinese ties is not merely the case of clashing nationalisms/identities, but also a tool utilised by state-elites for domestic political and diplomatic expediency. It illustrates the manifestation of both psychological/emotional and political/instrumental properties of nationalism, where state-elites' external perceptions and calculations are influenced by as much sense/passion, as sensibility/reason, with one prevailing over the other, during particular time and conditions.

### 6.1.3. Yasukuni Shrine as a domestic issue

Domestically, Yasukuni Shrine first emerged as a political issue in the early 1950s, when *Nihon Izokukai*<sup>15</sup> staunchly advocated for its re-nationalisation, as a means to secure state tribute to the war dead, and pension for the bereaved families (Breen 2004:86). Its cause was championed by the LDP, which on five occasions between 1969 and 1974, had sought, albeit unsuccessfully, to submit bills to the Diet calling for Yasukuni to be granted special

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<sup>14</sup> Noda Takeshi sees Yasukuni as a big issue for the Chinese leadership, because of its link to Chinese nationalism and the legitimacy of the CCP. According to him, China's understanding of the war is very much focused on the view of Japan being the aggressor and China its victim. The Chinese views the war criminals enshrined in Yasukuni as the major problem, and therefore, any Japanese PM visit to Yasukuni, would trigger Chinese perceptions that Japan is trying to justify its role in the war (Noda Interview).

<sup>15</sup> The organisation was originally called the Japan Welfare Federation of War-Bereaved Families in the English language, but was later re-named as the JABF. According to Tamamoto Masaru, the real motivation and original objective behind *Izokukai's* formation was economic, namely to seek war pension rather than venerating the war dead. This suggests pressure groups utilizing nationalism as a political tool to pressure the Japanese government, for their own political/economic agenda/goals (Tamamoto interview).

status and placed under state patronage (Tokita 2003:48; Harootunian 1999:155-157). Strong resistance from leftwing bodies eventually forced the LDP to abandon the nationalisation bill, compelling the Shrine's proponents to recalibrate their focus towards realising official visits by Japanese premiers and cabinet members as their major political agenda (Tokita 2003:49; Rose 2007:26). In fact, the term "official" has since, become diluted to simply being "prime ministerial visits", at present (Tanaka 2003). Interestingly, prime ministerial visits never elicited much contention before 1975, with most postwar premiers, from Shidehara Kijuro onwards, having paid homage, while annual visits by the Emperor<sup>16</sup> during auspicious festivals were considered a norm. However, the declaration of the "private nature" of his April 1975 visit by then PM Miki Takeo (Deans 2007:272), triggered fierce, "left-versus-right" debate within Japanese politics, in the context of the constitutional separation of religion and the state, which has since, transformed Yasukuni into a highly politicised domestic issue (Tokita 2003:49). Core to the debate is the constitutionality of such visits in both private and official capacities, and the definition of, and differences between them (Sono 2005). Previous homages by Japanese premiers had been, largely interpreted as private, as indicated explicitly beforehand, or implicitly, by their quiet visitation, and their eschewing of the use of any symbols of official trappings and subtle changes in ceremonial rituals during such visits (Wan 2006:236-237). Nonetheless, critics argue that what constitutes as being "official", and "private" is subjective, ambiguous, and tend to overlap, and that it is difficult, to objectively distinguish the two categories (Sono 2005:52). In view of such ambiguity, state leaders should thus, refrain from visiting Yasukuni to avoid the possibility of infringing the related constitutional provision (Umehara 2004).

The Shrine courted more domestic controversy in 1979, when *Asahi Shimbun* revealed its secret enshrinement of Class-A war criminals, a year before, sparking further debates on the legality of the decision, and possible government involvement and contravention of the related constitutional provision (Lam 2006b:3). According to Tokita, the Yasukuni authorities defended their action, citing the 1953 Law for Relief of War Victims and

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<sup>16</sup> The late Emperor Hirohito, posthumously known as Emperor Showa visited Yasukuni eight times in the postwar period (Deans 2007:273), but stopped after the enshrinement of the Class-A war criminals in 1978.

Survivor as having granted equal status to the deceased war criminals, which allowed them to be treated like other war dead, and that their castigation was “an act of arbitrary condemnation” of the vanquished, based on victor’s justice (2003:49). Meanwhile, the Japanese state denied any involvement in the controversy. In responding to calls for the removal of the war criminals, the government stipulated that it had no legal authority to order the Shrine to do so, given the provision on Article 20 of the Constitution (Lam 2006b:3).

#### 6.1.4. Internationalisation of the Yasukuni dispute

Notwithstanding the fervent Diet debates, Yasukuni remained essentially a domestic issue until the mid-1980s. Visits by Japanese premiers following the mentioned controversies did not provoke significant international criticisms. In the context of Japanese-Chinese relations, the Chinese authorities had never taken offence with prime ministerial visits, prior to 1985 (Deans 2007:274-275). Although veiled protests were apparent in response to homages between 1982-1984, none escalated into diplomatic standoffs (Shibuichi 2005:207).<sup>17</sup>

However, the publicised “official” visit by Nakasone Yasuhiro on August 15, 1985, unexpectedly triggered international opposition, mainly from China and South Korea. The Chinese took offence and vehemently protested the visit, albeit unofficially through state and popular channels (Rose 2007:29-30). A self-professed nationalist, Nakasone declared the visit “official”, despite strong domestic protests from leftist/pacifist groups (Shibuichi 2005:207). His decision was apparently, based on an independent consultative committee’s conclusion that “an official visit would not be unconstitutional if carried out in a manner relatively free of religious elements” (cf. Tokita 2003:49). The underlying reasons were both, political and personal, namely strong pressure from *Izokukai*, and his experience as a military officer during WWII (Nakasone 2001:100-111 cf. Shibuichi 2005:206),<sup>18</sup> which underscored his sentiment, and arguably, dependence on nationalist-based political support

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<sup>17</sup> For instance, Beijing did not reprimand Suzuki for his August 15, 1982 visit, despite coinciding with the history textbook row (Wan 2006:237). It did express “mild” displeasure during Nakasone’s 1982 visit, via the official mouthpiece, *Renmin Ribao*, followed by similar “soft” protests in 1983 and 1984 (Shibuichi 2005:207).

<sup>18</sup> According to his personal account, Nakasone cited two reasons: i) he was pressured by *Izokukai* members, who reportedly resorted to large-scale hunger strike in demand for his paying an official visit to Yasukuni on August 15, and ii) his personal experience as a naval officer in WWII influenced his decision to pay tribute to those who lost their lives under his command (Nakasone 2001:100-111 cf. Shibuichi 2005:206).

that required living up to his nationalist reputation. Nonetheless, the Chinese reaction forced Tokyo to seek remedial measures to pacify Beijing, and Nakasone to reconsider future Shrine visits. Taking the Chinese protest seriously, he did not visit Yasukuni again during his premiership,<sup>19</sup> despite severe criticisms and character attacks from nationalist groups and rightwing intellectuals, as well as threats of assassination by *uyoku* for allegedly “kowtowing” to Chinese pressure (AS 03/08/2001 cf. Shibuichi 2005:209). Nakasone’s successors followed suit, establishing a temporary moratorium of prime ministerial visits, amid strong nationalist pressure, presumably to avoid further internationalisation of the dispute (Kingston 2004:238; Shibuichi 2005:209).

The Yasukuni issue remained dormant in Japanese-Chinese diplomacy throughout the early 1990s, but resurrected in July 1996, by then PM Hashimoto Ryutaro’s “private” visit.<sup>20</sup> Apparently, it was not Hashimoto, but Miyazawa Kiichi, who first broke the moratorium by secretly visiting Yasukuni during his tenure (KN 25/07/2001). China strongly protested against Hashimoto’s pilgrimage, which coincided with the period of rising Chinese nationalism, and worsening ties caused by bilateral problems highlighted in the preceding chapters.<sup>21</sup> It is widely construed that Hashimoto made the visit to appease *Izokukai*, of which he was its former chairperson before securing the PM position, ostensibly via *Izokukai*’s clout in LDP politics. Nevertheless, like Nakasone, Beijing’s protestation “effectively prevented him from making another visit [during his premiership]” (Wan 2006: 237). Subsequent premiers, from Obuchi to Mori, avoided the debacle by keeping Yasukuni at arms-length. The Obuchi administration rekindled the call for the removal of Class-A war criminals and purging of Yasukuni’s religious nuances, and even proposed the creation of an alternative site in 1999 (Breen 2004:88).

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<sup>19</sup> Nakasone explained in his memoirs that he stopped his Shrine visits in response to a personal request from Hu Yaobang, the Japan-friendly CCP General Secretary, with whom he developed personal ties. Apparently, Nakasone’s visit in 1985 had forced Hu into a tight corner (Nakasone 2004: 135-139; cf. Kokubun 2007:153).

<sup>20</sup> Hashimoto, however, insisted that his homage to Yasukuni in 1996 was “official”, not “private” as many had believed, when queried by the press, prior to the April 2001 LDP presidential election (KN 17/04/2001).

<sup>21</sup> Japanese-Chinese ties in 1996 were undermined by bilateral quarrels, ranging from the Taiwan Straits crisis and the “Hashimoto-Clinton declaration” on the renewed Guideline for the US-Japan Alliance, to China’s nuclear tests and the Senkaku/Diaoyudao disputes. See Chapter 3 and Chapter 5 for details.

However, the coming of Koizumi Junichiro in 2001, triggered what was to become the most debilitating period of Japanese-Chinese political relations since 1972, with his Yasukuni pilgrimages at the heart of their diplomatic conundrums. Koizumi became the first post-Cold War Japanese PM to have visited the controversial Shrine, annually during his tenure. These visits were, carried out, despite fervent protests from China and Korea, and a chorus of international criticisms, domestic consternations, notwithstanding. In regard to Japanese-Chinese relations, Koizumi's visits forced the infuriated Chinese government to freeze leader summits and top-level exchanges, turning what was merely a symbolic issue into a "diplomatic *faux pas*" (Sato 2006a:2; Okazaki 02/09/2006).

Koizumi's nonchalance towards the Yasukuni issue distinguished him from his predecessors, i.e. Nakasone and Hashimoto, who unlike Koizumi, had crumbled under staunch domestic and international pressure that saw them shying away from subsequent Shrine visits. Interestingly, such distinction has been, closely linked to resurgent Japanese nationalism, and the apparent national fatigue towards Japan's "kowitz diplomacy" and desire to establish a "normal-cum-equal" relationship with China. This raises crucial questions regarding the extent to which domestic nationalist pressure intervenes, and affects Japanese leaders' perception and management of the Yasukuni dispute, and whether such assertiveness is directly induced by the emotional properties of nationalism/identity politics, and/or calculated responses for domestic and diplomatic expediency.

## **6.2. The Yasukuni Problem in Contemporary Japanese-Chinese Diplomacy: Nationalism and the External-Domestic Nexus in Japan's China Policy-making**

Yasukuni Shrine re-emerged as a serious point of contention in Japanese-Chinese ties during the Koizumi administration, at a time when nationalism and the question of identity resonated increasingly loudly within the Japanese domestic political debate and popular consciousness. It also coincided with the changing power relations between the two resident powers of East Asia, in a fluid post-Cold War international environment that has perpetuated Japanese sense of insecurity, notably towards China's rise, and its flourishing nationalism that seemingly targeted Japan. The juxtaposition and interactions between nationalism and

these shifting external-domestic dynamics were responsible for fuelling the “China threat” perception, and redefining Japanese external behaviour, when dealing with the Chinese, as illustrated by Tokyo’s tough posturing over the Yasukuni issue.

The following sections analyse the international and domestic environments, and the related processes that affected Japanese state-elites’ perception and calculation, to explicate nationalism’s salience vis-à-vis other variables in shaping Tokyo’s policy-options and diplomatic manoeuvres during Koizumi’s Shrine visits. His defiance and Japan’s diplomatic responses to Chinese challenges during each visit between 2001 and 2006 offer an opportunity to analyse the interaction between domestic nationalist pressure and foreign policy-behaviour/preferences, under particular external-domestic conditions, as perceived/calculated by Japanese state-elites. Many Japanese observers share the opinion that Koizumi’s stubbornness, maverick personality, and personal conviction (nationalistic or otherwise) are central to understanding his persistence in visiting Yasukuni.<sup>22</sup> However, a critical examination of the prevailing environs leading to his Shrine visits, and the manner in which they were carefully choreographed and executed, not mentioning, the diplomatic manoeuvring thereafter, suggest that shrewd calculations involving the use of nationalism for domestic political objectives, and its delicate balancing and trade-off with other factors, were also at play. Moreover, a comparative observation on the ambiguous position taken by his successor, Abe Shinzo and his Cabinet on the issue, despite their overtly nationalistic disposition<sup>23</sup> (Lam 2006c), implies that emotional nationalism and domestic nationalist pressure may not necessarily be the driver of Japan’s China policy, or the overarching feature of post-Cold War Japanese-Chinese diplomacy, after all.

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<sup>22</sup> Kato Koichi, Koizumi’s ex-political ally, described him as “a politician who depends much on emotions and intuition, instead of logic and reason when making decisions...and also not one to listen to the advice of others” (Yoshida 28/05/2005 cf. van Kemenade 2006:49). This was reiterated by Kato during my interview with him, an opinion that was equally shared by many Japanese “China” experts, i.e Takagi Seiichiro, Kokubun Ryosei, Soeya Yoshihide, and Mori Kazuko, interviewed between January -March 2007 and May-June 2008.

<sup>23</sup> For a description of the “nationalistic” disposition of Abe’s cabinet, see “Hawkishness is watchword for Abe team: Cabinet ministers are seen as staunch supporters of traditional values”, *Japan Times*, 27 September 2006.

### 6.2.1. Koizumi and the Yasukuni disputes (2001-2006)

From the outset, Koizumi's rise to the apex of Japanese politics occurred amid the structural transformation in Japanese-Chinese relations, which saw both governments readjusting to the changing bilateral dynamics since the mid-1990s. His appointment also reflected the shift in Japan's domestic politics, where he became principally, the first Japanese premier elected based on popularity and mass support, instead of the usual backroom negotiations between the LDP *habatsu*/factions that saw relatively obscure/weak politicians appointed to the office, previously (Anderson 2004:152; Hashizume 2001:53). Against the milieu of rising domestic nationalist impulses, and being a popularly elected leader who relied heavily on mass sentiment and media appeal (Iida 2003), Koizumi would have been responsive to nationalist pressure during his premiership. In the context of Japan-China ties, his Administration would have been vulnerable, to an extent, to pressures from the mentioned nationalist groups, conservative media coverage, and an increasingly sceptical, anti-Chinese public opinion, especially when it came to dealing with Beijing over the Yasukuni problem. That said, mitigating domestic forces, and pragmatism in maintaining friendly ties with China to facilitate Japan's broader national interests could have similarly affected Koizumi's policy-considerations. This external-domestic nexus in foreign policy decision-making was apparent in the circumstances surrounding Koizumi's inaugural visit in August 2001.

Externally, Japanese-Chinese relations were showing signs of improvement since early 1999, as both governments took damage control initiatives to improve ties, which had been hitherto, undermined by a series of bilateral disputes that culminated in the diplomatic fiasco during Jiang Zemin's 1998 visit. As elaborated, the Chinese leadership resorted to a diplomatic "charm offensive" after realising the damage caused by their excessive manipulation of the history issue and stoking of popular anti-Japanese nationalism, which had undermined Japanese-Chinese goodwill since the mid-1990s (Rozman 2002). The Obuchi and Mori governments reciprocated China's so-called "smile diplomacy" (Rozman 2001), bringing a thaw in political ties that complemented their increasingly robust economic relationship. Despite the positive development, Japan remained cautiously optimistic,

adopting a so-called “reluctant realist” policy of containment-cum-engagement to hedge against potential belligerence from a powerful China (Green 2001), as demonstrated by its incremental security policy-shifts under the auspices of an enhanced US-Japan alliance.

The domestic environment in Japan was less sanguine, due to growing public scepticism regarding China’s benign rise, and their unfavourable images of, and unabated resentment towards the Chinese. Undoubtedly, Japanese nationalists/media have exploited this “thriving” domestic condition, “demonising” and fuelling the “China threat” perception to advance their parochial agenda (Rozman 2002; Satoh 2006b), with prime ministerial Yasukuni visit high on their priority list. Expectedly, Yasukuni became a key issue during the run-up to the 2001 LDP presidential election, occupying the campaigns of the two leading candidates: Koizumi and Hashimoto. It was ironic that Hashimoto, the former *Izokukai* chief, and also, being the most recent of ex-premiers to have visited Yasukuni during his time in office, declared that he will not be repeating this feat, if elected this time around. Meanwhile, Koizumi, who had never before visited the Shrine, pledged to pay annual homage on August 15, and made this promise an integral part of his manifesto, during his LDP presidency campaign. It is believed that he made the pledge on 15 April 2001 to Morita Tsuguo, *Izokukai*’s vice-chairman (Yoshida 28/05/2005), in a calculated attempt to distinguish himself from, and cash in on Hashimoto’s earlier decision (Anonymous interview A). This timely move, made a week before the election, would have given Koizumi the opportunity to undercut Hashimoto’s power base within *Izokukai*, alienate the latter from other nationalist/rightwing groups, and consequentially benefit from their electoral support.<sup>24</sup> Koizumi’s decision to woo nationalist support may have proven decisive, as he outpolled Hashimoto 51% to 40% at the parliamentary level, while gaining an 87% to 11% victory

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<sup>24</sup> According to several of my interviewees, Hashimoto’s decision was probably due to, among others: i) the negative experience and repercussions he faced following his previous Yasukuni visit as PM; ii) his knowledge and experience on the intricacies of foreign affairs and diplomacy, which may have prompted his statesman-like considerations for maintaining the thawing relationship with China; and perhaps, iii) a “miscalculation” of his domestic power base and influence. Hashimoto may have thought that his declaration would not have any damaging impact, since he had already visited Yasukuni during his premiership, and that he could count on his personal affiliation with *Izokukai* and support from military veterans/pensioners organisations, considering his influential position as then Welfare Minister. This “miscalculation” was strategically exploited by Koizumi (Nakai interview; Tomoda interview; Kim interview; Yoshida interview; Anonymous interview A).

margin at the prefectural level (Anderson 2004:153). Koizumi's pledge drew Chinese (and Korean) concerns, and his election, and consequent anointment as PM saw the Japanese and Chinese governments locked in a protracted diplomatic "tug-of-war" over the Yasukuni issue, culminating in his inaugural visit on 13 August 2001.

Retrospectively, Koizumi's Yasukuni pledge was ill-timed, as April 2001 also saw a resurrection of the history textbook controversy,<sup>25</sup> Li Denghui's controversial visit to Japan,<sup>26</sup> and trade dispute over agricultural produce,<sup>27</sup> which were already straining their relationship (Wan 2006:237). On the day he assumed the LDP presidency, Koizumi reiterated his intention to fulfill his pledge, much to Beijing's dismay (KN 24/04/2001). The Chinese MFA immediately responded with a statement imploring the PM-elect to act responsibly to restore damaged ties and reconsider his plan to visit Yasukuni (Reuters 24/04/2001; KN 24/04/2001). This was followed by intensified Chinese pressure during the next few months to dissuade Koizumi from his Shrine agenda. During his meeting with South Korea's ruling party delegation on May 28, President Jiang Zemin criticised Koizumi over the Yasukuni issue, and his management of the textbook controversy (Jiji 28/05/2001). A Chinese MFA spokesperson kept up the pressure days later, by questioning Japan's commitment towards promoting friendly relations, citing that Koizumi would be sending a mixed signal to Japan's neighbours with his Shrine visit (XNA 31/05/2001). On June 25, the Chinese ambassador to Japan purportedly urged Koizumi to rethink his plan (Jiji 25/06/2001), while Jiang again expressed concern in a July 10 meeting with the secretaries-general of Japan's ruling coalition, during their visit to Beijing (DY/YS 11/07/2001). It was believed that this inaugural trip by Japan's new coalition government to China and South Korea came with a correlated errand to placate its hosts, and explain Japanese position concerning the history textbook

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<sup>25</sup> Aforementioned in Chapter 5, the Japanese government (MOE) had on 3 April 2001, approved the junior high history textbook published by the neo-nationalist intellectual group, *Tsukurukai* that ostensibly contained "sanitised" information on Japan's war history, drawing strong protests from South Korea and China.

<sup>26</sup> Despite strong pressure from Beijing, Tokyo allowed the former Taiwanese president to visit Japan between 22-26 April 2001, under the pretext of seeking medical treatment. China retaliated by cancelling the planned visit to Japan in May 2001, by Li Peng, the NPC Chairman and former Chinese premier (see JT 26/04/2001).

<sup>27</sup> A bilateral trade dispute broke out when Japan imposed temporary safeguard measures on *shitake* mushrooms, leeks and *tatami* straws imported from China, on 23 April 2001, provoking Beijing to retaliate by raising tariffs on imports of Japanese automobiles, air-conditioners, and mobile phone on 19 June 2001 (Przystup 2001b:93-94).

and Yasukuni visit.<sup>28</sup> Predictably, the Chinese rebuffed such efforts and remained adamant that Japan should carefully manage the “history” problem, implying their displeasure on Koizumi’s insensitivity towards both issues (JT 11/07/2001).<sup>29</sup> Upon their return, Koizumi was briefed, and urged by the secretaries-general to carefully reconsider his plan (AS 11/07/2001 cf. Wan 2006:238), but the PM reaffirmed his resolve to visit during a pre-Upper House election debate with the opposition (JT 12/07/2001). China pressed on during the mid-July ASEAN-Plus-Three meeting in Hanoi, when Tanaka Makiko was told by China’s FM, Tang Jiaxuan, that the visit “must be cancelled” (KN 24/07/2001; Jiji 24/07/2001).<sup>30</sup> The Japanese FM agreed to relay Chinese concerns, and advise Koizumi (DowJones 25/06/2001; KN 26/07/2001), while categorically, expressing her personal opposition to the planned homage (MDN 31/07/2001). The Chinese leadership also relied on “China Hand”, Nonaka Hiromu to intervene and persuade Koizumi to cancel his pilgrimage, during the LDP stalwart’s trip to China in early August 2001 (Jiji 25/07/2001; JT 03/08/2001).

Besides external pressures, Koizumi encountered domestic opposition, from within and outside the LDP, and ambiguous public support towards his Yasukuni visit. All the opposition parties were against it, while moderate LDP elites/lawmakers, i.e. current and ex-secretary-generals, Yamasaki Taku and Kato Koichi urged Koizumi to be prudent, and suggested changing the date of the visit (Wan 2006:240; KN 07/08/2001). In fact, during the cabinet meeting on August 7, most members wanted the PM to exercise caution, while stating their own apprehension towards visiting Yasukuni on the symbolic August 15 (XNA 07/08/2001 cf. Wan 2006:240). However, Yamasaki had confirmed earlier that the pilgrimage “will certainly be made”, pending decision on the date by Koizumi (JT 06/01/2001). Public opinion surveys by *Asahi Shimbun* also revealed a shift towards a more

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<sup>28</sup> The secretaries-general were Yamasaki Taku of LDP; Fuyushiba Tetsuzo of Shin-Komeito; and Noda Takeshi of Hoshuto. The trio reportedly carried with them Koizumi’s personal letters to the Chinese and Korean leaders expressing his commitment to maintaining friendly ties with the two countries (Jiji 02/07/01; 06/07/01).

<sup>29</sup> During the July 10, 2001 meeting, Chinese FM Tang Jiaxuan told the ruling coalition trio that China will not accept Koizumi’s plans to visit Yasukuni. He also insisted that Japan should properly manage the history textbook issue, in response to Tokyo’s recent rejection of Chinese demands for changes to *Tsukurukai’s* controversial history textbook (see JT 11/07/2001).

<sup>30</sup> Meanwhile, the Korean government joined in by issuing its first official protest against the planned Yasukuni visit, through its ambassador in Tokyo (Shibuichi 2005:211; see also Reuters 24/07/2001).

cautious position by early August, in light of intense media scrutiny and debate on the issue, with those supporting the visit declining to 26% from 42%, a month before<sup>31</sup> (Takashina 2001:50).

Despite the opposition, Koizumi stood by his decision and visited Yasukuni, albeit two days earlier from the promised date. The visit received blanket international and domestic media coverage, with commentators associating it and other recent “taboo-breaking” developments to rising nationalism in Japan. Specifically to Japanese-Chinese ties, Koizumi’s uncompromising posture towards Chinese demands suggests increasing domestic nationalist constraint on state-elites in China policy-making. That said, one could equally contend that the “change-of-date” strategy represented a political compromise by Koizumi to appease the contending participants located at the opposite ends of the Yasukuni dispute. This brings us to question nationalism’s salience vis-à-vis other factors/actors, and their roles in determining the particular policy-option taken by the Koizumi administration.

Not surprisingly, Beijing issued a strongly worded official statement in protest of the visit (BBC 13/08/2001). Stronger diplomatic reactions ensued, such as Chinese refusal to grant a bilateral summit with Koizumi, and Jiang’s intention to cancel his meeting with the Japanese premier come October’s APEC convention in Shanghai (ST 18/08/2001). Conversely, the Japanese government was, surprisingly keen to mend relations in the aftermath of the standoff, with Koizumi repeatedly indicating his desire to visit China, before the APEC summit (JT 27/08/2001; 05/09/2001).<sup>32</sup> Tokyo’s “fence-mending” efforts were subsequently, albeit ironically facilitated by the “9/11” incident, which dramatically altered “the parameters of Sino-Japanese relations”(Wan 2006:244). With both sides eager to shelve the Yasukuni issue to smoothen the path for cooperation in the US-led “campaign against terrorism” (Bezlova 09/10/2001), Koizumi seized this window of opportunity to make

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<sup>31</sup> The *Asahi Shimbun* public opinion poll’s questionnaire on August 4, 2001 was allegedly skewed, causing the results to be inaccurate. This argument by Takashina (2001:50) is elaborated in the next sub-chapter.

<sup>32</sup> On 24 August 2001, Koizumi instructed the MOFA to arrange his visit to China before the APEC summit in Shanghai (JT 27/08/2001). He reiterated his desire to visit China and Korea “at an earliest possible opportunity, if the situation permits” during an interview with the Japan Times (JT 05/09/2001; see also KN 24/08/2001).

amends during his October 8 working visit to Beijing (AFP 08/10/2001). His widely reported “friendly” gestures during the trip drew favourable Chinese remarks, which helped lessen political tension (XNA 08/10/2001; KN 12/10/2001). Japan-China ties regained traction, following further cordial exchanges at the sideline of regional multilateral fora. Despite these diplomatic efforts, and the “benefit of the doubt” given to him by the Chinese government (Wan 2006:245), Koizumi refused to rule out future Yasukuni visits, as demonstrated by his “non-committal” press statements during his high-profile China trip (JT 09/10/2001).

Beijing was clearly infuriated, when Koizumi decided to make it a routine with his second Yasukuni trip on 21 April 2002. The “Spring Festival” visit took the Chinese by surprise, for they probably did not expect Koizumi to be that indecorous, after having only recently made positive remarks about Japan-China ties, during the Boao Forum in Hainan (JT 13/04/2002).<sup>33</sup> Moreover, both sides were planning an elaborate celebration in September to mark the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of diplomatic normalisation. The Chinese response was ritualistic, with the Vice-FM summoning the Japanese ambassador (XNA 21/04/2002), while the MFA swiftly issued an official statement denouncing the visit (AFP 21/04/2002). Beijing also postponed scheduled defence exchanges, namely the April visit to China by JDA chief, Nakatani Gen, and the inaugural port calling of a Chinese warship to Japan in mid-May 2002 (AFP 23/04/2002), but, surprisingly, proceeded with senior CCP leader Zeng Qinghong’s Japan visit (AFP 25/04/2002). Nonetheless, Chinese indignation ultimately saw the cancellation of Koizumi’s state visit to China, and postponement of the summit, scheduled to coincide with the anniversary celebration<sup>34</sup> (AS 09/08/2002; Curtin 2003b).

Koizumi appeared unfazed by the adverse impact his shrine visits had on the political atmosphere of the bilateral ties. With political relations worsening amid fresh Chinese

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<sup>33</sup> In his keynote speech at the Boao Forum, Koizumi stressed that China is not an economic threat to Japan but an opportunity. For a similar report, see “Koizumi says China no economic threat,” *Reuters*, 11 April 2002.

<sup>34</sup> *Asahi Shimbun* reported on 9 August 2002 the postponement of Koizumi’s scheduled China trip to mark the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of diplomatic normalisation, apparently following Beijing’s recommendation to avoid a visit during the 16<sup>th</sup> CCP Congress, and Tokyo’s intention to arrange one after the event to enable him to meet China’s new leadership (AS 09/08/2002; Wan 2006:247). However, observers see Koizumi’s unwillingness to satisfy Chinese demand to declare a halt to his Yasukuni visits as central to the suspension of this symbolically important trip (AS 09/08/2002; Wan 2006:247).

protest over the disputed Senkaku/Diaoyudao in early January 2003, the “maverick” premier paid another visit to Yasukuni on January 14, making it his third in as many years. Again, the Chinese seemed unable to do anything more than lodging official protests.<sup>35</sup> However, it became clear by then, that Koizumi was unwilling to yield to Chinese pressure, while the new Hu-Wen leadership was not in a favourable position, domestically, to compromise over the Yasukuni diplomatic *faux pas*,<sup>36</sup> for fear of domestic nationalist retribution. The Chinese government thus had to maintain an assertive stance, by repeatedly rejecting Japanese proposal for a bilateral summit between their state leaders, and making a halt to Yasukuni visits the pre-requisite for any top-level exchanges to materialise. China’s hardened posture was demonstrated by FM Kawaguchi’s repeated failures to arrange Koizumi a state visit to meet President Hu Jintao, during her trips to China, and Premier Wen Jiabao’s lukewarm response to Koizumi’s invitation to visit Japan (KN 07/04/2003; 07/10/2003). Indeed, Wan (2006:249) thought it was probably Chinese intention to snub Koizumi by choosing Kan Naoto, the DPJ leader, for Hu’s first meeting with Japanese political elites, in his capacity as China’s new head-of-state (see also AS 17/04/2003). That said, Koizumi was able to meet Hu in St. Petersburg on 31 May 2003, on the sidelines of the Russian city’s tri-centennial celebration, where amiable exchanges transpired between the two leaders and foreign ministers (Nikkei 31/05/2003; Wan 2006:249).

Whilst Hu’s pragmatic approach towards Japan, ostensibly influenced by the so-called “new thinking on Sino-Japanese ties” discourse (Lam 2004:9), provided opportunity to improve relations, it was Koizumi yet again, who decided to rankle and second-guess the Chinese, by reiterating on June 19, that Yasukuni visit would remain in his agenda (KN 19/06/2003).<sup>37</sup> The previously highlighted history-related quarrels during the second half of 2003 threatened to strain bilateral ties further. Despite that, China’s new leadership

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<sup>35</sup> Japan’s ambassador to China was, again, immediately summoned by Chinese Vice-FM, Yang Wenchang to protest the visit, while Chinese ambassador to Tokyo, Wu Dawei called on Japanese Vice-FM, Takeuchi Yukio for a similar purpose (China Daily (CD) 15/03/2003; Przystup 2003b:102; 108).

<sup>36</sup> In my interview with Okazaki Hisahiko, the well-known hawk and opinion leader, and advisor of ex-PM Abe and the *Yushukan* Museum, opined that the Yasukuni issue has become China’s diplomatic *faux pas*.

<sup>37</sup> Koizumi told reporters of his intention to continue visiting Yasukuni, and that he did not believe the shrine was the key issue in Japanese-Chinese relations, eliciting a rebuke from the Chinese MFA on the next day (KN 19/06/2003; see also JT 22/06/2003).

appeared less emotional in its handling of those problems, possibly demonstrating eagerness to improve relations, in hope of a reciprocal response from the Koizumi administration over the Yasukuni issue. Beijing also utilised other levels of bilateral interaction, and meetings on the sidelines of multilateral platforms to continue stressing the need for Japan to manage “history” carefully, and restore “favourable” conditions to facilitate top-level exchanges, in a veiled attempt to pressure Koizumi against further Yasukuni visits.<sup>38</sup> To China’s dismay, Koizumi remained adamant to the point of mocking Chinese efforts by insisting that they understood his intention, and that Shrine visits will not damage bilateral relations (KN 13/10/2003).<sup>39</sup>

The Japanese PM kept to his words by paying his fourth Yasukuni homage on New Year’s Day of 2004, thwarting any realistic opportunity to improve relations with China that year. The Chinese MFA reacted with the usual diplomatic protests (MDN 02/01/2004), and again, postponed the much awaited, mutual navy visit, despite having only been recently rekindled, during the resumption of high-level defence exchanges that saw JDA chief, Ishiba Shigeru visiting Beijing in September 2003 (Jiji 09/01/2004; AS/IHT 05/09/2004). Meanwhile, the LDP maintained its staunch support, stating that Yasukuni visits would be declared as part of its political platform, on 16 January 2004, together with constitutional revision and several other nationalist-oriented issues that were once considered taboo (JT 07/01/2004).

The Yasukuni debacle remained unabated throughout 2004, compounded by the ECS territorial/maritime disputes, anti-Japanese incidents during the July Asia Cup football tournament, and Chinese submarine incursion in November, among the grievances. Beijing nonetheless, pragmatically maintained relations at other levels, while continuously shunning Koizumi, i.e. Wen’s “cold-shoulder” at the October ASEM summit in Hanoi (SCMP 11/10/2004). Conversely, Tokyo reaffirmed its willingness to improve ties, with Koizumi

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<sup>38</sup> For instance, Koizumi invited Wen Jiabao to visit Japan during their meeting at the 9<sup>th</sup> ASEAN summit in Bali on 7 October 2003, but Wen diplomatically declined, citing the need for “good atmosphere” between the two nations to prevail for resumption of summit visits (KN 07/10/2003; JT 08/10/2003).

<sup>39</sup> During their meeting at Bali’s Asean-Plus-Three summit, Wen Jiabao hinted to Koizumi that the “history issue” must be handled “appropriately”, without explicitly mentioning the Yasukuni issue (IHT 08/10/2003), only to have the Japanese PM disregarding Chinese concerns by reiterating to the press his Shrine resolve, after the meeting (Przystup 2004a:124).

indicating keenness to meet the Chinese leaders, despite the Yasukuni conundrum (JT 11/10/2004). On November 21, 2004, Koizumi met Hu at the APEC summit in Chile, where the latter, for the first time explicitly mentioned Yasukuni as the major issue stifling Japanese-Chinese political ties, and reminded the Japanese premier of the sensitivity surrounding the year 2005, in an attempt to dissuade another visit by him (MDN 22/11/2004; JT 23/11/2004). Premier Wen raised a similar concern with Koizumi, at the ASEAN-Plus-Three summit in Laos on 30 November 2004 (BBC 30/11/2004). Interestingly, unlike previous occasions, Koizumi did not rebuff the Chinese leaders, when questioned by Japanese reporters, after those meetings (Wan 2006:255), but somewhat maintained public silence regarding his Yasukuni plan, although many expected him to continue his annual pilgrimage (DY 22/12/2004; Curtin 2005a).

With the Shrine row still unresolved, the eruption of other contentious issues mentioned in Chapter 3 saw Japanese-Chinese ties sinking to a nadir in 2005. Bilateral tension ratcheted up when the Japanese government assumed ownership of the *Seinensha*-built lighthouse in Senkaku/Diaoyudao. Then, Chinese concerns over the implications of the February “Two-plus-Two” meeting on Taiwan saw Beijing responding with the Anti-Secession Law, a month later (Kokubun 2007:145). Compounding the emerging Japanese-Chinese strategic rivalry was Japan’s UNSC ambition, which triggered the noted internet petition in China, in March. Tokyo’s declaration of China’s “graduation” from Japanese ODA after the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games<sup>40</sup> (YS 03/03/2005; DY 18/03/2005), also did not augur well with the Chinese. The MOE/MEXT’s approval of a new edition of *Tsukurukai*’s contentious textbook on April 5 drew further Chinese protests (Nakanishi 2005:19). All these Chinese grievances resulted in the popular anti-Japanese demonstrations across China’s major cities that lasted almost three weeks (Kokubun 2007:138-139). Tokyo demanded a formal apology and compensation for the damage inflicted upon Japanese companies and diplomatic missions, but Beijing refused to budge, and instead, blamed the Japanese

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<sup>40</sup> Koizumi had earlier hinted on ending ODA to China on 28 November 2004, which reflected Japanese public sentiment. See Koizumi’s press statement at <http://www.mofa.go.jp/reion/asiapaci/asean/pmv0411/press.html>.

government entirely for the popular outburst (Zhu 2005:16; Kokubun 2007:139).<sup>41</sup> Although both sides eventually sought to stabilise relations, Tokyo was clearly annoyed, when Vice-Premier Wu Yi, unceremoniously cancelled her scheduled “fence-mending” meeting with Koizumi on 23 May 2005, apparently in reaction against the Japanese premier’s “untimely” reiteration of his Yasukuni resolve, before the event<sup>42</sup> (MDN 24/05/2005).

As political tension escalated in the following months over the ECS gas dispute and China’s indiscreet opposition to Japan’s UNSC bid, there were growing calls for Koizumi to visit Yasukuni on August 15, to show contempt and defiance towards the Chinese. Meanwhile, speculations were abound that Koizumi might utilise Yasukuni to rally support for the September 11 Lower House elections, which was crucial to his domestic reform agenda. Eventually, Koizumi did not turn it into an election issue, nor did he visit Yasukuni on August 15. Instead, he made his fifth visit during the Shrine’s Autumn Festival, on October 17, following the LDP’s “landslide” electoral victory, which provided the political mandate for him to do so, despite Chinese indignation (JT 18/10/2005; Funabashi 15/09/2005). The timing of the visit was deemed “a serious provocation” as it coincided with the success of China’s second manned space flight (KN 18/10/2006). Beijing instantly protested by summoning the Japanese ambassador, and then, postponing senior official-level meetings scheduled later that week, which included FM Machimura’s meeting with his Chinese counterpart (AFP 18/10/2005; JT 18/10/2005). As if to add further insult to injury, a defiant Koizumi reshuffled his Cabinet on October 31, appointing well-known anti-China hawks and staunch Yasukuni supporters to key Cabinet positions. They were Abe Shinzo, the new CCS replacing the more moderate Fukuda, who were absent from the new line-up, and Aso Taro as FM (AFP 31/10/2005). Interestingly, the “moderate” Tanigaki Sadakazu

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<sup>41</sup> According to Zhu, the Chinese authorities did tacitly accept responsibility for the damage to Japanese-related facilities, when Vice-FM Qiao Zonghuai expressed regrets to Japanese ambassador Anami Koreshige, and promised to compensate for the damages. However, Chinese FM Li Zhaoxing refused to apologise to his Japanese counterpart, Machimura Nobutaka in a subsequent meeting on April 17 (2005:16). For a discussion on the reasons behind the April 2005 anti-Japanese demonstration, see Zhu (2005). See Yayama (2005) for a Japanese perception and view about the “real reason” behind Chinese contention.

<sup>42</sup> Koizumi strongly hinted that he will continue visiting Yasukuni during a Lower House budget session on May 16, 2005, a day before Wu Yi’s arrival (XNA 16/05/2005). The Chinese leadership initially remained cool, hoping the trip would result in more conciliatory tone from Koizumi, but was subsequently offended, when Koizumi made his intention clear a day before the schedule meeting (Curtin 2005a).

was reappointed Finance Minister (JT 01/11/2005).<sup>43</sup> Clearly bemused by Koizumi's audacity, China's leaders ignored their Japanese counterparts at the November APEC summit in Pusan, and together with South Korea, suspended the tripartite meeting under the auspices of ASEAN-Plus-Three in December 2005, freezing all channels of high-level exchanges, including those at the fringes of multilateral foras, as Japanese-Chinese political relations worsened (Togo 2006:5).

Aware of their futility in changing Koizumi's attitude, and realising his term would end in September 2006, the Chinese shifted their attention to, and begun applying pressure on the prospective LDP presidential/prime ministerial candidates by early 2006. During a meeting with the heads of seven Japan-China friendship organisations on 31 March 2006, President Hu "extended an olive branch" by indicating his readiness to resume talks with Japanese leaders upon their clarification to halt future Yasukuni visits (cf. PD 01/04/2006).<sup>44</sup> However, the Japanese leadership hopefuls were quick to rebuff Beijing, with Abe criticising the Chinese for pinning the fate of their bilateral ties to a single issue, while Aso even labelled China a military threat (JT 03/04/2006; Lam 2006b). Abe also suggested that he would continue Koizumi's shrine legacy, if elected (KN 12/01/2006). Indeed, Abe has been known for his nationalistic disposition, and hawkishness towards North Korea, while Aso was perhaps, seeking to bolster popular and rightwing support for his presidential campaign by maintaining an anti-China stance (Ni 2006),<sup>45</sup> and harping on nationalistic issues, including calling for the Emperor to visit Yasukuni (Reuters 28/01/2006). Conversely, Tanigaki was more prudent, espousing "strategic ambiguity" on the Yasukuni issue (KN 12/01/2006). Both former CCS Fukuda, and ex-LDP Secretary-General Yamasaki, opposed prime ministerial visits, with Fukuda, as the "dark horse" in the presidential race, proposing a secular war memorial as an alternative to Yasukuni (AS 20/01/2006; DY 11/01/2006). Although Koizumi and Abe called for the exclusion of prime ministerial Yasukuni visit as an

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<sup>43</sup> For an analysis of the cabinet reshuffle, see Richardson (04/11/2005).

<sup>44</sup> However, Chinese FM Li Zhaoxing describe Koizumi's Yasukuni visit as "stupid and amoral" during a news conference, earlier, on March 7, 2006, sparking counter-critcisms from Tokyo (BBC 08/03/2006).

<sup>45</sup> This opinion was offered by Liu Jianyong, a Chinese expert on Japan-China relations, in an article by Ni Yanshuo in a January 2006 edition of *Beijing Review*. See Ni (2006).

issue in the LDP polls, it became clear that its “politicisation” would be unavoidable, with the Japanese nation drawn unwittingly into the debate (BBC 11/01/2006).

Meanwhile, there were speculations that Koizumi would make his final visit on the symbolic August 15, before stepping down. Pressure began to mount, both externally and domestically, with nationalist groups and opinion leaders pressing for a continuation, while moderate forces, including some conservatives, called for a moratorium on Shrine visits by Koizumi’s eventual successor (Satoh 2006b:5). Externally, even the US, usually silent about the Yasukuni issue, weighed into the debate, as American expert opinion and media began calling for a review of Japan’s Asia and China policies, with the halt to Shrine visits presumably at the heart of the debate.<sup>46</sup> Apparently concerned about its ally’s increasing political isolation in the region, which could undermine overall American interests, President Bush purportedly hinted that Koizumi should stop visiting Yasukuni<sup>47</sup> (MDN 02/01/2006). Growing American opposition also ostensibly denied Koizumi his chance to address the US Congress, during his farewell tour of the US in June 2006.

Similarly, public support began to erode, as the average Japanese started questioning the wisdom of continuing such visits, in light of the searing images of massive Chinese, anti-Japanese demonstrations, and widespread international criticisms that have cost Japan dearly, in diplomatic terms (Satoh 2006b). A July 2006 *Mainichi* opinion poll recorded decreasing public support for Yasukuni visits, from 47% in January to 33%, while those opposing increased from 47% to 54% (cf. PD 28/07/2006). Even the rightwing *Sankei Shimbun*’s public opinion survey conducted several months earlier showed 52.6% opposing against 36.2% who supports the visit (SS 20/03/2006; cf. Lam 2006b:10). The *zaikai* also voiced concerns over the potential negative impact of an antagonistic China policy on Japan’s national interests, given the significance of their burgeoning economic ties in sustaining Japanese economic recovery (ATO 19/10/2005). The *Keizai Doyukai* had, for the

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<sup>46</sup> See Michael Green’s remark on Yasukuni visits in “Simply stopping Yasukuni visits won’t solve problem: ex-Bush aide” *Kyodo News*, 4 February 2006. For other expert opinion, see “US walks fine line on Japan shrine: Response cautious to dispute among allies and trade partners,” *International Herald Tribune*, 21 October 2005.

<sup>47</sup> Nonetheless, Koizumi reportedly told President Bush in November 2005 that he would not stop his Yasukuni routine even if the US requested him to do so (see also KN 21/01/2006).

first time, explicitly called for a halt to prime ministerial Yasukuni visit, and officially proposed for an alternative national memorial, in May 2006 (DY 10/05/2006). Meanwhile, *Keidanren* expressed hopes that the new premier would improve ties with China, and refrain from visiting Yasukuni, as reflected by its chairman, Mitarai Fujio's call for the PM to "respect public opinion and use his political wisdom to solve the issue of the Yasukuni", and be "prudent on the issue" (quoted in PD 29/07/2006).

Pressure mounted on Koizumi and the LDP leadership hopefuls on July 19, following *Nikkei's* revelation of a former Imperial Palace aide's memoir containing information explaining the reason behind Emperor Showa's sudden decision to stop visiting Yasukuni. The memoir cited the Emperor's displeasure over the enshrinement of the Class-A war criminals, which was, ironically, the very reason that drew Chinese opposition towards Yasukuni visits (MDN 20/07/2006). Perhaps, most significantly, the intense international opposition and domestic commotion saw Yasukuni's staunchest advocate, *Izokukai*, uncharacteristically weighing in by proposing the separation of class-A war criminals as possible solution to the impasse (MDN 02/08/2006).<sup>48</sup>

Despite the unprecedented opposition, Koizumi made good his 2001 election promise by ultimately visiting Yasukuni on 15 August 2006. Many viewed his decision as an intention to defend his "stubborn maverick" and "reformer" image, which were key components of his popularity (Yoshida 16/08/2006; Noda interview/2). Although the Chinese protested, it is believed that they had anticipated, and somewhat resigned themselves to the idea that Koizumi would pay his last visit as premier on August 15, and thus had concentrated on resuscitating the bilateral ties "on a clean slate" with Koizumi's successor (Tang 15/08/2006). With the LDP leadership race revving up and the Yasukuni issue inextricably tied to the election agenda, the front runners – Abe, Aso, and Tanigaki – were forced to declare their position under intense public scrutiny. Tanigaki made a concrete

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<sup>48</sup> In fact, *Izokukai* issued a statement on June 11, 2005, imploring Koizumi "to refrain from further visits out of considerations for war victims in neighbouring countries", and for the spirits of the war dead to rest in peace (cf. van Kemenade 2006:48; KN 11/06/2005), only to later reaffirm its position in support of prime ministerial visits (Przystup 2005c:131). For the different views within *Izokukai*, see Yoshida (12/08/2006).

decision by declaring that he will not visit Yasukuni, if elected, while both Abe and Aso, interestingly, shifted their initially assertive pro-Yasukuni posture to a more prudent stance. Aso, who was uncharacteristically antagonistic towards China earlier in the year, decisively mellowed down his opinion by opting to visit only when Yasukuni's legal status is changed, while the hardliner, Abe, chose a position of "strategic ambiguity" initially proposed by Tanigaki (Lam 2006c).

After fulfilling his "Yasukuni obligation", Koizumi stepped down in September, and was succeeded by his protégé, Abe, who emerged victorious in the LDP presidential election. The new PM wasted no time in mending Japanese-Chinese ties, choosing China, instead of the US for his first official visit, shortly after his anointment, in October 2006. This came as a surprise, since few expected a Japanese-Chinese reconciliation to materialise so early into his premiership, especially in view of his previous "anti-China" stance and nationalistic outlook. Whilst Beijing did not press him for a declaration of his Yasukuni policy, Abe maintained an ambiguous position, and did not visit the Shrine during his short-lived premiership. He did, however, pay a "secret" visit back in April 2006, months before his appointment, and made a "sakaki" tree donation during the Spring Festival of 2007 (Nakata 09/05/2007).

### **6.3. Power Politics versus Nationalism and Identity Politics: A Neoclassical Realist Assessment of Koizumi's Yasukuni Policy**

Why did Koizumi make those visits? Were they predominantly responses to domestic nationalist pressure, and/or based on his political/ideological disposition and personal conviction? More importantly, were they strategically calculated decisions and carefully choreographed actions based on accurate/skewed perceptions of domestic and international conditions that warranted an assertive-cum-conciliatory China policy, to fulfill both external and internal expediency, without damaging overall bilateral ties? By utilising the NCR model developed in Chapter 2, this section seeks to map the Koizumi administration's position during each Yasukuni visit within the four quadrants of the NCR diagram, via the assessment of, and inference on the prevailing international-domestic conditions and

actors/factors, and their interactions, which influenced Japan's China policy-making. Besides the overarching international environment, Japan's perceptions of its allied resolve/commitment, and diplomatic leverage vis-à-vis China shall be inferred along with the Koizumi administration's domestic political resolve vis-à-vis nationalist pressure and other domestic constraints, to determine the perceived conditions that warranted the policy-options pertaining to each visit.

### 6.3.1. The August 13, 2001 visit

The Koizumi administration came to power at a time when Japan was experiencing a relatively indeterminate post-Cold War international environment. Notwithstanding North Korea, the demise of the Soviet threat factor relieved Japan from any direct external security threat, strategically altering the regional power balance, and rendering the "China card" in the US-Japan-PRC "strategic-triangle" relationship, obsolete. Concomitantly, the changing international, bilateral, and domestic dynamics have generated new challenges and opportunities for Japanese foreign policy-makers. This brought a noticeable shift in Japan's China policy, from the traditional "deferential"<sup>49</sup>/*"friendship"* diplomacy, to a more assertive, realist-oriented approach, especially when managing sensitive bilateral issues.

According to NCR's assumptions, domestic considerations tend to gain foreign policy-making salience, under an ambiguous/benign external environment. As such, the obsolescence of China's strategic value in balancing against the USSR, coupled with resurgent nationalism's impact on Japanese domestic politics, would expectedly, affect Japan's China policy-making, and specifically, Tokyo's management of the Yasukuni dispute in the bilateral ties. The concurrence of these factors probably explains why Japanese PMs during the Cold War era, notably Nakasone and his successors, were "more prudent and cautious" (Sato 2006b:5) about visiting Yasukuni, especially after the 1985 diplomatic row with China, while Koizumi and his post-Cold War predecessors, namely Miyazawa and Hashimoto, were comparatively undeterred by Chinese pressure, to proceed with their pilgrimages (Shibuichi 2005:212-213). For instance, it is believed that Nakasone gave

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<sup>49</sup> Aforementioned in Chapter 2, I borrow this term from Drifte (2003).

priority to the “de facto strategic alliance” with China, and was thus, willing to incur domestic nationalist wrath to appease Chinese demand, by terminating his Shrine visits (Shibuichi 2005:207-209). Given the structurally determinate external environment and significance of the “China card”, it was unsurprising that the remaining Cold War premiers – Takeshita, Uno, and Kaifu continued to observe the Yasukuni moratorium. Conversely, both Miyazawa and Hashimoto were more willing to risk damaging relations with China to satisfy domestic demands, in view of the relatively flexible international condition posited by the Cold War’s demise. The prevailing environment also possibly established the parameter for Koizumi’s calculated decisions to make his Yasukuni visits, and advance a more assertive China policy during his tenure.<sup>50</sup>

Additionally, Japan enjoyed an increasingly favourable allied resolve/commitment through the enhancement of the US-Japan security alliance, notably from April 1996 onwards, which saw the Clinton-Hashimoto Declaration establishing new agendas for bilateral security cooperation, with a rising China ostensibly their key strategic consideration. Despite a period of uncertainty following Clinton’s so-called “Japan passing” in 1998 (Zhao 2002:39), Tokyo would have eventually, taken comfort in Washington’s hard-line posturing against Beijing that became conspicuous during the nascent period of the “neo-conservative” Bush administration.<sup>51</sup> With the “China threat” theory gaining ground in the US Congress since the mid-1990s, and against the milieu of rising diplomatic tensions in the wake of the Belgrade embassy bombing and the EP-3 spy-plane incidents, the Bush administration appeared to favour a “containment-cum-engagement” policy towards China, with Japan serving as the fulcrum of the US grand strategy in Asia. The influential “Armitage Report” of 1999 was well received in Tokyo, and enthusiastically embraced by the incoming Koizumi government, who possibly foresaw opportunities to realise important foreign and

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<sup>50</sup> This paragraph’s NCR-oriented argument is similar to, and based on Shibuichi’s interpretation regarding the plausible correlation between the Cold War/Soviet threat factor and the respective Japanese premiers’ attitude towards Yasukuni visits. See Shibuichi (2005:207-209; 212-213).

<sup>51</sup> The Bush administration’s hardline China policy was evidently, spelt out in Condoleeza Rice’s article in *Foreign Affairs* (see Rice 2000). For a discussion of Bush’s “anti-China” posture, see Klare (2006).

domestic policy-goals, via a strengthened US-Japan security relationship.<sup>52</sup> In the presence of a presumably hawkish and “anti-China” US administration, it would not be exaggerative to say that Koizumi’s decision to embrace a pro-American, instead of pro-Asian foreign policy, provided Tokyo the perception of a sanguine external environment, in terms of favourable allied resolve, to seek a nationalistic, “anti-status quo” China policy (Takahata interview; Anonymous interview H). Koizumi’s resoluteness in visiting Yasukuni amid mounting Chinese pressure partly reflected this bold policy.

However, Yasukuni is not an exclusively Japanese-Chinese issue, as it also involves South Korea, another US ally in Northeast Asia. With Japan identified as the hub of its Asia doctrine, it would not be in Washington’s interest to see Tokyo damaging ties with Seoul over a symbolic issue, which could undermine its regional strategy (KN 03/08/2001).<sup>53</sup> The decision to shift the date of Koizumi’s first visit was believed to be partly influenced by such considerations, besides Tokyo’s attempt to allay Chinese and domestic opposition. Indeed, it was reportedly, engineered by then CCS Fukuda (Kitaoka interview), with the intention of minimising Seoul’s response, and the visit’s impact on Japan-Korea ties within the American-sponsored “allied diplomacy” framework, among others (Wan 2006:240).<sup>54</sup>

In the bilateral context, the aforementioned Chinese “smile diplomacy” since 1999 (Rozman 2001) provided “cautious optimism” for the Japanese government to pursue a more normal-cum-equal relationship with Beijing. Anticipating diplomatic leverage vis-à-vis China, Koizumi could have estimated that a Yasukuni visit would not trigger excessive Chinese response, in view of Beijing’s recent efforts to tone down and reduce the use of “history” as a diplomatic card. Indeed, a perceived Chinese concession over the “war

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<sup>52</sup> The “Armitage Report” emphasised the significance of the US-Japan security alliance, and Japan’s role as the fulcrum to the new strategic approach in dealing with North Korea. For more details, see “The Armitage Report on North Korea: Naval Blockade and Preemptive Strikes by Japanese Forces?” *Congressional Record*: March 4, 1999 [Extensions]: E341-E343 [<http://www.kimsoft.com/1997/armitag.htm> (accessed on 15/06/2007)].

<sup>53</sup> A US administration official, speaking under the condition of anonymity, voiced concerns regarding the negative repercussions of Koizumi’s planned visit on the Japan-ROK relations in early August 2001 (KN 03/08/2001). See also “Koizumi’s Yasukuni visit plan worries U.S.,” *JijiPress*, 11 August 2001.

<sup>54</sup> Fukuda reportedly received guidance from Koga Makoto, *Izokukai*’s deputy chief, regarding the possible option for Koizumi to visit between August 13-16 in conjunction with *Obon*, which apparently, critically helped resolve Koizumi’s dilemma (YS 17/08/2001).

apology” issue after the “Jiang fiasco” could have set a precedent for Tokyo to maintain its assertiveness on other history-related problems. Japan’s confidence was bolstered by unusually subdued Chinese reactions towards the history textbook row in April 2001, which was reportedly milder than the South Koreans<sup>55</sup>(Yang 2001:183). To Japanese policy-makers, China’s response implied pragmatism in handling the “history” issue. Similarly, Beijing’s postponement of Li Peng’s Japan visit in May 2001 in protest against Tokyo’s decision to allow Li Denghui to seek medical treatment in Japan was perceived by Japanese sources as a low-intensity reaction (Przystup 2001b:97). In view of recent Chinese pragmatism, a Shrine visit would probably trigger similar responses that would not adversely affect Japan-China relations. Also, Japanese policy-makers tend to perceive popular Chinese, anti-Japanese nationalism to be predominantly state abetted, and thus popular protest against a Yasukuni visit would be manageable, pending on Beijing’s prerogative.<sup>56</sup> Moreover, flourishing trade ties and China’s reliance on Japanese investments and ODA would have dampened potential Chinese blowback over an issue of merely symbolic significance (Page 14/08/2001).

Furthermore, the Chinese showed signs of tolerating a date change, not mentioning Tokyo’s calculation that Beijing would perhaps give Koizumi the “benefit of the doubt”, as it was his first visit (Wan 2006:245). *Yomiuri Shimbun* reported that Beijing had indicated to the ruling coalition’s secretary-generals in July that it would tolerate a shrine visit on a date other than August 15 (YS 08/08/2001). A similar claim was later made by Koizumi’s aide that Beijing had made a “behind-the-scene” concession by accepting Koizumi’s visit, pending a change of date (JT 29/12/2003; KN 28/12/2003). Koizumi’s ex-political ally, Kato Koichi, ultimately confirmed this speculation, by revealing that the Chinese ambassador had personally conveyed Beijing’s acquiescence, before his crucial “last-minute” meeting with

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<sup>55</sup> To compare the reactions between South Koreans and Chinese over the textbook controversy, see Beal, Nozaki, and Yang (2001). See also the news coverage on Korean actions in “Japanese History Textbook Raises Concerns” *Asia Today*, 10 July 2001.

<sup>56</sup> This observation was confirmed by a majority of my Japanese interviewees.

Koizumi on August 11 (Kato interview/2).<sup>57</sup> Hence, despite explicit Chinese pressure against the visit, the prevailing bilateral conditions and mixed signals from Beijing would have had Tokyo perceiving an ambiguous diplomatic leverage vis-à-vis China.

On the domestic front, Japanese public sentiment towards China has deteriorated, while nationalist demands for an assertive China policy has grown, requiring Koizumi to adequately respond to public opinion. Besides nationalist pressure from within the LDP, generational change across the domestic political spectrum saw the emergence of more nationalistic politicians, who wanted to replace the traditional “kowtow” diplomacy with a realistic and equidistant relationship with Beijing.<sup>58</sup> According to Wan, “Koizumi’s insistence on visiting the shrine illustrates Japan’s desire to reshape its relationship with China on its terms and highlights the transformation of the bilateral relations from a “special” one to a “normal” one at the top level” (2006:6). Although difficult to pinpoint his nationalist convictions, observers identify Koizumi as a moderate, “normal-nationalist,”<sup>59</sup> whom, Tamamoto insists, like many in the political class, “see Japan as...a sort of “half-state””, and long for its return to “normalcy” (2004:13; 2005a:14; Samuels 2007a). Both Hashizume (2001) and Satoh (2006a) contend that Koizumi is a reformer, who understood the need for Japan to resolve the history impasse in its postwar politics, which is responsible for the longstanding Japanese identity crisis. By visiting Yasukuni, he confronts the history problem straightforwardly, bringing it into scrutiny by exposing it to Chinese criticism (Satoh 2006a:7), and in so doing, implicitly called on Japanese to face up and seek reconciliation of their history and identity (Hashizume 2001:54). Seen in this light, Koizumi’s Yasukuni policy was plausibly part of his agenda to reinstate Japan as a “normal” state, and an indication of his resolve to realise other related moderate-nationalist/neo-conservative goals, namely a more

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<sup>57</sup> Kato Koichi revealed that he acted as the intermediary between the Chinese ambassador and Koizumi on “negotiations” over the Yasukuni issue. Prior to his dinner-cum-discussion with Koizumi at the PM residence, together with Yamasaki Taku on August 11, Kato spoke to the Chinese side several times. Finally, via a cell-phone conversation with the Chinese ambassador, who was at Beidaihe (the resort for China’s leaders/VIPs), he was told that the Chinese would tolerate, if Koizumi makes just one visit, and evades August 15 (Kato interview/2).

<sup>58</sup> Suzuki Keisuke, a young Diet-member and rising star in LDP, confirms this observation on the general sentiment of the younger generation of Japanese politicians on China policy-making (Suzuki interview).

<sup>59</sup> However, opinions do differ, with some observers such as Okazaki Shigenori branding Koizumi as “the most hawkish, rightwing prime minister since the end of World War II” (2005:23).

dynamic and assertive, albeit pro-US external orientation, constitutional revision, and the re-establishment of the military as an instrument of Japanese foreign policy. Objectively, Koizumi was an astute politician, who knew how to manipulate the symbolic and political values of Yasukuni to his political advantage, to advance his policy agendas (Yoshida interview; Kato interview/2).

Although attributing Koizumi's single-mindedness on Yasukuni to his nationalistic conviction is debatable, it is undeniable that he was under pressure from nationalist-rightwing groups to fulfill his electoral promise. However, one would query his decision to place himself in a politically vulnerable position, by making the initial deal with *Izokukai*, and the visit, consequentially, despite commanding immense popular pre-election support, and enjoying incredibly high approval ratings during the nascent months of his premiership.<sup>60</sup> Observers cited personal convictions, either nationalist or otherwise,<sup>61</sup> but a more objective answer lies on the anticipated political drawback of his unprecedented domestic reform agenda to transform Japan's cumbersome, "developmental-state" political economy. Koizumi's quest to eradicate the entrenched political and business culture, and in so doing, destroy the LDP's *modus operandi* and traditional pillars, especially *keisei-ka*'s dominance, created many political enemies and oppositions within the ruling party, and alienated *zoku* support from traditional business sectors (Shibuichi 2005:210).<sup>62</sup> In this sense, Koizumi's Yasukuni pledge may be attributed to a perceived need to rely on *Izokukai*'s political clout, and rightwing support to gain an electoral edge over *keisei-ka*'s Hashimoto (Anonymous interview H),<sup>63</sup> and then, to ensure their continuous political backing for his domestic reforms. According to a former top Japanese diplomat to China, there was no nationalist

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<sup>60</sup> Koizumi's approval ratings during the early days of his premiership recorded unprecedented highs of above 80%, with *Mainichi* polls recording 85%, *Nikkei* 80%, and *Kyodo* 86.3% (KN 30/04/2001; 28/04/2001). See also "Koizumi's popularity hits fresh peak," *CNN.com*, 12 June 2001, <http://archives.cnn.com/2001/BUSINESS/asia/06/11/japan.popularity/index.html> (cf. Anderson 2004:150).

<sup>61</sup> A significant majority of my Japanese interviewees contend that Koizumi's resoluteness on visiting Yasukuni was due to his personal conviction and personality, both of which, are not necessarily driven by nationalism.

<sup>62</sup> Shibuichi opines that Koizumi's pledge to reform the domestic economy antagonised many influential pressure groups from sectors like construction, postal services, agriculture, and small-and-medium size enterprises (SME) that traditionally supported the LDP (2005:210).

<sup>63</sup> It is also plausible that Koizumi foresaw the need to rally nationalist-rightwing support in his desperation to make what would be his third attempt at the LDP presidential post, a successful one.

pressure on Koizumi to make the Yasukuni pledge, but he did it out of political considerations. His decision to visit, as much, emboldened Japanese nationalist voices, as fuelled Chinese nationalism that in turn, stimulated reactive popular anti-China sentiments in Japan (Anonymous interview I).

Moreover, unlike his predecessors, Koizumi encountered insignificant domestic political opposition over Yasukuni visits, following the weakening of the SDPJ, JCP and other leftist/pacifist bastions (Shibuichi 2005:210). Meanwhile, Japan's largest opposition party, the DPJ, is conceivably another "catchall/umbrella party" comprising as many progressive politicians, as right-leaning Diet-members that support Shrine visit, whilst smaller parties like the Liberal Party, and the LDP coalition partners, Shin-Komeito and Hoshuto, although apprehensive, were not vocally influential. As such, the aforementioned domestic opposition, launched by the usually sympathetic and "pro-China" voices of the Japanese progressives, was somewhat ineffective.<sup>64</sup> Conversely, Koizumi received a timely boost, when 105 lawmakers forged a nonpartisan group to support his decision, while three ministers confirmed their intention to visit Yasukuni,<sup>65</sup> on the same day a majority of his Cabinet members expressed wariness towards his plan (JT 08/08/2001).

Koizumi also enjoyed strong public support for his planned pilgrimage based on *Mainichi Shimbun's* pre-visit opinion polls (Figure 2).<sup>66</sup> Although the support figures declined in the August 4 *Asahi Shimbun* poll, with only 26% supporting his visit "positively", while 65% wanted Koizumi to be "cautious", the poll had apparently skewed the outcome by forcing respondents to choose between the two alternatives, thus encouraging "neutral" or undecided respondents to opt in favour of "caution" (cf. Takashina 2001:50). Moreover, opinion polls by other broadcasting media agencies found the majority supporting the visit,

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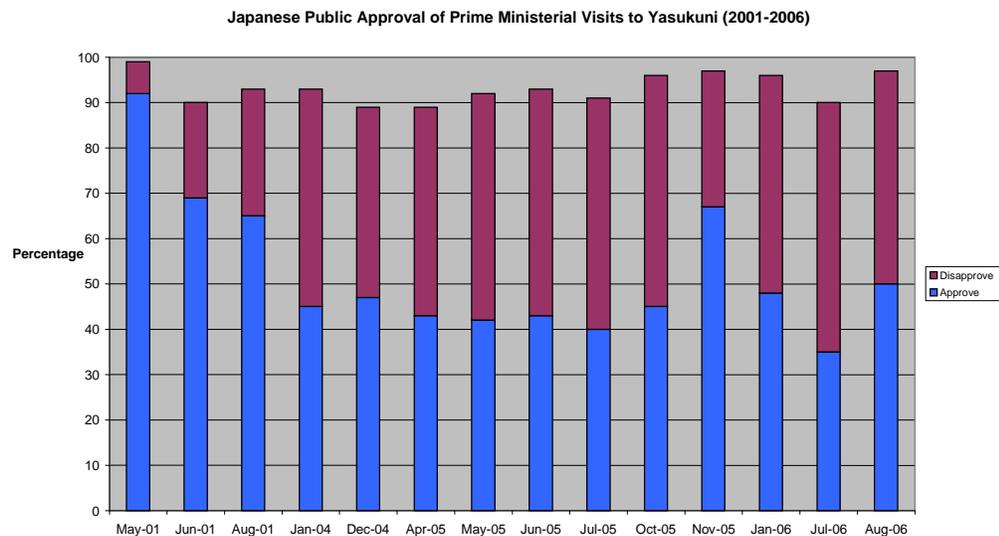
<sup>64</sup> Although all the opposition parties were officially against the visit, the political pressure was not as intense as it used to be, as seen in their relatively subdued criticisms on the media. Koizumi did however, try to be diplomatic, offering to consider the coalition partners' "final plea" not to visit Yasukuni (BBC 10/08/2001).

<sup>65</sup> The three Cabinet members were Finance Minister, Shiokawa Maajuro, METI chief, Hiranuma Takeo, and Public Safety Commission chairman, Murai Jin. Five of the remaining 14 ministers decline to publicly state their intentions (JT 08/08/2001).

<sup>66</sup> For instance, according to a *Mainichi* poll on May 28, 44% of respondents saw nothing wrong with Koizumi's visit, while 46% thought that worshipping in a private capacity was acceptable, with only 7% disagreeing with his planned visit (cf. Takashina 2001:50). See also Deans (2007: Table 4).

i.e. Nippon Broadcasting System (August 3) found 76% supporting an August 15 homage; TV Asahi (August 4) recorded a 59% support rate; and Fuji Television Network (August 10) reported 48.8% (cf. Takashina 2001:50). These figures suggest most Japanese supported Koizumi's plan, giving him a favourable domestic condition to proceed with the visit.

**Figure 2**



Sources: Mainichi Daily News/Mainichi Shimbun; adapted and modified from Deans (2007: 278; Table 4)

The PMO also enjoyed decision-making leverage under the political and administrative reforms law mentioned in Chapter 5, which saw a corresponding reduction of MOFA's bureaucratic influence on foreign policy-making, generally, and its China Division's traditionally strong foot-hold in shaping Japan's China policy-orientation. Indeed, Wan noted that the MOFA "was not central to Koizumi's decision" (2006:243) as the PM appeared undeterred by bureaucrats' opposition, including FM Tanaka's explicit disagreement over his planned visit. Apparently, the MOFA was in turmoil over scandals involving senior bureaucrats, and Tanaka's allegedly inept management style, which affected public confidence and created a rift between Koizumi and her (Nabeshima 14/08/2001). This chasm led Koizumi to bypass the MOFA on the Yasukuni issue, and Tanaka was not even informed of the decision to shift the date of visit, as decision-making ostensibly centred around the PMO (YS 14/01/2001).<sup>67</sup> The PM was equally unfazed by Nonaka Hiromu's

<sup>67</sup> Observers like Prof Kubo Fumiaki reportedly suggested that the rift between Koizumi and Tanaka would lead the PM to depend on CCS Fukuda and his aides to manage Japan's foreign policy, as Tanaka can no longer be trusted over policy matters (JT 04/08/2001). Tanaka would eventually be forced to resign in January 2002.

criticism, suggesting the waning influence of *kuromaku* in China policy-making (KN 05/08/2001). Incidentally, Koizumi and Nonaka had previous disagreement over his domestic reform agenda, not mentioning the former being the “deal-maker” for his LDP election rival, Hashimoto (JT 24/04/2001), which made Koizumi all the more dismissive of the old “China Hand’s” suggestions (AS 30/07/2001; cf. Wan 2006:239).<sup>68</sup> Nonetheless, it was evident that internal pressure and advice from Cabinet members and trusted political allies did have an impact on Koizumi’s decision-making, as his minimal “date-changing” compromise suggests. Indeed, the decision transpired following the mentioned “eleventh-hour”, “dinner-cum-discussion” with two of his closest political allies, Yamasaki Taku and Kato Koichi (Kato interview/2)<sup>69</sup> and Fukuda Yasuo’s advice (KN 11/08/2001; YS 14/08/2001). Koizumi also reportedly received the guidance and blessings of *Izokukai*’s deputy president, Koga Makoto (ex-LDP secretary-general) (YS 17/08/2001), which cleared a key domestic-“nationalist” obstacle for Koizumi to proceed with the altered arrangement.

Overall, it is fair to conclude that Koizumi’s decision to visit was based on the perception/calculation of an ambiguous external environment (relative power position) shaped by favourable allied resolve, but somewhat indeterminate diplomatic leverage vis-à-vis China, following mixed signals from Beijing. However, his Administration did consider the potential repercussions of China’s response, and had taken measures to seek Chinese understanding before, and after the visit, which included the “change-of-date”, conciliatory pre-visit press statement<sup>70</sup> (BBC 13/08/2001), feasibility studies for a secular war memorial

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<sup>68</sup> According to observers, Nonaka was one of the LDP “Old Guards” i.e. defender of the old political-economic system that Koizumi was hoping to destroy (see JT 24/02/2001; Anderson 2004; Hiwatari 2005). Nonaka’s intervention in the Yasukuni issue therefore, bore limited results, as Koizumi apparently did not pay attention to him (Wan 2006:239).

<sup>69</sup> The close relations between Koizumi, Yamasaki, and Kato were popularly known as the “YKK” clique. Indeed, Kato confirmed during interview that Koizumi requested a “dinner-cum-discussion” meeting with Yamasaki and him at the PM’s official residence on 11 August 2001, where the “change-of-date” strategy was deliberated (Kato interview/2).

<sup>70</sup> Koizumi expressed his “profound remorse and sincere mourning to all the victims of war” in a press statement issued just before the visit, apparently in a final effort to soothe Chinese and other Asian neighbours resentment, and cushion the negative external repercussions. The PM also provided reasons for his decision to change the date of his visit, citing “I am in a position, where I have to handle various issues by assuming responsibility as premier for the sake of broad national interests...I think from the bottom of my heart that I want to promote friendship with China, South Korea and other neighbouring countries” (quoted in BBC 13/08/2001). See also “Statement of Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi” (provisional translation), MOFA Japan, 13 Aug. 2001 [<http://www.mofa.go.jp/announce/pm/koizumi/state0108.html>] (accessed on 21/06/2007)].

(JT 19/08/2001), and Koizumi's much publicised "friendly" gesture during his October visit to China. Domestically, Koizumi would have perceived himself to be in a less favourable position, insofar as his dependence on nationalist/rightwing support made him vulnerable to nationalist demands, his personal conviction notwithstanding.<sup>71</sup> It could be that Koizumi felt he had no choice, but to fulfill the promise, since his popularity depended on his reputation as a reformer and a strong-willed leader. Also, Koizumi could have anticipated the need to utilise Yasukuni as a *leitmotif*, or "litmus test" to demonstrate his resolve on domestic reform programmes.<sup>72</sup> Moreover, insignificant domestic opposition gave him political room to manoeuvre, and make the visit, be it for political expediency, or nationalist conviction.

In view of the stipulated conditions, one could locate Koizumi's position between quadrant C and D in the NCR model (see Diagram 3). An ambiguous external environment, taken together with unfavourable domestic political resolve vis-à-vis nationalist pressure, required Koizumi to seek assertive-nationalist policy-options (visiting Yasukuni) to satisfy nationalist demands, followed by those visible, conciliatory measures to reduce the negative impact on bilateral ties.

### 6.3.2. The April 21, 2002 visit

In the NCR schematics, the international environment leading to the 2002 visit remained relatively favourable for the Japanese government to maintain a high-posture vis-a-vis China. For one, the "9/11" incident provided the basis for an intensified US-Japan security cooperation, and Japan took advantage of the growing public fear of international insecurity to answer its ally's call for a "global war on terror". The Afghanistan campaign, not only provided the opportunity for Koizumi to strengthen US-Japan ties, but also gave Tokyo the necessary justification to augment its international security role, under the pretext of assisting its ally in the UN-sanctioned operation. The intensification of the US-Japan alliance

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<sup>71</sup> According to UCLA's Ronald Morse, Koizumi's visit may rest ultimately on his impulse for political survival, as failure to do so may anger the nationalist cohorts and damage his political position (AP 03/08/2001). His expression of "deep shame" for not fulfilling his promise to visit on August 15, was an attempt to appease domestic nationalist displeasure (AFP 13/08/2001).

<sup>72</sup> This was suggested by Takagi Seiichiro and Sugawa Kiyoshi during my respective interviews with them. Yasukuni being a "litmus test" for both Japan and China was also mentioned in Taniguchi (2005:449).

would have Tokyo feeling confident of a favourable allied resolve/commitment, to proceed with the repositioning of its bilateral relationship with Beijing. Moreover, Washington's silence over the previous Yasukuni row would have emboldened Koizumi's resolve to pursue his Shrine routine (KN 14/08/2001).<sup>73</sup>

Concurrently, Japanese-Chinese ties were on the mend, and mutual efforts to forge constructive relations have gained momentum, since "9/11". Although a reluctant partner in the US "war on terror", Beijing did not allow the speedy Diet passage of defence bills in October 2001 that expanded Japanese security activities to sidetrack the improvement of bilateral ties. Chinese pragmatism was also due to flourishing trade relations, and continued dependence on Japanese investments and aid to fuel economic development. It is reasonable to suggest that Beijing's keenness to improve relations was partly to facilitate the disbursement of Japanese ODA, which was delayed by strained ties over the 2001 Yasukuni debacle (JT 06/08/2001). On Japan's part, Koizumi took full advantage of the mentioned October 8 visit to demonstrate his eagerness to reconcile with the Chinese. His symbolic gestures of visiting *Luguojiao* and the nearby war memorial hall, and expressing his apology,<sup>74</sup> followed by meetings with Jiang Zemin and Zhu Rongji, managed to pacify and convince the Chinese of his intention (Bezlova 09/10/2001). Indeed, a former top Japanese diplomat who witnessed the events opines that Jiang was "very happy" and "almost embraced Koizumi"(Anonymous interview I). Reportedly, a congenial atmosphere transpired following the trip (Przystup 2002a:90-91).<sup>75</sup>

According to Japanese analysts, Koizumi's China trip was, apparently timed to coincide with the US' first strike on Afghanistan, to put indirect pressure on the Chinese to reciprocate Japan's fence-mending efforts, for the sake of promoting stable bilateral ties to

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<sup>73</sup> Although there were initial voices of concern, Washington ultimately did not comment on Koizumi's 2001 visit (KN 14/08/2001). For a similar view, see Lincoln, Edward, 15 August 2001. "The Sound of Silence," *New Republic Online* [<http://www.thenewrepublic.com/express/lincoln081501.html>] (cf. Wan 2006: Chp.9, en.34)].

<sup>74</sup> According to Wang Jianwei, Koizumi's visit to the Memorial Museum of the Chinese People's War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression, was the first by a Japanese premier. He also laid a wreath at the symbolic "Great Wall" that symbolises Chinese heroic resistance against the Japanese (2002:118).

<sup>75</sup> For a confirmation of Chinese perception of an improved atmosphere, see the Chinese Foreign Ministry's statement at <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/ce/celt/eng/zt/zgfk/t125307.htm> (accessed on 20/07/2007).

facilitate cooperation with the US (cf. Wan 2006:244). The Japanese government maintained the thrust of reconciliation after the successful visit with the mentioned bilateral summits at the fringes of the APEC and ASEAN-Plus-Three meetings (Wakayama 2003).<sup>76</sup> Beijing's responsiveness in improving ties also convinced Tokyo of Chinese pragmatism in managing their symbolic "history" disputes, which included the Yasukuni issue. Koizumi could have therefore, calculated that future Shrine visits would not seriously impede on Chinese sensibility towards maintaining a functional relationship with Japan.

Nonetheless, the timing of the second Yasukuni visit was, apparently calculated, with China in the equation. China's Japan experts like Wan Xincheng and Lin Xiaoguang, considered the April visit to be propitious, as it would have allowed ample time for criticisms to subside by the fall of 2002, and minimise its harmful effects on the celebration of their 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of diplomatic normalisation (cf. Wan 2006:246). Also, Koizumi must have thought that his positive exploits at the Boao Asia Forum, had won him sufficient Chinese goodwill to mitigate the impact of his visit (Anonymous interview I).<sup>77</sup> Tokyo would have anticipated that Koizumi's remark on "China as not a threat but an opportunity to Japan" made during the Forum (CD 13/04/2002; JT 13/04/2002) could put Beijing in a fix, and undercut the magnitude of Chinese response towards his subsequent Yasukuni visit, since it would not be in China's interest to overreact and prove him wrong, so soon. Indeed, Koizumi told reporters before the homage that "it is the best timing" for a visit (JT 22/04/2002). Moreover, from a region-wide perspective, Koizumi's inaugural Shrine trip did not trigger criticisms from ASEAN-states, whose officials were noticeably silent over the issue during Yamasaki Taku's diplomatic rendezvous to Southeast Asia in the aftermath of the visit (AS 22/08/2001 cf. Wan 2006:242). Notwithstanding Korean responses, the anticipated bilateral position and prevalent regional climate vis-à-vis China and the ASEAN-states, respectively,

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<sup>76</sup> See the text of a 2003 speech by Wakayama Kyoichi, Consul-General of Japan in Guangzhou, China, entitled "Actual International Circumstance and the relationship between Japan and China" (document received from Wakayama during an interview on 2 March 2007).

<sup>77</sup> Moreover, it was the Chinese who extended the invitation to Koizumi to attend the biennial Boao Forum in 2002, which somewhat suggested that Beijing was warming up to the Japanese premier after an inopportune start (Drifte 2003:129). For a similar view on his Boao Forum exploit as a "cushion", see Wan (2006:246).

would have given Tokyo confidence to press on with future Shrine pilgrimage, without being overly concerned about damaging Japan's regional interests and cooperation.

Domestically, Koizumi may have continued perceiving a need to garner support from nationalist groups, and maintain his "reformer" image in the eyes of the Japanese public, in order to push forward his reform agenda. Since it was only his second year in office, and the reform programme had barely taken shape due to strong anti-reform forces, Koizumi knew he had to keep on portraying himself as the strong leader, different from his predecessors, which so endeared him with the public. In fact, Koizumi faced severe opposition from within the LDP regarding his postal privatisation policy during April 2002, and public scepticism began to creep in about the prospect of, and his resolve towards the reform programme (Anderson 2004:176; Koizumi and Shiroyama 2002:11). Compounding Koizumi's domestic problems was the scandal that hit his political ally, Kato Koichi, forced to briefly resign from the LDP and Diet in April over improprieties involving his former aide (YS 09/03/2002). The incident was a major embarrassment that somewhat undermined public confidence regarding his Administration's commitment toward political and economic reforms (BBC 08/04/2002). Growing public scepticism saw Koizumi's personal approval ratings dropping 40% points, since taking office a year ago (BBC 08/04/2002). He also probably lost some popular and political support after firing Tanaka Makiko in January 2002<sup>78</sup> (Murata 2006:44).

Feeling under-pressure, the timing of the second Yasukuni trip possibly reflects Koizumi's calculated intention to bolster faltering domestic support.<sup>79</sup> By visiting Yasukuni annually, and not botching under Chinese pressure, Koizumi intends to demonstrate unwavering commitment to his pledges, since action speaks louder than words. Moreover, maintaining an assertive China policy was in line with popular sentiment, and appreciated by

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<sup>78</sup> Tanaka Makiko was very popular, especially among women voters, besides being the daughter of former premier, Tanaka Kakuei, whose faction once wielded the most power in LDP politics (Murata 2006:43-44). The observation that Koizumi lost some popular support was also offered by several interviewees i.e. Kokubun Ryosei, Kato Koichi, and Anonymous C. See also Mizoguchi (30/01/2002) and Anderson (2004:176).

<sup>79</sup> Indeed, both *Yomiuri* and *Mainichi* public surveys conducted coincidentally between 20-21 April 2002 showed Koizumi's support rate slipping to new lows of 47.9% and 42%, respectively, leading observers to view the visit as being aimed at winning votes (especially from *Izokukai*) in two by-elections and a prefectural governor election on April 28 (Reuters 23/04/2002; Kwan 23/04/2002).

nationalists, both within and outside the political circle. Koizumi was obviously emboldened to make another Shrine visit, since the previous trip did not hurt him politically in the domestic arena, with the public largely supporting it, whilst the “change-of-date” strategy had not adversely affected his reputation in the eyes of Japanese nationalists. A *Mainichi Shimbun* opinion poll conducted soon after his first visit also revealed that 65% supported his decision, with only 28% opposing it (MDN 21/08/2001).<sup>80</sup>

The manner in which Koizumi made his second Yasukuni trip also indicates a calculated strategy for domestic political expediency. According to Tanaka (2003), although superficially appearing to be a “surprise” and an “unofficial” visit, the large media presence and coverage suggest that the PM had intended all along to utilise the event to impress on the nationalist groups and general public. Tanaka noted that Koizumi reportedly arrived at Yasukuni much earlier on the day of visit. However, the apparent “time wasting” by the usually “schedule to the minute” premier before appearing at the main altar to perform the rituals, was in Tanaka’s opinion, intentionally arranged to allow the media sufficient time to converge and cover the event, to make it look like a “prime ministerial visit” (2003).<sup>81</sup> Koizumi also signed the Shrine’s guestbook and presented a wreath in the name of the PM, which further confirms the observation (Tanaka 2003). By making a consecutive visit and making it appear “official”, Koizumi would have pleased nationalist organisations like *Izokukai*, which have long campaigned for “official visits” by Japanese leaders (Tanaka 2003). Indeed, the second trip, made just after *Izokukai* established a new agenda to regularise/institutionalise prime ministerial visits, received warm appraisals from *Izokukai*’s chief, Koga Makoto, who characterised it as a “splendid and wonderful act” that “represented a step forward toward regularisation of the visit” (quoted in Tanaka 2003; JT 22/04/2002).

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<sup>80</sup> Conversely, 49% of respondents said they “cannot understand” Chinese and Korean demands over Yasukuni, and saw that as “unacceptable”, while 45% thought otherwise (MDN 21/08/2001; see also KN 20/08/2001).

<sup>81</sup> Tanaka contends that Koizumi would have visited Yasukuni “quietly, without notifying the media” if it was intended to be a private affair (2003). According to him, Koizumi arrived at Yasukuni at 8:30am, but only proceeded with the ceremony after “wasting one hour waiting” for the media to arrive, suggesting that he intended to publicly convey that it was a “prime ministerial visit” (2003). Moreover, Koizumi apparently published “Thoughts on a visit to Yasukuni Shrine” after the visit, making clear that there had been “careful preparations” (Tanaka 2003). For a similar observation, see “Maneuvering preceded visit,” *Yomiuri Shimbun*, 21 April 2002.

The external-internal conditions leading to Koizumi's second trip suggest the salience of domestic considerations vis-à-vis international constraints in shaping his policy-choice. Enjoying a perceived, favourable relative power position (external environment) in terms of allied resolve and diplomatic leverage vis-à-vis China, yet facing indeterminate domestic leverage resulting from the aforementioned challenges and opportunities, Koizumi's position would have been located between Quadrant B and C, giving allowance to the implementation of a nationalist-assertive foreign policy-option to facilitate domestic political objectives. Appeasing the nationalists would gain Koizumi much needed political support from certain LDP quarters to counter the "anti-reform" forces within the ruling party itself. Furthermore, limited measures to appease China in the visit's aftermath highlights a calculated risk and trade-off by the Japanese government that saw domestic political expediency supplanting the maintenance of friendly ties with China as the immediate priority, at that given time.<sup>82</sup>

### 6.3.3. The January 14, 2003 visit

Japan continued to enjoy a relatively favourable external environment, in the run-up to Koizumi's third Shrine visit. In terms of allied resolve, the security alliance with the US became fundamentally stronger as the "anti-terror" war progressed, with the Japanese enthusiastically providing "rear support" to its ally. As Koizumi's foreign policy became indiscreetly pro-US, Washington further encouraged the rearmament, and expansion of Japanese security policy, to the delight of normal-nationalists in Japan. The US also remained conspicuously mute about Yasukuni and its debilitating impact on Japan's Asia policy. Indeed, opinions are abound, that "the Koizumi style of nationalism is only possible with American encouragement" (Tamamoto 2005a:16). It is believed to be Koizumi's grand strategy to seek intimate ties with the US and utilise the alliance to facilitate Japan's quest for normal statehood (Huo 2005). To this end, Koizumi's pro-US policy also gave Japan

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<sup>82</sup> Indeed, the only reported gesture by Koizumi soon after the visit was his decision to write a letter that would be delivered by Shin-Komeito's head Kanzaki Takenori to President Jiang Zemin, to reaffirm Japan's intention to strengthen ties with China (Jiji 23/04/2002).

leverage vis-à-vis China in the US-Japan-China “strategic triangularity” (Soerensen 2006), and boosted Tokyo’s confidence in pursuing an assertive China policy.

Nevertheless, the North Korean nuclear proliferation and Japanese abduction issues meant that Japan needed both China and South Korea, together with the US and Russia to deal with Pyongyang’s belligerence. This would necessitate Tokyo to prudently, manage its souring relationship with Beijing and Seoul, especially concerning their diplomatic rows over Koizumi’s Shrine visits (Wan 2006:249). In the Japanese-Chinese context, ties have deteriorated, underscored by visible Chinese reactions taken in protest of the second Yasukuni trip. The “Shenyang Incident” in May 2002 that saw Chinese authorities storming the Japanese consulate to retrieve North Korean refugees, further tested their relationship (Kokubun 2007:144). The worsening bilateral atmosphere led Koizumi to cancel his planned visit to China for the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration. Koizumi was, however, unperturbed by Chinese reaction, nor was he upset by Beijing’s “cold shoulder”, thus far.<sup>83</sup> Anyhow, the suspension of top-level visits had not prevented Koizumi from meeting China’s leaders at the fringes of multilateral summits,<sup>84</sup> nor has it derailed other levels of bilateral exchanges crucial for maintaining a functional day-to-day relationship (Anonymous interview A and B). Indeed, he believed that a third Shrine visit would not damage Japanese-Chinese relations (JT 15/01/2003).

Yet, *Yomiuri*’s editorial suggested his third visit, was apparently, timed to avoid potential diplomatic clashes with the new leadership in Beijing and Seoul, respectively (DY 15/01/2003).<sup>85</sup> Tokyo may have been optimistic about the coming of China’s “fourth generation” leadership, perceived as more pragmatic, less consumed by “history”, and certainly not tainted by personal experiences of Japanese war occupation (Pryzstup

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<sup>83</sup> According to Wan, Koizumi’s perception suggests that “he believed Chinese reactions to date had been in an acceptable range of severity – strong discontent expressed in a symbolic manner without having an impact on vital China-Japan bilateral interests” (2006:248).

<sup>84</sup> Koizumi cordially met Zhu Rongji at the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) in Copenhagen on 22 September 2002 (BBC 23/09/2002), and then Jiang at Mexico’s APEC summit on 27 October 2002 (XNA 28/10/2002).

<sup>85</sup> *Yomiuri* subsequently reported from a source close to the PMO that the timing of the “surprise” visit had been “elaborately orchestrated” since late 2002, to take into account key domestic and external political agendas (see DY 16/01/2003). A similar observation can be found in Curtin (2003a).

2003a:105). As mentioned, indications of a “new thinking on Japan” by the “Hu-Wen” leadership were apparent from Ma Licheng’s December 2002 article, which triggered fierce debates in China, but welcomed by the Japanese intellectual and foreign policy communities, and Japan’s rightwing press, as well<sup>86</sup> (Lam 2004:10; Kokubun 2006:30). Since Koizumi intended to visit Yasukuni annually, an early trip before Hu Jintao’s official anointment would have taken it out of the list of annual bilateral grievances and avoided pushing the new Chinese leadership to a corner so early into office, while allowing more time and opportunity for the perceived “new thinking” to materialise.

Domestically, Koizumi could have felt nationalist pressure increasing after his diplomatic rendezvous to North Korea in September 2002 (Pilling 16/09/2002). Although popularly accepted, the trip unwittingly “opened-up a can of worms”, in which Kim Jong-il’s apparent goodwill gesture of returning several allegedly abducted Japanese nationals, sparked public anger and nationalist rancour in Japan.<sup>87</sup> The highly charged “abduction issue” and the deadlock in diplomatic negotiations with Pyongyang could have compelled Koizumi to make a “timely” visit to Yasukuni, to soothe swelling domestic nationalist sentiment. Besides, Koizumi probably calculated that he could not afford to further compromise his “nationalist” credentials by skipping his Shrine routine and appearing weak vis-à-vis China. This is especially so, when the advisory group formed in August 2001 to consider the idea of a less controversial national memorial for Japan’s war dead, concluded its report in December 2002, recommending the establishment of a “non-religious” facility in place of Yasukuni, which obviously incensed the nationalists (YS 24/12/2002; Yamaori 2003: 44, 47).

Additionally, observers saw the visit as shrewdly timed to bolster faltering support within the LDP during the party’s annual convention held days later, following limited progress in his domestic economic reform agenda (AP 15/01/2003). Moreover, Koizumi was

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<sup>86</sup> The rightwing *Sankei Shimbun* ran a full-page coverage of the “New Thinking” debate in China, and made several proposals for the improvement of Japanese-Chinese ties (SS 10/01/2004 cf. Lam 2004:10).

<sup>87</sup> The public and nationalists alike were incensed by Pyongyang’s belligerence, and the possibility of more Japanese abductees held in North Korea (The Guardian 16/10/2002).

optimistic that the diplomatic cost of another Shrine visit on Japan-China ties would not outweigh the domestic political gains, based on his perception of Chinese reaction mentioned earlier. Furthermore, the striking decline in Japanese public images of, and confidence towards the Chinese shown in recent public opinion surveys would have strengthened Tokyo's resolve.<sup>88</sup> Koizumi's indication in December 2002 regarding his intention to continue visiting Yasukuni, even in the presence of an alternative memorial, demonstrated his confidence in maintaining a hardnosed China policy, partly to placate nationalist concerns over Yasukuni's fate, which could be, sealed by the advisory group's following report/proposal (KN 24/12/2002). That said, Koizumi reportedly did not fully observe the traditional Shrine ritual during his third pilgrimage,<sup>89</sup> apparently a symbolic gesture to dilute Chinese and domestic consternations (Yamaori 2003:44).

The stipulated global and regional events prior to the third pilgrimage would have the Koizumi government perceiving a relatively favourable external environment in terms of allied resolve and bilateral leverage vis-à-vis China to maintain its current Yasukuni policy. Conversely, a seemingly weaker domestic political resolve vis-à-vis nationalist pressure required Tokyo to pursue a tougher foreign policy-option to boost domestic political support. The international-domestic nexus thus locates Koizumi's position within Quadrant C (Diagram 3) that stipulated an assertive-nationalist policy-option regarding Yasukuni visits, in the context of Japan-China relations.

#### 6.3.4. The January 1, 2004 visit

Japanese-Chinese tension remained high throughout 2003 following several history-related quarrels, but China's new leadership appeared pragmatic in handling and suppressing them. Although Koizumi decided in October against a visit to China that year, and Wen Jiabao had been declining the invitation to visit Japan, citing the need for Tokyo to improve the

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<sup>88</sup> See Chapter 3 Figure 1 for the declining trend in annual Cabinet Office public opinion survey on perception/images of China (especially October 2002). Meanwhile, a *Yomiuri Shimbun* survey carried out in the fall of 2002 showed only 36% of respondents agreeing that "China can be trusted", representing a significant drop in public confidence from 1998, when 76% of respondents agreed to that statement (cf. Ma 2004:41).

<sup>89</sup> Koizumi reportedly took a deep bow, instead of performing the usual two bows, two hand claps, and one final bow of traditional Shinto worship, ostensibly hoping that it would be perceived by his domestic and external detractors as a "non-religious" form of respect (Yamaori 2003:44).

atmosphere to facilitate his trip, these high-level posturing did not impede other levels of governmental exchanges. Koizumi was able to meet the Chinese leaders in a “third country”, which reinforced his opinion that continual absence of top-level mutual visits would not be detrimental to overall bilateral ties. Moreover, the Japanese government noticed Beijing’s new flexibility in managing their bilateral problems, with less mentioning of history, and harping on the Yasukuni issue by the Hu-Wen leadership<sup>90</sup> (Fouse 2003). Despite reservations on resuming normal bilateral summits, Hu Jintao appeared to encourage exchanges between key officials of both states (Funabashi 01/07/2003). Increased bilateral cooperation in various areas, i.e. combating the SARS epidemic, and disposal of bio-chemical weapons left by the Imperial Japanese Army in China, gave further indications of the resumption of amiable ties after the previous Yasukuni fallout. Japan also made a conciliatory gesture by agreeing to Chinese demands for damages inflicted by the Qiqihar poison gas incident, albeit as a form of cooperation and not compensation (JT 17/10/2003).

The Shrine rows did not appear to compromise their deepening economic ties either, with China poised to overtake the US as Japan’s top trading partner in 2004, besides becoming the driver of Japanese economic recovery.<sup>91</sup> Japan was also appreciative of China’s efforts in realising the first of several rounds of the Six-Party Talks in August 2003, and understood the significance of Sino-Japanese cooperation in bringing to fruition the event’s objectives. Tokyo’s emphasis on maintaining cordial relations with China can be seen from the conciliatory measures taken soon after Koizumi’s New Year Shrine homage, in which the PM reiterated his views of China as Japan’s most important partner and the great importance he attached to Japanese-Chinese friendship (AS 06/01/2004). On January 9, Koizumi instructed the Japanese delegation to China comprising the chairs of the respective ruling coalition’s PARC to convey his views to the Chinese side (Wan 2006:252). This suggests the 2004 pilgrimage was made upon anticipation of an ambiguous diplomatic

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<sup>90</sup> For instance, during the St. Petersburg summit, Hu did not raise the Yasukuni issue in his talk with Koizumi, although he did comment generally on the history issue (YS 31/05/2003).

<sup>91</sup> China accounts for 80% of Japan’s export growth in 2003, with the total value of Japanese export to China increasing 33.2% from the previous year, hitting a record high for the fifth consecutive year (DY 02/03/2004; Glosserman 17/05/2004). China’s growing economic significance to Japan is elaborated in Chapter 3.

position vis-à-vis China, and that Koizumi had been striking a delicate balance between maintaining satisfactory relations with China for Japan's broader national interests, and satisfying domestic political/nationalist demands for personal political expediency, besides advancing the longer-term goal of "normal" statehood.

The decision was expectedly, facilitated by Japan's buoyancy about its allied resolve, as the US-Japan alliance continued to strengthen under Koizumi's pro-American foreign policy. Japan was prepared to defy growing public disapproval to commit the SDF for the reconstruction of postwar Iraq, much to US' appreciation, but to China's consternation. Tokyo had earlier pledged USD1.5 billion to support the Iraq reconstruction agenda, prior to President Bush's visit to Japan in October 2003.<sup>92</sup> The premier's allegiance and commitments to Washington's cause endeared him to the Bush administration, which saw a "special relationship", reminiscent to that of the "Reagan-Yasu"<sup>93</sup> era developing between the two leaders (Daniels 2004:1), and its positive "spillover" on US-Japan ties (McCreedy 2004). Indeed, Bush appreciated Koizumi's significance as a crucial ally, for he was probably the only Japanese leader, who could successfully augment Japan's security role to support Washington's unpopular Iraq policy and still survive unscathed, domestically (Kokubun interview/3). Strategically, Koizumi's foreign policy continued to give Japan the perceived favourable external environment and diplomatic leverage over China, which affected Tokyo's China policy decision-making, and reinforced Koizumi's determination to stand up to China.

Japanese public approval remained generally strong, and the Yasukuni issue had not undermined Koizumi's political standing. Not only did Koizumi manage to get re-elected as the LDP president on September 20, 2003, he went on to lead the party to electoral victory in the November Lower House election, which secured the political mandate and support necessary to advance his political agenda, including his annual Shrine routine.

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<sup>92</sup> The timing of the pledge, which came ahead of Bush's visit, was apparently a move to demonstrate that it was not made under US pressure (JT 16/10/2003).

<sup>93</sup> This refers to the close relationship forged by Ronald Reagan and Nakasone Yasuhiro that saw a significant warming of US-Japan relations during their tenures as head-of-state.

Koizumi's confidence was obviously, boosted by his re-election, and the degree of public support for his Yasukuni visits, which did not dissipate, despite increased public awareness of the controversy it has courted. However, Koizumi did feel the heat of public opposition towards his plans to dispatch the SDF to Iraq, soon after the November election. A November 29-30 *Mainichi* poll shows that the vast majority of Japanese were either directly opposed, or reluctant to send troops, and were critical of US unilateralism in Iraq (Agawa 2004:7). A *Yomiuri*-Gallup public opinion poll in mid-December also saw those Japanese who "do not trust the US" topping those who "trust" it, for the first time (cf. McCreedy 2004:1), highlighting growing apprehension towards Koizumi's foreign and security policies.

The New Year Shrine visit, could possibly, be meant to divert public attention, and mobilise support for the SDF dispatch, when the Diet session reconvenes on January 19, 2004. This is especially so, since Chinese hostility over Yasukuni could easily trigger reactive nationalism and aggravate the "China threat" perception in Japan,<sup>94</sup> giving weight to the government's argument for broadening its security policy, and the importance of the US-Japan alliance in hedging against an unpredictable China that required Japanese to continue supporting their ally. On the same note, it provided Tokyo justification to advance a more fundamental nationalist agenda in the revision of the Article IX, and the reinstatement of Japan's normal military role. According to Tamamoto, "the symbolism of the Yasukuni visits and the bravado associated with the Iraq expedition are not unrelated", suggesting that Koizumi was taking advantage of "a fabricated air of emergency...to fundamentally transform Japanese national identity from a state of constitutional pacifism to a state than can go to war" (2004:15). This view is shared by Hughes, who asserts that the domestically unpopular SDF deployment to Iraq for postwar reconstruction purposes represents the emergence of an increasingly "normal" Japan, where "vital precedents" for future overseas dispatch have been established under the US-Japan pact that can effectively circumvent the Article IX (2005:133-134), with China arguably part of such calculations.

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<sup>94</sup> Japanese public scepticism regarding China's "peaceful rise" was equally fuelled by the success of Chinese manned space mission in October 2003, which triggered concerns over China's advanced military development.

The timing and indications made before the visit also suggest ingenious statecraft by the Koizumi administration. Koizumi's aide publicly announced in December 2003 that the PM was contemplating to visit Yasukuni on August 15, next year (KN 28/12/2003; JT 29/12/2003). However, he went on New Year's day, instead, which according to a Chinese observer, appeared to be a calculated move, since a January trip would be less contentious compared to a visit on the date that was intentionally publicised, earlier (cf. Wan 2006:429, *en.94*). If such was the case, then the crafty strategy could also, be meant to induce the Chinese into believing the so-called "change-of-date" as a minor concession by Koizumi, similar to his compromise in 2001. Furthermore, an early visit would end speculation over the issue, and avoid further Chinese pressure (Nikkei 03/01/2004; Wan 2006:251). Likewise, Koizumi could have anticipated more scepticism and criticisms towards his policies that could compromise approval ratings, and put pressure on his Cabinet, later in the year. Hence, an early visit, especially after the recent election, would be timely, with public approval still relatively propitious.

Koizumi's 2004 visit, was thus, plausibly made following perceptions/calculations of the ambiguous external conditions, stipulated earlier, and a relatively favourable domestic environment fostered by recent electoral victory and public support for an assertive China policy. This external-domestic nexus places Koizumi between Quadrant A and B in the NCR model, which allows a flexible China policy-option (visiting Yasukuni), supplemented by moderate policy-measures to reduce the diplomatic cost of Chinese reactions.

#### 6.3.5. The October 17, 2005 visit

Allied resolve remained positive throughout 2004-2005, as Japan enjoyed one of the best periods of relations with the US. During the "Two-Plus-Two" talks in February 2005, both allies established a "common strategic objective" in hedging against an increasingly powerful China (Klare 2006). Washington, on its part, remained unusually quiet over Yasukuni and Koizumi's "aloof" policy towards China (and Korea). Amidst mounting international opposition to its highly unpopular Iraq policy, the Bush administration would have treasured the personal ties with Koizumi, and Tokyo's unwavering support, and therefore, would

understandably avoid interfering on issues sensitive to its ally. It has been suggested that the “special relationship” between Bush and Koizumi had given Japan the kind of leverage never before enjoyed by the junior partner, which under NCR’s hypothesis, allowed Koizumi to advance his assertive, and somewhat reckless China policy.<sup>95</sup>

As US-Japan relations prospered, Japanese-Chinese ties worsened in 2004-2005, due to the aforementioned bilateral disputes. This contrasting diplomatic outlook would have Tokyo perceiving an ambivalent external environment that gives domestic politics saliency in China policy-making. Although China maintained a pragmatic approach throughout 2004, it became clear by 2005 that Koizumi’s nonchalance over Yasukuni, and Tokyo’s assertive posturing and growing international ambition would be obstacles to improving relations (Zhu 2005:16-17). Ironically, Beijing’s pragmatism in maintaining a functional relationship, despite the Shrine rows, allowed Koizumi to continue visiting Yasukuni with the same “aloof optimism” that such visits would not adversely affect Japan-China ties.<sup>96</sup>

That said, Koizumi’s decision to delay his annual visit until late 2005 could be due to diplomatic prudence, notably to avoid Japan from becoming increasingly isolated in the region, and dodge criticisms during the run-up to the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of WWII. Media speculations were rife by early 2005 that Koizumi would visit at year’s end, since the other prospective dates were considered untimely. *Asahi Shimbun* deduced that a visit in either January (New Year), or April (Spring Festival) would be unwise, after having only recently, re-established cordial exchanges with China’s leaders, and Tokyo’s intention to invite Premier Wen to attend the World Expo in Aichi prefecture, in May (AS 01/01/2005).<sup>97</sup> Moreover, with diplomatic rows concurrently brewing between Japan and two other

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<sup>95</sup> This observation was offered by several interviewees, including Young C. Kim, Kikuchi Tsutomu, Murata Koji, Nakai Yoshifumi, Kato Koichi, and Noda Takeshi. Indeed, Kato recalled Bush saying that he did not want to put Koizumi in an awkward position over Yasukuni, underscoring the constraint on Bush’s handling of the issue (Kato interview/2).

<sup>96</sup> High-level bilateral exchanges/consultations continued on, despite Beijing’s displeasure over Yasukuni, as seen in the sideline meeting between the two foreign ministers in Hanoi’s ASEM summit in October 2004 (SCMP 10/10/2004). Similarly, the Hu-Koizumi and Wen-Koizumi summits at the November APEC and ASEAN-Plus-Three gatherings in Chile and Laos, respectively, proceeded, even though relations were recently strained by the Chinese submarine incident (AFP 22/11/2004; BBC 30/11/2004). See Chapter 7 for the case-study on the submarine incident.

<sup>97</sup> This media observation is also noted in Wan (2006:256). See also “Japan eyes inviting Chinese PM to Aichi Expo,” *Mainichi Daily News*, 28 November 2004.

neighbours, South Korea and Russia over territorial disputes (Korea Times 24/02/2005; Nikkei 31/01/2005), avoiding another Shrine row with Beijing would clearly be in Tokyo's regional interest (Wan 2006:258). Likewise, an August 15 visit was ruled out in view of the historical sensitivities concerning the date and the year, while paying homage during the Autumn Festival would risk opportunities to arrange sideline meetings with the Chinese leaders at the APEC summit in November (AS 01/01/2005).

Koizumi's decision to take the risk, nevertheless, demonstrated his resolve, and priorities in mollifying domestic sentiments, rather than soothing Chinese displeasure. One reason for such foreign policy bravado would be that Koizumi was neither overly concerned with the decline in Japanese-Chinese diplomacy, nor with Japan's growing isolation in Asia, as long as Washington-Tokyo relations continued to prosper and develop into a matured and equal partnership. Some Japanese bureaucrats and observers suggest that Koizumi's "skewed" external perspective and his lack of diplomatic finesse were attributed to his limited foreign policy know-how, and consequential indifference towards the policy-area, as well as his lack of affinity with, and knowledge about China.<sup>98</sup> Affected by these "limitations", Koizumi could have thus, (mis)perceived a pro-US foreign policy as sufficient in helping realise Japan's external goals. Moreover, Koizumi sees the deterioration of relations with China (and Korea) as "temporary and not fatal while the [Yasukuni] visits promote the long-term strategy of pushing Japan closer to normalcy in international relations" (Huo 2005).

Furthermore, Japanese public images of China were, severely dented by the anti-Japanese demonstrations in July-August 2004 and April 2005, and Beijing's endeavour to derail Tokyo's UNSC bid. The annual PMO polls in 2004-2005 saw unprecedented highs of Japanese feeling no closeness to China, surging to 58.2% in 2004 from 48% the year

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<sup>98</sup> According to several of my interviewees, Koizumi was not particularly interested in foreign policy, and had limited experience and knowledge in the field before assuming the premiership. This partly explains why Koizumi had devoted his efforts predominantly to realising domestic policy-objectives, while hinging Japan's external strategy on the US-Japan ties. Also, his assertive China policy was possibly influenced by his political and personal background, notably his affiliation with the pro-Taiwan Fukuda-Mori faction, and allegedly limited knowledge and interests about China. Apparently, Koizumi's 2001 trip was only his second visit to China, which explains his limited affinity and lackadaisical attitude towards the Chinese (Anonymous interview C). Opinion also shared by Kokubun Ryosei, Tomoda Seki, and Zhao Quansheng in their respective interviews.

before, and then topping at 63.4% in 2005.<sup>99</sup> Both the *Asahi* and *Yomiuri*-Gallup polls in November and December 2004 also recorded a similar trend, with a staggering 71.2% and 71% indicating distrust towards China, respectively (Przystup 2005a:126; DY 16/12/2004). In light of the prevailing public sentiment, it would not be difficult for Tokyo to rally popular support for an assertive China policy. Whilst public opinion favoured Koizumi standing tall against China, opinions regarding his Yasukuni visit were more ambiguous, as seen in the rather evenly divided *Asahi* poll in November, where 38% supported his Yasukuni routine as opposed to 39%, who wanted Koizumi to stop (cf. Kokubun 2007:147). However, *Mainichi's* monthly opinion surveys between April-October 2005 showed signs of public wariness, with higher percentages opposing than supporting his Shrine visits (cf. Deans 2007:278).<sup>100</sup> A June 2005 *Nikkei* poll also recorded declining public support, with 42% opposing a visit, while those supporting dropped to 38%. Approximately 69% of those opposing cited concerns over deteriorating ties with neighbouring countries as the main reason (*Nikkei* 20/06/2005), indicating the extent to which Chinese and Korean antagonisms have had impacted on Japanese public awareness regarding the wisdom of Yasukuni visits.<sup>101</sup>

Similarly, domestic political opposition mounted after the fourth visit, with opposition parties periodically attacking Koizumi over his Yasukuni antics (KN 01/01/2004a; 22/11/2004). Even the LDP's coalition partner, Shin-Komeito expressed concerns over the constitutionality of such visits (KN 01/01/2004b), and implore Koizumi to take the Chinese protest seriously (JT 09/12/2004). During a Diet session in January 2004, DPJ's Kan Naoto, criticised Koizumi's antagonistic China policy for undermining Japan's broader national interest, in view of Beijing's importance as a Six-Party Talks partner to promote North Korean denuclearisation (Wan 2006:253). China's subsequent role in facilitating the "abduction talks" between Pyongyang and Tokyo, before the February 2004 round of the Six-Party summit, also broadened Japanese awareness of the significance of Chinese

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<sup>99</sup> See Figure 1 in Chapter 3. For similar information, see also "Public Opinion Survey on Diplomacy by the Cabinet Office of Japan" October 2005 [<http://www8.cao.go.jp/survey/h17/h17-gaikou/3.html> cf. Mansfield Foundation homepage at <http://www.mansfieldfdn.org/polls/poll-05-12.htm> (accessed on 03/06/2007)].

<sup>100</sup> See also Figure 2 in this chapter for the trend of public support on Yasukuni visits.

<sup>101</sup> However, another *Nikkei* poll in August 2005 saw 46% supporting compared to 38% opposing (*Nikkei* 12/08/2005), suggesting that public opinion can be fickle and thus remain ambiguous.

cooperation, which increased the diplomatic cost of Japanese-Chinese conflict over future Yasukuni visits (AS 16/02/2004; Daniels 2004:33).<sup>102</sup> Apprehensions were growing within LDP, as well, notably among senior party cadres and “pro-China” factions. In a highly unusual act, Lower House Speaker Kono Yohei reportedly met with five former premiers on June 1, 2005 to discuss relations with China, and subsequently made clear their unanimous decision in discouraging Koizumi from continuing his Shrine visit (AFP 01/06/2005). Even Nakasone weighed in, telling reporters that Koizumi should “think more about national interests than personal beliefs” and stop his Yasukuni trips (Przystup 2005c:131).

The *zaikai* also began voicing concerns since the 2004 visit, regarding the negative spillover effect of the Yasukuni problem on bilateral economic relations (KN 13/01/2004). Indeed, *Asahi Shimbun* reported Chinese officials’ statements indicating that Japan would lose its bid on a lucrative high-speed train project, purportedly due to the January 2004 Shrine visit (AS 18/02/2004; Daniels 2004:54).<sup>103</sup> Fear of Chinese retribution in the economic realm after the April 2005 anti-Japanese riots led to *Keidanren* and *Keizai Doyukai* calling for the PM to exercise caution on future Yasukuni pilgrimages.<sup>104</sup> In a mid-July *Kyodo* poll, more than half of top Japanese companies surveyed fear that strained ties could adversely affect their business in China (KN 02/08/2005). Domestic pressure came from the legal front as well, when the Fukuoka District Court and Osaka High Court ruled against the Shrine visits, in April 2004 and September 2005, respectively (JT 29/06/2006).<sup>105</sup> However,

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<sup>102</sup> China’s Vice-FM, Wang Yi reportedly told LDP policy chief, Nukaga Fukushima that China had approached North Korea to open the avenue for resolving the abduction issue with Japan, before the February 2004 Six-Party Talks (AS 16/02/2004).

<sup>103</sup> The *Asahi Shimbun* also reported that the Chinese indicated their likely support for France, instead of Japan, in their competing bids to host the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor Project (ITER), in retaliation against the New Year day visit in 2004 (AS 18/02/2004). For reports of Chinese economic retribution in 2004, see “BUSINESS IN CHINA: Anti-Japan Sentiment Threatens to Thwart Deals,” *Nikkei*, 11 November 2004, and Curtin (2004a).

<sup>104</sup> The main critics of Koizumi’s actions came from Okuda Hiroshi, Chairman of *Keidanren* and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Toyota, Yotaro Kobayashi, Chairman of Fuji Xerox, and Kitashiro Kakutarō, Chairman of both *Keizai Doyukai* and IBM Japan (cf. Lam 2006b:10).

<sup>105</sup> To be sure, there were mixed lower court rulings on the issue, with Osaka and Matsuyama District courts dismissing the Yasukuni lawsuits on February 27 and March 16, 2004, respectively (MDN 27/02/2004; 16/03/2004). On May 13, 2004, the Osaka District Court also ruled Koizumi’s Yasukuni visit as private in nature (MDN 13/05/2004), while the Chiba District Court ruled against plaintiffs seeking compensation for his 2001 shrine visit (Przystup 2004b:114-115; 2004c:127-128; 2005a:132).

the other court rulings were inconsistent, and would be, eventually annulled by subsequent deliberations at the Supreme Court, in favour of Koizumi and his Government.<sup>106</sup>

Koizumi appeared unmoved by the domestic apprehension, possibly due to his assessment that his Yasukuni visits and China policy-orientation would not be detrimental to his overall political position, considering the lack of consensus and fickle-mindedness of the Japanese public on the policy-areas concerned. Furthermore, he knew that the public was more concerned with his domestic reform agenda, which remained the “staple diet” that fed his popularity and power base. Moreover, Koizumi could count on LDP Diet-members and other conservative politicians for support, following the formation of a panel of 116 LDP lawmakers on 28 June 2005 that backed his Shrine visit (JT 29/06/2005), and subsequent statements by a non-partisan group of 235 conservative lawmakers urging him to visit on August 15 (AFP 02/08/2005).<sup>107</sup> The staunch LDP support was equally reflected earlier, in the adoption of the Party’s policy platform during its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary convention, on 18 January 2005, which included the call for a continuation of Yasukuni visit (Reuters 18/01/2005), an agenda that was first introduced in January 2004.

More importantly, it was Koizumi’s “landslide” victory in the September 11, 2005 Lower House election that saw the LDP gaining a significant majority, which emboldened and gave him a clear mandate to visit Yasukuni soon after. The snap election was, in Funabashi’s opinion, more of a referendum on Koizumi than his reform agenda. Although difficult to detect since they were “discreetly under the radar” and “absent from the pre-election debate”, Funabashi contends that the “China factor” and Yasukuni were amongst “the largest (election) issues” (Funabashi 15/09/2005). With the context for the pre-election debate set by the “agitating concern” of a rising China and its challenge to Japan, Koizumi’s determination to resist Chinese pressure was in tune with the prevailing Japanese public sentiment, and therefore, a decisive factor in forging the resounding electoral success

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<sup>106</sup> On June 23, 2006, Japan’s Supreme Court rejected the lawsuit filed against Koizumi’s 2001 Yasukuni visit, without giving any judgement on the constitutionality of the visit (XNA 23/06/2006).

<sup>107</sup> The statement was made by five Diet-member groups, namely a non-partisan group, an LDP group, and three citizen’s groups, urging Koizumi to stand firm against Chinese/Korean pressure to visit Yasukuni on August 15 (see also JT 03/08/2005).

(Funabashi 15/09/2005; Anonymous interview I). Interestingly, Gerald Curtis predicted the landslide win as giving Koizumi leeway to stop visiting Yasukuni (KN 12/09/2005). His subsequent homage, nonetheless, indicates that he was not merely doing it for political expedience, but also possibly to fulfill his “nationalist” conviction following propitious conditions stipulated by NCR.

The 2005 visit therefore shared similarities with the previous year’s pilgrimage in terms of the conditions that affected and fostered Koizumi’s decisions. Both trips were made under an ambiguous external environment, shaped by favourable US-Japan relations, but worsening bilateral ties with China. Also similar to 2004, Koizumi visited Yasukuni soon after a successful Lower House election, which bestowed a relatively conducive, domestic political condition that facilitated the visit. Hence, Koizumi’s position in 2005 would be in between Quadrant A and B, which stipulates a similar foreign policy-option to that of the previous year, in managing the Yasukuni issue vis-à-vis China.

#### 6.3.6. The August 15, 2006 visit

By late 2005, the international environment had become relatively unfavourable for the Koizumi administration to continue exploiting the Yasukuni issue in pursuit of an assertive China policy and other nationalist agenda. Aforesaid, the Bush administration had for the first time, “cautioned” against Koizumi’s future Shrine pilgrimage, considering its debilitating impact on Japan’s ties with two key regional actors, which have undermined Tokyo’s position regionally, and the US strategy in Asia (JT 12/08/2006). Indeed, from Bush’s insinuation, and veiled disapproval by senior US administration officials, to Washington’s signal for better US-China-Japan ties (Christensen 2006),<sup>108</sup> the American dissonance became obvious, to the extent that Koizumi was ostensibly denied his coveted address at the joint sitting of the US Congress during his farewell US tour, following strong

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<sup>108</sup> For veiled comments from senior US officials, i.e. US Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick, and Deputy National Security Adviser, Jack Crouch, see “U.S. official seeks March realignment plan, better Japan-China ties.” *Kyodo News*, 24 January 2006. See also “US says frustrated over Japan’s strained Asian ties,” *Reuters*, 19 Nov.2005, for Asst.US Secretary of State, William Hill’s voices of “frustration”. Indeed, observers perceive Zoellick’s influential speech to the National Committee on US-China relations on 21 September 2005 calling for the engagement of China as a “signal” to Koizumi, and Tokyo to “reassess” Japan’s China policy-direction (see Zoellick 2005; Takahata interview).

congressional opposition towards his “Yasukuni bravado” (Nikkei 01/06/2006; Lim 02/06/2007).<sup>109</sup>

From a bilateral perspective, Japan-China political ties could not have got any worse, as tensions escalated amid the ECS quandary, while bilateral negotiations and dialogues at various levels failed to progress, due to dissipating political will caused by the prolonged absence of top-level interactions.<sup>110</sup> Although the Chinese kept the pressure on Koizumi over Yasukuni, Beijing appeared to have allocated greater attention to his prospective successors, to ensure that the Shrine routine would not continue under the post-Koizumi administration. This suggests the Chinese government, having contemplated, and accepted the worst-case scenario, namely Koizumi visiting on August 15, has decided to wait out on him (ST 16/03/2006; Lam 2006b:1). Ironically, Koizumi’s decision to make his final Shrine visit on the controversial date could have stemmed from his anticipation of this shift in Chinese focus and diplomatic pragmatism, which would mean the visit itself carrying limited impact on Japanese-Chinese diplomacy after his departure.

The domestic condition was equally disadvantageous, with the strongest opposition yet towards his Yasukuni exploits deriving from across Japan’s political spectrum. There were growing unrest within the LDP ranks, with senior members like Kato Koichi, Kono Yohei and Yamasaki Taku urging for a rethinking of the Yasukuni policy, while anti-Shrine LDP Diet-members forged a study group in March 2006 to improve Tokyo’s regional relations (IHT 17/03/2006; Lam 2006b:8). In fact, a supra-partisan group of 130 Diet-members from the LDP, Shin-Komeito, and the opposition DPJ was established, last October, to advocate for an alternative, non-religious war memorial in place of Yasukuni (JT 28/11/2005; cf. Lam 2006b:8). Differences apparently reappeared between the PMO and MOFA regarding Yasukuni, as reflected by an article in the MOFA-affiliated *Gaiko Forum*

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<sup>109</sup> The strongest opposition came from the Chairman of the House’s International Relations Committee, Congressman Henry Hyde. In a leaked letter to House Speaker, Dennis Hastert, Hyde cited that if the PM visited Yasukuni as expected, after he were to address the Congress, “Mr. Koizumi would dishonor the place where President Franklin Roosevelt made his ‘Day of Infamy’ speech after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor” (quoted in IHT 24/06/2006). In fact, Congressman Hyde had voiced concern back in October 2005 regarding a regional Yasukuni fallout vis-à-vis Japan following Koizumi’s 2005 visit (IHT 28/10/2005).

<sup>110</sup> This is the opinion shared by senior MOFA officials interviewed (Anonymous interview A and B).

that was critical of the visits (KN 10/12/2005).<sup>111</sup> Even the Japanese conservatives have spoken against a continuation of Koizumi's actions, due to increasingly strong international and domestic repercussions since his last visit. In an unprecedented development, Watanabe Tsuneo, head of Japan's largest conservative, centre-right newspaper, *Yomiuri Shimbun*, and one of the most influential public opinion leaders, openly criticised the PM's shrine visits during a *New York Times* interview, and in a leftist journal, *Ronza*, in February 2006 (NYT 11/02/2006; KBS 13/02/2006; IHT 18/02/2006). More significantly, Watanabe forged an unlikely alliance with his counterpart from *Yomiuri's* ideological archrival, Wakamiya Yoshibumi of the left-leaning *Asahi Shimbun*, to call for a moratorium on future prime ministerial visit (Lam 2006b:10).<sup>112</sup> Both *Yomiuri* and *Asahi* also agreed on a joint project to delve into the question of Japan's war responsibility, which is inextricably related to the Yasukuni ideology (van Kemenade 2006:51; JT 29/03/2006). As highlighted earlier, public support for the visit also declined considerably,<sup>113</sup> while the *zaikai* had officially made clear their opposition (YS 10/06/2006). Most ironic of all was *Izokukai's* appeal to Koizumi to refrain from visiting their sacrosanct site, while proposing for a solution amenable to China.

So, why did Koizumi proceed with his plan, despite facing somewhat unfavourable international and domestic conditions? The answer to this "anomaly" insofar as the NCR framework is concerned, would lie on his judgment that the visit would not matter, or carry any significant political risk, since he was already at the twilight of his premiership.

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<sup>111</sup> The article, written by former Japanese ambassador to the US, Kuriyama Takakazu, ostensibly reflects a more conciliatory attitude within MOFA towards China. It triggered a nationalist backlash, with the rightwing *Sankei Shimbun* chastising it as representative of MOFA's enduring "kowtow" diplomacy towards China. See Kuriyama Takakazu, Jan. 2006. "Wakai: Nihon gaiko no kadai: hansei o kodo de shimesu doryoku o" [Reconciliation: Japan's diplomatic challenges: working to translate regrets into action] Part 1, *Gaiko Forumu*, No.210:8-15, and Feb. 2006. "Nihon gaiko no kadai: wakai no jitsugen o mezashite" [Reconciliation: Japan's diplomatic challenges: Aiming to realize reconciliation], Part 2, *Gaiko Forumu* No.211:63-69. See also "Taichu gaiko: tsuyoki kantei yowaki gaimusho" [Diplomacy towards China: Strong-spirited Prime Minister's Office, fainthearted Ministry of Foreign Affairs], *Sankei Shimbun*, 6 January 2006 (details and translations derived from Lam 2006b:11).

<sup>112</sup> See "Yasukuni o kataru, gaiko o kataru" [Talk about Yasukuni, talk about foreign relations], *Ronza*, No.2, February 2006: 26-39 (cf. Lam 2006b:11). For an abridged version of the discussion between the two media chiefs in *Ronza*, see "Yomiuri and Asahi Editors Call for a National Memorial to Replace Yasukuni", *Japan Focus*, Article 524 [<http://www.japanfocus.org/article.asp?id=524> (accessed on 12/05/2006)].

<sup>113</sup> Besides the polls cited earlier, see also "Poll: Japanese increasingly oppose shrine visits", *People's Daily*, 25 July 2006.

Realistically, the Chinese had “written him off”<sup>114</sup> and begun concentrating their efforts on the incoming Japanese leadership (JT 20/02/2006), while other sources of external and internal pressure would recede, if his successor observes the proposed moratorium. Koizumi was also no longer, unduly concerned about securing domestic political support for his reform agenda, since he had successfully achieved some of his targeted programmes, and set in motion the forces of change in the Japanese political economy. More so, instead of harming his popularity, a visit on the promised date would have cemented his “*kizen*” (Funabashi 15/09/2005) or “lionheart” image (Anderson 2004), and reputation as a steadfast leader, in the hearts of millions of Japanese.<sup>115</sup> In this regard, Koizumi could have reckoned the international conditions and domestic processes to be indeterminative rather than determinately unfavourable (Diagram 3), due to circumstances surrounding the anticipated leadership transition, which gave him the policy flexibility that led to his “final” visit. His “nationalistic” action thus conforms to NCR’s dictum that state-elites do not necessarily respond effectively to the prevailing decision-making constraints, due to “intervening” elements i.e. (mis)perceptions and/or personal disposition/interests.

#### 6.4 Conclusion

Japan’s management of the Yasukuni dispute during the Koizumi administration demonstrates to an extent, the salience of domestic nationalist pressure, notwithstanding Koizumi’s so-called “normal-nationalist” disposition, in affecting Tokyo’s policy-decision to sustain the annual Shrine routine. That said, the timing and manner in which they were executed between 2001-2006, and the diplomatic manoeuvring, before and after the pilgrimages, also suggest the prevalence of shrewd and rational, rather than purely

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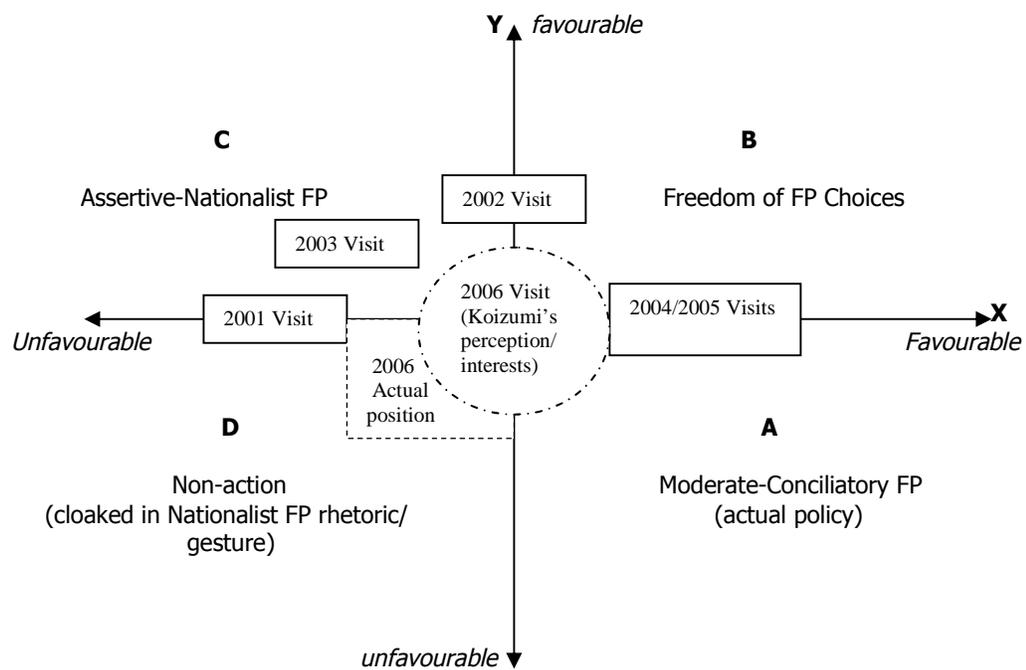
<sup>114</sup> On February 8, 2006, China’s State Councillor Tang Jiaxuan told the visiting Japan-China Association head, Noda Takeshi that the Chinese has “written off” Koizumi and expected nothing from him during the remainder of his office (Przystup 2006b:124).

<sup>115</sup> An emergency public opinion poll by *Asahi Shimbun* after Koizumi’s 2006 visit shows 49% of respondents agreeing to the statement that “it was good that he visited” Yasukuni Shrine on August 15, 2006, while 37% answered that he “should not have visited”, indicating commendable public support for his decision [cf. Mansfield Foundation homepage <http://www.mansfieldfdn.org/polls/poll-06-6.htm> (accessed on 12/06/2007)]. The regular *Asahi* poll on August 26-27, 2006 also recorded a rise of 3% point in Koizumi’s cabinet approval rating, from 44% in July to 47%, while those who disapprove fell from 40% to 36%. Overall, 68% of respondents evaluated Koizumi’s achievement between “very positively” (12%) and “somewhat positively” (56%), as a whole [cf. Mansfield Foundation homepage at <http://www.mansfieldfdn.org/polls/poll-06-7.htm> (accessed on 12/06/2007)]. See also “Last shrine trip OK, but not next: poll”, *Japan Times*, 17 August 2006.

emotionally-laden policy-calculation, and external-internal balancing, on Tokyo's part, in an effort to simultaneously promote foreign and domestic policy-goals. This concurs with NCR's assumptions regarding the extent to which nationalism determines Japan's China policy-making, which under particular international-domestic conditions, as perceived by Japanese state-elites during specific time periods, can be more, or less salient in shaping their policy-options.

**Diagram 3**

**NCR MODEL OF NATIONALISM AND JAPANESE STATE BEHAVIOUR/CHINA POLICY PREFERENCES ON THE YASUKUNI SHRINE ISSUE**



**X = Domestic Political Resolve (vis-à-vis domestic nationalist pressure)**  
**Y = Relative Power Position (vis-à-vis disputant-state/China)**

## **CHAPTER SEVEN**

### **CASE STUDY II: NATIONALISM, SOVEREIGNTY, AND JAPANESE-CHINESE TERRITORIAL/MARITIME DISPUTES IN THE EAST CHINA SEA**

The preceding chapter has demonstrated the extent to which resurgent nationalism exacerbates the Japanese-Chinese “history” problem that manifested most emphatically in their diplomatic quarrels over Koizumi’s visits to Yasukuni-*jinja*. Similarly, bilateral issues concerning territorial integrity and sovereignty are extremely delicate and potentially explosive, as they often arouse nationalistic impulses that galvanise societal and governmental responses “disproportionate to the material stakes involved” (Roy 2003:3). Indeed, nationalism is widely perceived to have increased the stakes and retarded possible resolutions of their competing sovereignty and resource claims over the ECS islands and surrounding waters, turning the dispute into a key diplomatic quandary. Utilising the NCR framework, this second case-study attempts to evaluate nationalism’s role vis-à-vis other policy-determinants affecting the Koizumi administration’s perception/calculations and policy-options, when dealing with China over the ECS territorial/maritime disputes. The focus of analysis is on their competing claims over the Senkaku/Diaoyudao archipelago, and quarrels regarding natural gas exploration and Chinese violations of Japanese maritime boundary within ECS. This chapter begins with a background study of the dispute, before delving on the specific issues and periods of contention. Particular attention is given to analysing the interactions between domestic nationalist pressure and other external-internal variables within the matrix of Japan’s China policy-making, to assess the extent to which nationalism constrains Tokyo’s management of this potentially destabilising bilateral dispute.

#### **7.1. Background of the ECS Territorial/Maritime Disputes**

Before addressing nationalism’s role in Japan’s China policy-making pertaining to the ECS quandary, it is essential to elaborate the dispute’s origins and multi-dimensional nature, and the contesting legal interpretations involved, as well as its significance to nationalism, to comprehend the intricacies surrounding what is considered to be a perilous set of issues in Japanese-Chinese relations.

### 7.1.1. Origins and nature of the ECS disputes

The bitter disputes over the ECS comprises several correlated issues, namely their contending territorial claims over Senkaku/Diaoyudao,<sup>1</sup> competition for energy resources and unilateral exploration activities in the adjacent waters, and incursions by Chinese naval and research vessels into the disputed maritime boundaries claimed by Japan. Central to the conundrum is the longstanding territorial dispute over a group of five islets and three barren rocks called the Senkaku/Diaoyudao archipelago.<sup>2</sup> These relatively small and uninhabited insular formations are located at the edge of ECS continental shelf, approximately midway between Taiwan and the southernmost island of the Japanese Ryukyu chain, and separated from the latter and Japan's continental shelf by the Okinawa Trough (Su 2005:46; Shaw 1999:10-11; Chiu 1999:2-3; Hagstrom 2003:80; Suganuma 2000:11; Schoenbaum 2005; Dai 2006:136; Drifte 2008b:29) (see Table 4).

**Table 4**  
**Senkaku/Diaoyudao Archipelago**

Chinese Name	Japanese Name	Category	Latitude (N)	Longitude (E)	Size (sq.km)
Diaoyu Dao	Uotsuri-shima	Islet	25° 45'	123° 29'	4.319
Huangwei Dao	Kuba-shima	Islet	25° 58'	123° 41'	1.08
Nanxiao Dao	Minami Kojima	Islet	25° 44'	123° 34'	0.463
Beixiao Dao	Kita Kojima	Islet	25° 45'	123° 33'	0.302
Chiwei Dao	Taisho-Kojima	Islet	25° 55'	124° 33'	0.154
Dabeixiao Dao	Okino Kitaiwa	Rock			
Dananxiao Dao	Okino Minamiwa	Rock			
Feilai Dao	Tobise	Rock			

Sources: Adapted from Su (2005:46) and Suganuma (2000:12).

Before the 1970s, these “islands” were of limited “intrinsic value” (Shaw 1999:12), underappreciated and regarded by both Japan and China as “essentially “worthless land””

<sup>1</sup> There are numerous studies of Japanese-Chinese dispute over Senkaku/Diaoyudao. Among the studies analysing the dispute from the perspective of international law include Cheng (1974), Greenfield (1992), Valencia (1996), Shaw (1999); Chiu (1999), Dzurek (2000), Heflin (2000), Suganuma (2000), Su (2005), and Dai (2006). Meanwhile, studies by Downs and Saunders (1998/9), Drifte (2000; 2003; 2008a/b); Deans (2000), Bong (2002), Hagstrom (2003; 2005), Blanchard (2006), and Chung (2004; 2007), among others, analyse the dispute from the IR viewpoint. For an excellent and up-to-date work, see Drifte (2008a).

<sup>2</sup> The geological terms “islets” and “barren rocks” are commonly noted (Drifte 2008a/b; Hagstrom 2003:80). According to observers, the islands are called “Senkaku”, “Senkaku Shoto”, “Senkaku Retto”, “Senkaku Gunto”, meaning “Pinnacle rocks” in Japanese. “Tiaoyu” or “Tiaoyu tai”, meaning “Fishing platform” is the Chinese name for the islands, spelled in the Wade-Giles Pinyin system widely used in Taiwan and Hong Kong. In the PRC, they are known as, and spelled “Diaoyu Dao” or “Diaoyu Tai” in the Hanyu Pinyin system (cf. Su 2005: *fn.1*; Narayanan 2005: *fn.2*; see also Suganuma 2000:93; Deans 1996:2). These islands are also called “Pinnacle Islands” for convenience and neutrality sake by some Western scholars and can be found in recent studies (see Hagstrom 2003; 2005). For the purpose of this study, the name shall be standardised and called “Senkaku/Diaoyudao” or “Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands” to avoid a biased slant towards either disputant-states.

(Suganuma 2000:11). Traditionally serving as temporary fishing platforms and shelters, they stirred limited, sustained interests from the eventual claimant states, and were essentially a dormant issue during the early postwar decades. It was only after the publication of the United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (UNECAFE) report in 1969, which optimistically predicted the potential existence of abundant hydrocarbon reserves surrounding the archipelago that triggered the consciousness of the concerned parties, and led to the bitter ownership contest between Japan and China (and Taiwan)<sup>3</sup> (Su 2005:47; Chiu 1999:4; Green 2001:84; Drifte 2008a). Since then, it has been identified in both academic and official accounts as one of the most complicated and potentially explosive issues in Japanese-Chinese relations (e.g. Cheng 1974:265; Whiting 1989:200; Zhao 1996:195; Nathan and Ross 1997:93; ; Kato 1999:2; Blanchard 2000:122-23; Suganuma 2000:151, 162; Valencia 2000:1; Yang 2002:11; cf. Hagstrom 2003:79-80; Drifte 2008a:2).<sup>4</sup>

The dispute was originally between Taiwan (ROC) and Japan over their overlapping concession zones surrounding Senkaku/Diaoyudao, but eventually shifted to a contest between the PRC and Japan following their diplomatic normalisation in September 1972, and Taiwan's de-recognition as a sovereign state (Su 2005:47). At first glance, economic considerations, namely the discovery of natural resources, appear to be the catalyst and driver of the islands dispute. Intense competition, especially over the exclusive control of the potentially rich oil/gas deposits in the contested area is expected, since both countries are dependent on foreign energy supplies to fuel their gargantuan economies (Calder 1996; Drifte 2008b:33), not mentioning the prospects of these islands as future Chinese *lebensraum* (Jencks 1994:91). However, the complexity and difficulties in reaching a mutually equitable economic solution thus far, let alone seeking a political resolution to the dispute, point to the significance of political, emotional, and strategic sensitivities, which are equally, if not more salient in fuelling the periodic Japanese-Chinese diplomatic confrontations over the islands and surrounding waters throughout the past decades.

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<sup>3</sup> This study considers Taiwan's claims over Senkaku/Diaoyudao as similar and in tandem with those of the PRC, and thus treats them as a single claim under the name of China.

<sup>4</sup> The Senkaku/Diaoyudao dispute in the ECS has been, likewise declared as "most worrying" by the UK House of Common Foreign Affairs Committee's Seventh Report (UK Parliament June 2005).

The Senkaku/Diaoyudao controversy is inextricably linked to nationalism, and has been predominantly a nationalistic dispute (Shaw 1999:5; Chung 2004; Valencia 2007:166). To the Chinese, these islands are China's *irredenta*, territories historically belonging to China that have been annexed and continuously occupied by Japan, owing to Japanese imperialism in the past (Taira 2004; Suganuma 2000; Chung 2004:26-27). Accordingly, they are symbols *sine qua non* to modern Chinese nationalism that not only reminded Chinese of Japan's past militaristic transgressions, persistent historical amnesia and skirting of war responsibility, and possible resurgence of militarism (Shaw 1999:5), but also the need to recover these "lost territories" as pre-requisite for the redemption of China's incomplete sovereignty (Suganuma 2000). Conversely, most ordinary Japanese, especially rightwing nationalists, consider Senkaku/Diaoyudao to be an inalienable part of Japan, since their initial discovery by a Japanese national (Chung 2004:29).

As shall be elaborated, symbolic and provocative activities undertaken by nationalists from both sides were responsible in triggering past diplomatic disputes over the islands. Interestingly, the various instances of clashes illustrate the propensity of popular nationalism pressuring and eliciting nationalistic responses from the respective governments, suggesting the vulnerability of state-elites to domestic nationalist pressure, when managing this highly charged issue. That said, it is worth noting that pragmatism appears to have thus far, governed both states' management of past incidents, where concerted efforts were taken to de-escalate bilateral tension arising from them. However, with resurgent nationalism raising the stakes of competition for national pride and prestige (Tamamoto 2005b), any resolution to the debacle, or compromise by way of joint development appears bleak, if not almost impossible, as none of the disputant-states seem willing to shelf their sovereignty claims (Shaw 1999:5), in light of rising domestic nationalist pressure. Moreover, compromise by either claimant-state would set a precedent that could undermine their bargaining position in other unresolved territorial disputes<sup>5</sup> (Deans

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<sup>5</sup> Apart from the history-induced Chinese ultra-sensitivity towards issues concerning extraterritoriality, the PRC is still engaged in a multitude of sovereignty disputes with neighbouring states such as the South China Sea archipelagos of Paracels and Spratlys (Lam 1996; Garver 1992), and secessionist movements in Tibet, Xinjiang-

2000:126; Hagstrom 2003:80). Further complicating the possibility of dispute settlement between Japan and China is the geo-strategic value of the archipelago, straddling along key international shipping lanes vital to commerce and energy security, where ownership could carry strategic implications (Suganuma 2000:13), and affect the evolving regional power dynamics. Suganuma best captures the complexity of the conflict, noting that:

The cornerstone of the Diaoyu [Senkaku] dispute sprouts from an intricate tapestry of economic interests, geopolitical considerations, symbolic reasons, and historical rights (2000:11).

There are three dimensions to the Senkaku/Diaoyudao dispute from the legal perspective (Schoenbaum 2005). The most fundamental concerns sovereignty, which directly affects their respective bargaining position on the subsequent two aspects, namely their overlapping claims over the ECS continental shelf and maritime boundary, and the right to ownership of the islands' contiguous waters and Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ), stipulated in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) (Schoenbaum 2005; Dai 2006). Expectedly, the sovereignty issue is the most difficult to resolve (Schoenbaum 2005; Drifte 2008a/b; Shaw 1999; Harrison 2005), not only because of the historical-emotional sensitivities involved, but also due to the contrasting interpretations of the sovereignty concept resulting from the vagueness of the UNCLOS.

China claims Senkaku/Diaoyudao based on two inter-related arguments; "historical discovery" and utilisation documented as early as the Ming Dynasty; and "territorial cession" along with Taiwan to Japan following Qing China's defeat in the first Sino-Japanese war (Su 2005:48; Chiu 1999:9-11; Blanchard 2000:101; Dai 2006:142).<sup>6</sup> Conversely, Japan establishes its claims via the principles of "discovery-occupation" and "effective control" in the international law (Hagstrom 2003:141; 2005:168). The Chinese substantiate their claims by drawing on historical records of early contacts with the Islands dating back to 1372, or further (Blanchard 2000:101; Suganuma 2000:42-44; Wan 2005:19), citing their functions as shelters for Chinese fishermen, and navigation aids for Chinese "tribunary" envoys to the

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Uighur and Taiwan, among others (Hagstrom 2003:80). Likewise, Japan is involved in irredentist claims over the Kuriles and Tokdo/Takeshima Islands, with Russia and South Korea, respectively (Hagstrom 2003:80).

<sup>6</sup> For a description of the historical basis of China's claims, see also Shaw (1999:43-69) and Chiu (1999).

Ryukyu kingdom, as well as part of the coastal defence system against Japanese *wako* (pirates) (Cheng 1974:253-60; Matsui 1997:11; Shaw 1999:38; Hagstrom 2003:140-141). The islands' historical ties with, and incorporation as part of Taiwan's coastal defence system by the Qing government during the 18<sup>th</sup> century are also alluded to verify the "territorial cession" argument, where they are considered among the islands "appertaining or belonging to" Taiwan (Formosa) that were forcefully ceded to Japan on April 17, 1895, under the "unequal" Treaty of Shimonoseki (Shaw 1999:38; Su 2005:48). The Japanese reject the Chinese arguments, asserting that Senkaku/Diaoyudao were *terra nullius* until their subsequent discovery by Koga Tatsuhiro, a Japanese national, in 1884, which eventually led to their formal incorporation into Japan's territory in January 1895, ostensibly after more than a decade of official Japanese survey, and several months before the cessation of Taiwan (Chung 2004:28; Su 2005:49; Hagstrom 2003:140-141). Further validating Japan's claims have been its "effective jurisdiction/control" of the islands, since then, apart from the period between 1945 and 1972, when they were grouped together with Okinawa, under American occupation (Chung 2004:28).<sup>7</sup> From the Japanese viewpoint, the islands were indisputably incorporated with the Ryukyus into the "Nansei Shoto"<sup>8</sup> under the US trusteeship system (Narayanan 2005:14; Drifte 2008b:30), before their reversion to Japanese administration under the 1971 Okinawa Reversion Treaty (Lee 2002; Taira 2004).

Indeed, the contending interpretations of events leading to, and after Japan's WWII defeat, and the US administration of the Islands further complicated the sovereignty dispute. As understood by the Chinese, the provisions of the 1943 Cairo Declaration and 1945 Potsdam Declaration, not mentioning, the 1951 San Francisco Peace Treaty, effected the return of all territories annexed by Imperial Japan, which included Taiwan and the Pescadores, and supposedly by implication, Senkaku/Diaoyudao as an appurtenance of the former (Shaw 1999:39-40; Taira 2004). The renunciation of Japanese claims to these

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<sup>7</sup> For an official position and statement on the Japanese claim, see "The Foreign Ministry's View Concerning the Rights to Ownership over the Senkaku Islands" on 8 March 1972 (AS 09/03/1972 cf. Chung 2004: Chp.3, *fn.*4; see also Chiu 1999:11-12).

<sup>8</sup> The term "Nansei Shoto", which literally means "Southwestern islands", is a geographic reference to "an arc of islands lying between the southern end of Kyushu and Taiwan...[that] includes, from North to South, the Tokara Islands, the Amami Islands, the Okinawa Islands, and the Yaeyama Islands" (cf. Taira 2004).

territories was apparently, reaffirmed in the 1952 Japanese-Chinese Peace Treaty signed between Japan and the ROC as then legitimate government of China (Chiu 1999:18; Su 2005:48). Accordingly, the Chinese argue that the American occupation of Senkaku/Diaoyudao was in contravention of these international treaties, and therefore, neither recognised Japan's effective control of the islands, nor the US' decision to revert their administrative rights to the latter (Zhong 1996:14; Hu 21/05/2003; Chung 2004:29). In contrast, the Japanese government maintains that the islands were not part the territories ceded along with Taiwan in 1895, as there was no explicit reference to them under the terms of the Shimonoseki Treaty (Suganuma 2000:118; Hagstrom 2003:142). Tokyo also asserts that they were neither specifically mentioned in any of the above Declarations/Treaties, nor did the Chinese government initially raise any objections to such omissions, let alone challenge the postwar arrangement that placed them under US administration (Suganuma 2000:120-121; Matsui 1997:21-22; cf. Hagstrom 2003:142; Su 2005:48-49; Dai 2006:147).

To be sure, the ROC did express disagreement with Article 3 of the San Francisco Peace Treaty, while the PRC denounced it as illegal, since it was signed in the absence of either representative of China, a point used by Beijing to refute Japanese claims of Chinese non-objection to the placement of these islands under American control (Shaw 1999:41, 121-122; Cheng 1974:251-252; cf. Su 2005:fn.40; Taira 2004). However, the Chinese contestations were mainly regarding the status of the Ryukyu and Okinawa islands, without specifically referring to Senkaku/Diaoyudao, which according to observers, seems to indicate that both Chinese governments were initially oblivious to their existence (Hagstrom 2003:fn.282; Shaw 1999:121; Downs and Saunders 1998/9:125).

Meanwhile, Washington's policy was that Senkaku/Diaoyudao were part of its Okinawa administration. Occasionally used by the US military for aerial bombardment exercises (Suganuma 2000:121-122), the Americans initially grouped them together with Okinawa and Ryukyu as an administrative unit (Blanchard 2000:121; cf. Hagstrom 2003:143; Drifte 2008b:29). However, Washington's position concerning the island's sovereignty had become rather ambivalent by the time of Okinawa's reversion to Japan

(1971-1972), presumably due to the internationalisation of the dispute, and the Nixon administration's budding rapprochement policy towards Communist China that required a more neutral American posture on the issue (Hagstrom 2003:143; Shoenbaum 2005).<sup>9</sup>

According to Chung, the Japanese-Chinese sovereignty contest over the archipelago became even more "convoluted" by the 1970s, with both disputant-states vigorously incorporating "the "law of the sea" language of continental shelves and exclusive economic zones" to strengthen their respective claims (2004:29). The invocation of the UNCLOS provisions invariably leads to quarrels over the other two correlated dimensions. The PRC asserts its claims by concurrently invoking both the Continental Shelf Convention (CSC) and EEZ provision, under the UNCLOS. As a coastal-state, Chung states that the basis of China's claims over the islands, and in fact, its "exclusive jurisdiction over the economic resources in and under the entire ECS", lie partly on the CSC-sanctioned argument that its seabed is a "natural prolongation of the Chinese continent", demarcated by the Okinawa Trough (2004:29; Harrison 2005:6-7; Zhong 1996:10). Beijing also validates its claims using the 1982 UNCLOS III provision, which allows a coastal- and maritime-state to exercise jurisdiction over a 200 nautical-miles (nm) EEZ from its shore's baseline (Chung 2004:31; Dai 2006:136), via its 1992 "Territorial Waters Law" (TWL).<sup>10</sup> Conversely, Japan's position as a maritime-state only entitles it to invoke the EEZ provision, which supports its claims of a 200nm EEZ spanning across the ECS from the Okinawa/Ryukyu shores that includes Senkaku/Diaoyudao. Japan officially exercises its EEZ claims on July 20, 1996, via legislation from the Japanese Diet (Green and Self 1996:37). Since the ECS is less than 400nm in width, Japan's territorial and maritime claims overlap with those of China, thus complicating a legal solution to the dispute (Su 2005:46; Drifte 2008b:31).<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> The official US position is that the Okinawa Reversion Treaty "does not affect the legal status of those islands at all" and Washington holds a neutral position with regard to the ownership status of the islands (Niksich 1996 cf. Narayanan 2005:15; *fn.*68; see also Drifte 2003:54).

<sup>10</sup> The legislation is also officially translated as "Law of the Territorial Sea and the Contiguous Zone", or "Law on China's Territorial Waters and Its Adjacent Areas" (Hagstrom 2003:82, *fn.*177).

<sup>11</sup> According to Drifte (2008b:31), the delimitation of the ECS maritime border becomes more complicated, if South Korea's competing claims over the northern part of the ECS is taken into account.

By virtue of the UNCLOS, Japan unilaterally limits its claims to a “median line” equidistant between the Ryukyus and the Chinese mainland (Schoenbaum 2005), one which China does not recognise, for fear of undermining its claims over Senkaku/Diaoyudao. Interestingly, Japan’s successful claim to an extended median line in the ECS would depend on the establishment of Japanese sovereignty over the Islands, a pre-condition that China is acutely aware of. Since they are located significantly west of Japan, observers construe that possession of Senkaku/Diaoyudao would enhance Tokyo’s bargaining position over the location of an agreed median line, insofar as the islets (not rocks, though) are entitled to their own continental shelf and EEZ (Harrison 2005; Schoenbaum 2005). Harrison claims that they can be used “to demarcate the outermost extension of Japanese territory [which] would push part of the median line westward, maximizing the Japanese share of the seabed” (2005:6). Ferguson confirms that ownership entitles Japan to approximately “an additional 40,000 square kilometers of EEZ” bringing extra resources to the Japanese nation’s coffer (2004a). Such legal provisions not only make the possession of these uninhabited islands all the more significant to both parties, but the legal ambiguity, in Drifte’s opinion, promotes contending interpretations that complicate resolution to their sovereignty claims over the archipelago, which correspondingly hinders the delimitation of the related maritime border/zones (Drifte 2008b:31; Schoenbaum 2005).

Expectedly, both Japan and China hold a rigid position in the Senkaku/Diaoyudao dispute. The Japanese government appears most reluctant to negotiate the issue, asserting the islands as an “integral part” of Japanese territory, and even denies the existence of any sovereignty dispute over them (MOFA 1996; Shaw 1999:27; Su 2005:49; Drifte 2008a:5).<sup>12</sup> Apart from their economic values, these islands are important to Japanese geo-political and strategic interests in that they straddle along sea-lanes vital to Japan’s economic, energy,

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<sup>12</sup> Indeed, most of my Japanese interviewees opined that Senkaku is a non-issue, and were reluctant to elaborate on questions concerning the sovereignty dispute. For an official statement that denies the existence of the Senkaku dispute, see MOFA, 23 July 1996. “Reported lighthouse construction on Kita-Kojima in the Senkaku Islands” Press Conference by the Press Secretary [<http://www.mofa.go.jp/announce/press/1996/7/23.html#2>] (accessed on 12/10/2007)]. See also related press statements, and Japan’s official position on Senkaku/Diaoyudao, at MOFA’s website at <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/senkaku/senkaku.html>. Meanwhile, based on the official statements made over the years, Drifte opines that the Japanese position has evolved from one of implicitly agreeing to shelving the dispute, to a denial of the existence of a territorial dispute (2008a:5).

and military security (Suganuma 2000:13). Furthermore, Japan has unresolved territorial disputes with Russia and South Korea over the Northern Territories/Kurile and Takeshima/Tokdo Islands, respectively, and is understandably “reluctant to suspend Japanese territorial claims to the Senkakus...for the sake of joint exploration and development with China, lest this set a precedent that would jeopardize Japan’s position” (Harrison 2005:6) in these disputes. Although both governments have taken a pragmatic stance and avoided military conflicts over the ECS debacle, the intertwined notions of nationalism and territorial sovereignty are increasingly constraining their policy-options, especially in the wake of resurgent nationalism in both countries. In Japan’s case, domestic nationalist activities were not only responsible for several bouts of diplomatic disputes with China over the Islands since the 1970s, but rising Japanese nationalism has also ensured that they remain a highly visible foreign policy issue, which limits Tokyo’s options when dealing with Beijing.

#### 7.1.2. Domestic nationalist pressure and “internationalisation” of the ECS dispute

Aforementioned, the ECS was essentially a non-issue until the UNECAFE’s revelation of potentially rich petroleum deposits in the waters off Senkaku/Diaoyudao. It reportedly estimated the potential existence of an excess of “between 10 to 100 billion barrels” of oil in and under the continental shelf between Japan and Taiwan, notably where the islands are located (Park 1983:42-43, *n.3*; cf. Chung 2004:32; Downs and Saunders 1998/9:124). A subsequent Japanese government survey strengthened the speculation, estimating “well over 94.5 billion barrels of quality oil” trapped in the seabed to the northwest and south of the archipelago (Harrison 2005:6). As major oil importers, the news predictably triggered competing sovereignty claims by Taiwan and Japan.

The territorial dispute first manifested in September 1970, when Japanese police evicted a group of Taiwanese reporters from one of the islets after their symbolic effort to plant a Taiwanese flag, which elicited anti-Japanese protests and inspired the establishment of oversea movements to defend Chinese interests in Senkaku/Diaoyudao (Downs and Saunders 1998/9:126; Suganuma 2000:132; Chung 2004:34). The incident prompted Japan to officially, reassert its sovereignty over the islands, but Tokyo ostensibly favoured the idea

of deferring the ownership claims for joint exploration and development of the disputed areas with Taipei, and even Seoul (Chiu 1999:7). This led to negotiations between representatives from the three governments in November-December 1970, which saw the formation of a “Liaison Committee” (Suganuma 2000:132) to facilitate discussions of a tripartite “development cooperation” for the ECS (Chung 2004:32).

Despite its silence during the early stages of the sovereignty dispute, the PRC’s exclusion from the joint development negotiations saw Beijing wasting no time in denouncing the plans and thereafter, officially staking Communist China’s claims over the islands<sup>13</sup> (Blanchard 2006:214; Chiu 1999:9). China’s intervention virtually ceased all plans for development cooperation in the disputed waters (Chung 2004:35), and brought the “sovereignty question” back into the limelight, which erupted again in 1971-1972, following the US decision to revert the Islands’ administrative rights to Japan. Washington’s neutrality on the sovereignty issue notwithstanding, the Okinawa Reversion Treaty’s provision triggered fierce public demonstrations across North America, Hong Kong and Taiwan, as well as diplomatic protests from Beijing and Taipei (Shaw 1999:14-15). The controversy subsided after Japan and China, in their capacity as the official claimant-states, agreed to shelve the issue to facilitate diplomatic normalisation (see Drifte 2008a:4-5).

The next round of diplomatic contention occurred in April 1978, when the ultra-nationalist group, *Nihon Seinensha*, erected a lighthouse on Uotsuri-shima, the largest of the Senkaku/Diaoyudao islets, in an attempt to stake Japan’s claims over the disputed archipelago (Huang 1997). The provocative action took place following sustained, albeit unsuccessful efforts by rightwing, anti-China politicians to link the sovereignty issue to the bilateral negotiations for the Japanese-Chinese PFT (Tretiak 1978:1241; Bedeski 1983:35-37). Since the resumption of the talks in February 1978, pro-Taiwan and anti-PFT Diet-members led by the LDP’s rightwing *Seirankai* had been pressuring the government to

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<sup>13</sup> According to Chiu (1999), The PRC was silent in the early stages of the dispute, only to join in the foray after discovering Japanese proposal of shelving the ownership claims in favour of joint-development of the area with Taiwan and South Korea. It began with a semi-official claim via an article in the *Peking Review* before the Chinese MFA’s issuing of a statement of formal legal claim on 30 December 1971 (Chiu 1999:9).

extract a favourable resolution to the Senkaku/Diaoyudao dispute from China as a pre-condition for the inclusion of the so-called “anti-hegemony” clause in the PFT (Chung 2004: 36; Shaw 1999:16). Seeking for a “win-win” solution, the anti-PFT forces thought they could “either scuttle the talks by adopting an intransigent posture over Senkaku, or at least exact the islands as a price from the Chinese” (Chung 2004:36) for agreeing to the “clause”. China forcefully remonstrated against the political affront by dispatching a fleet of more than 100 allegedly armed fishing vessels to the disputed waters, to encircle the islands (Blanchard 2006:215).<sup>14</sup> Instead of eliciting Japan’s conciliatory posture, the Chinese action galvanised Japanese nationalist convictions that saw *Seirankai* members erecting a makeshift beacon, before collaborating with *Nihon Seinensha* to construct the mentioned lighthouse (Chung 2004:41). A series of assertive diplomatic exchanges ensued before eventually abating, with both governments agreeing “to shelve the sovereignty issue for future negotiations” to facilitate the “more important” goal of realising the PFT (Takamine 2005:453-454).<sup>15</sup>

Following a twelve-years hiatus, the sovereignty dispute reignited in September 1990, when the J-MSA reportedly decided to recognise the *Seinensha*-built lighthouse as an “official navigation mark” (Su 2005:47; Shaw 1999:17), and permitted its renovation (Chung 2004:42). The decision triggered instantaneous reaction from Taiwanese authorities, who lodged an official complaint to the Japanese government before dispatching two fishing boats filled with athletes carrying an Olympic torch to the islands to symbolise Taiwan’s claims (Deans 1996:4-5; Hifumi 1996:21). Despite intense media scrutiny, the J-MSA “forcefully” prevented their landing, eliciting more media criticisms and public demonstrations in Taiwan and Hong Kong (Whiting 1992:48). Although largely a dispute between Taiwan and Japan, the PRC did respond, albeit belatedly and reluctantly, by joining the chorus of denunciation of Japan’s claims and demanded Japanese authorities to curtail activities of

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<sup>14</sup> The PLA-Navy also intended to launch a large-scale naval exercise, but was overruled by Deng Xiaoping, a decision ostensibly made in assessment of the priority given to attaining the much sought after “anti-hegemony” clause from the Japanese in the PFT (Bachman 1998:40-41 cf. Downs and Saunders 1998/9:126).

<sup>15</sup> According to a *Yomiuri Shimbun* report on February 27, 1992, Deng Xiaoping allegedly told Japanese foreign minister, Sonoda Sunao during the 1978 PFT negotiations that “China tacitly admitted Japan’s practical control of the Senkaku Islands” (quoted in Takamine 2005:454).

ultra-nationalist organisations (Downs and Saunders 1998/9:128-129).<sup>16</sup> China's low-profile response probably reflected its gratitude and recognition towards Japanese support in the aftermath of the 1989 Tiananmen Incident, which saw Beijing employing mild rhetoric rather than concrete actions to challenge Tokyo's intransigence (Whiting 1992:48; Chung 2004:43). Following both sides' reiterations of claims to the islands, the sovereignty issue was, indecisively shelved again to prevent it from undermining the amicable atmosphere of the bilateral ties (Weisman 31/10/1990:A7).

Controversy soon re-emerged in 1992 following the promulgation of China's TWL, which explicitly located Senkaku/Diaoyudao within Chinese territorial waters, much to Japan's consternation (Hagstrom 2003:82). Subsequent ratification to the UNCLOS and the updating of continental shelf and EEZ claims by both governments in 1996, ratcheted up bilateral tension (Su 2005:47). Fuelled by provocative nationalist actions and counteractions from both sides, the already simmering dispute culminated in a protracted diplomatic crisis that saw both governments initially playing to the nationalist tunes and taking assertive stances, before scrambling to defuse the potentially explosive situation that threatened to spiral out of rational control, after the dispute suffered its first casualty.

The 1996 incident<sup>17</sup> started when *Nihon Seishinsha* made yet another attempt to assert Japan's claim by constructing a lighthouse on Kita-Kojima, one of the smaller Senkaku/Diaoyudao islets, days before the Japanese Diet ratified its EEZ claims, which encompass the contested archipelago. Apparently timed to put pressure on, and influence the Diet resolution (Chung 2004:43-44), *Seishinsha's* action and Tokyo's assertiveness over the issue, not mentioning, PM Hashimoto's "timely" visit to Yasukuni, emboldened the Japanese nationalists (Downs and Saunders 1998/9:133; Green 2001:86). Thereafter, another *uyoku* organisation known as the Senkaku Islands Defense Association erected the *Hinomaru* on Uotsuri-shima, while *Seishinsha* continued testing Chinese patience with

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<sup>16</sup> For a detailed anecdotal coverage and IR theoretical assessment of the September 1990 Senkaku/Diaoyudao incident, see Downs and Saunders (1998/9), Bong (2002), and Chung (2004).

<sup>17</sup> For an interesting analysis of nationalism and the 1996 dispute from the Chinese perspective, see Downs and Saunders (1998/9), and Deans (1996; 2000).

further provocative activities on the islands (Chung 2004:44). Public demonstrations reverberated from Hong Kong and Taiwan in response to the provocations (Kristof 16/09/1996). Unlike the previous incident, the Chinese government reacted more firmly this time around, lodging diplomatic protests against Tokyo's assertion of claims, and criticising the Japanese authority for their alleged indifference in curtailing the nationalist activities.

Under pressure from domestic nationalist forces during the period of high nationalism, both governments had to demonstrate their nationalist credentials by appearing assertive and uncompromising, although "behind-the-scene" negotiations were made to prevent further escalation of the dispute (Downs and Saunders 1998/9; Bong 2002; Chung 2004). Nonetheless, subsequent clashes between Chinese protesters attempting to land on the islands and the J-MSA that tried to prevent their landing resulted in the death of a Hong Kong activist, which led to more virulent popular anti-Japanese demonstrations across Greater China (Bong 2002:81).<sup>18</sup> The controversy receded after Beijing took measures to rein in nationalist sentiments and settled for a diplomatic compromise, in which Tokyo, though refusing to demolish the Kita-Kojima lighthouse, agreed not to recognise it.

These past disputes demonstrate the propensity of nationalist groups in Japan manipulating the Senkaku/Diaoyudao issue to advance their parochial agenda, and in so doing, trigger reactive popular Chinese nationalism that leads to diplomatic rows between the two governments (Downs and Saunders 1998/9; Deans 2000; Bong 2002; Chung 2004). They also suggest the salience of domestic nationalist pressure in constraining Japan's behaviour vis-à-vis China, where the Japanese state is inclined, to an extent, to assuage nationalist demands by standing firm on the sovereignty dispute.

Nonetheless, the fact that none of these diplomatic crises led to military engagements, and Tokyo's willingness to settle for compromises to de-escalate bilateral

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<sup>18</sup> On September 26, David Chan, a Hong Kong activist drowned after reportedly jumping into the water with four other activists when their freighter, *Kien Hwa No.2* was blocked by J-MSA/JCG vessels from landing on Senkaku/Diaoyudao. His death triggered popular demonstrations across Hong Kong and Taiwan, while Chinese authorities scrambled to diffuse anti-Japanese sentiments and curb protest in Mainland China (see also *CNN World News* 26/09/1996; *SCMP* 10/10/1996; *YS* 07/10/2006).

tension suggest the prevalence of other determinants, and limits of nationalism in shaping Japanese policy-options over the ECS dispute, and its overall China policy, for that matter. For example, the prompt containment of the crises in the early 1970s can be attributed to the prevailing Cold War international environment and US policy-shift toward the PRC that drove Japan to prioritise Japanese-Chinese reconciliation. Similarly, the willingness of Japanese state-elites to “dismiss” sustained domestic nationalist pressure during the 1978 crisis highlights the importance of securing the PFT to substantiate the *de facto* “strategic alliance” with China against a common security threat in the Soviet Union (Bedeski 1983:37; Whiting 1992:48; Zhao 1996:193-195). These instances reflect NCR’s assumptions regarding the salience of external variables vis-à-vis domestic considerations, i.e. nationalist pressure, in shaping state behaviour/preferences, under structurally determinate/high-pressure international conditions. Conversely, the protracted diplomatic row and Japanese assertiveness in managing the 1996 incident suggest increased domestic nationalist leverage in China policy-making, under a relatively low-pressure post-Cold War international environment. Furthermore, a perceptively favourable relative power position vis-à-vis China, in terms of “allied resolve” and bilateral exchanges, allowed Tokyo to exercise rather more nationalistic posturing during the dispute, which mirrors the NCR dictum.

This leads to the research question regarding the extent to which domestic nationalist pressure affects Japan’s policy-options when managing the ECS problem between 2001-2006, and whether they are directly induced by the emotional properties of nationalism and identity politics, and/or calculated responses by the Koizumi administration for domestic and diplomatic expediency. Indeed, the Japanese government has somewhat displayed a more assertive attitude vis-à-vis China over the ECS issues since 2001, following revitalised domestic nationalist impulses, and the advent of a widely regarded nationalist-oriented leadership in Japan. The islands’ sovereignty dispute has also become more complicated. Besides the occasional provocation by nationalists from both countries, China’s growing physical presence in the contested waters via repeated ship incursions into the area, and its unilateral decision to develop gas fields at the fringe, albeit Chinese side of

the median line, have broadened the scope of the debacle, and increased the frequency of diplomatic quarrels. Against the backdrop of a fluid external environment and regional power shifts that perpetuated Japanese insecurity towards the Chinese, an NCR analysis of the interactions between nationalism and these changing external dynamics can help explicate nationalism's salience in shaping Japan's China policy over the ECS dispute.

## **7.2. Nationalism and the International-Domestic Nexus in Japan's China Policy-making over the ECS Dispute**

In view of its three-pronged nature and constant recurrence throughout the period of investigation, an overview of the ECS debacle is elaborated, before applying the NCR model to assess nationalism's salience vis-à-vis other variables in affecting Japan's management of the: 1) Senkaku/Diaoyudao sovereignty contest; 2) Chinese incursions into the disputed waters; and 3) natural gas dispute.

### 7.2.1. An overview of the ECS conflict (2001-2006)

The ECS remained a "sea of simmering conflict" (Curtin 2005c) even after Japan and China managed to rein in their strident diplomatic row in 1996, with occasional incidents involving provocations by nationalists from both sides eliciting rhetorical exchanges between the two governments throughout the twilight of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>19</sup> Unlike before, the Chinese have also increased their physical presence in the disputed waters off Senkaku/Diaoyudao since 1999, via the dispatch of scientific research vessels, under the pretext of conducting maritime research (Su 2005:47). The frequency of Chinese vessel sighting in the area rose spectacularly since 1998, including suspected PLA-Navy intelligence gathering activities to map the sea floor for future Chinese submarine operations (Malik 2000:22; cf. Roy 2003:3; Drifte 2003:56-57; Glosny 2004; Goldstein and Murray 2004).<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Among the incidents included the landing of Diet-member, Nishimura Shingo on a Senkaku/Diaoyudao islet in May 1997, which triggered the usual "reaction-counteraction" dynamic that saw a Chinese diplomatic protest and Japanese reiteration of their position and denial of official involvement (CNN Report 06/05/1997). This was followed by clashes between Chinese protesters and the J-MSA/JCG in September 1998 that led to a Chinese boat sinking. See "Senkaku/Diaoyutai Islands," *GlobalSecurity.org* [<http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/senkaku.htm>] (accessed on 09/08/2007). In 2000, a Japanese rightwing group made another landing to build a shrine on one of the islets that brought further diplomatic exchanges (Su 2005:47).

<sup>20</sup> Chinese research vessel incursions into Japanese EEZ rose from 4 in 1997 to 14 in 1998, and 30 in 1999 (YS 28/08/2000 cf. Takamine 2005:454). Drifte (2003:57) noted the number of incursions at 33 and 24, for 1999 and

Viewed by Japan as a violation of the UNCLOS, these repeated Chinese forays into Japanese-claimed EEZ has become a key diplomatic irritant, which led to bilateral negotiations in September 2000 for the establishment of a mutual advanced notification mechanism regarding maritime research activities (Przystup 2001a:93). Although both sides reached an agreement in February 2001, the “prior notification” mechanism appeared vague on the definition of research activities and geographical area involved (JT 14/02/2001; Drifte 2008a:18-20),<sup>21</sup> which eventually saw China rescinding its obligation several months later, with the “illegal” return of Chinese ships to the contested waters (Przystup 2001c:112; KN 18/07/2001).<sup>22</sup> China’s failure to observe the agreement elicited strong criticism from Japan, and growing security concerns regarding Chinese intentions in the ECS, let alone capabilities, given the PLA-Navy’s rapid expansion/qualitative build-up (NIDS 2002:214). Tokyo released an incriminating, five-year review of China’s maritime activities within Japanese EEZ on 26 July 2001, soon after the Chinese violation, which highlighted possible military intelligence operations in the areas concerned, while FM Tanaka took the matter up with her Chinese counterpart during the ARF meeting in Hanoi, where the Yasukuni issue was also raised (YS 26/07/2001; Przystup 2001c:112).

The incursions halted temporarily after August 2001, with no violations reported until year’s end, when a *fushinsen* appeared in the disputed waters. Subsequently identified to be North Korean, it was intercepted by, and exchanged fire with the JCG before sinking off the Chinese EEZ (Samuels 2007/8:96). The incident triggered protracted diplomatic exchanges between Japan and China that lasted well into 2002 concerning alleged Japanese

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2000, respectively. However, there is a categorical difference between the number of Chinese research vessels and warship sightings in Japan’s EEZ (see Drifte 2003:56-58). Regarding the latter, the figure also significantly rose from two in 1998, to 27 and 31 in 1999 and 2001 (cf. Drifte 2003:58; Malik 2000:22 cf. Roy 2003:3). A PLA-Navy vessel also successfully circumnavigated the Japanese archipelago in May 2000, an event which heightened Japanese security planners concerns regarding implications of Chinese incursions on Japan’s maritime security (Calder 2001:108-109).

<sup>21</sup> The advanced notification framework agreement signed on February 13, 2001, stipulates the requirement for both sides to provide at least two-months advanced notice, including details of the vessel and crew, as well as the objective, period, and place of research activities (JT 14/02/2001). For a discussion on Chinese maritime incursions, and the setup and weaknesses of the advanced notification mechanism, see Drifte (2008a:18-20)

<sup>22</sup> Between July 9-16, 2001, the JCG discovered several Chinese ships operating near Senkaku/Diaoyudao in Japan’s claimed EEZ, without prior notification, which contravened the February 2001 bilateral agreement on advanced notification (Przystup 2001c:112).

aggression, the prospect of raising the sunken ship, and speculations of Chinese involvement in supplying the vessel, prior to meeting its fate (Przystup 2002b:99-101).

Although relatively quiet throughout 2001-2002, the Senkaku/Diaoyudao dispute resurfaced early January 2003, when Japanese media reported that the government had controversially leased three of the islets, Uotsuri-shima, Kita-Kojima, and Minami-Kojima, from their Japanese owner (YS 31/12/2002), triggering diplomatic protests from the Chinese MFA on January 3, and Vice-FM, Wang Yi, two days later (Reuters 03/01/2003; KN 05/01/2003).<sup>23</sup> Japanese Vice-FM, Takeuchi Yukio, responded with the usual reiteration of Japan's rightful claims to the archipelago, but called for a "cool-headed approach" to avoid damaging overall ties (cf. Przystup 2003b:101). Despite mutual governmental effort to contain the issue, Chinese nationalists were not prepared to go silent without responding to what was perceived as a move by Japan to strengthen its sovereignty claims (Roy 2003:3). On 22 June 2003, a group of mainland Chinese and Hong Kong activists attempted to land on the islands, but was "appropriately" repelled by the JCG (SCMP 23/06/2003; Reuters 23/06/2003)<sup>24</sup>. Japanese nationalist/rightwingers retaliated with a landing in August, prompting protests from Beijing (KN 26/08/2003). The Chinese activists remained undeterred as they regrouped and made further landing attempts in October (SCMP 10/10/2003). Meanwhile, Chinese naval/maritime incursions were limited in 2003, with the JDA detecting only eight such "intrusions" (Przystup 2004b:109). Nonetheless, the spotting of a Chinese Ming-class submarine in international waters close to Senkaku/Diaoyudao by a MSDF P-3C on November 12, did raise Japanese concerns regarding China's stealth-like strategy in establishing a forceful presence in the ECS<sup>25</sup> (JT 13/11/2003).

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<sup>23</sup> The Japanese government leasing of the islands began in April 2002 at a cost of JPY22 million annually. The decision was apparently meant to prevent their sale, or block anyone from landing on the islands (BBC 03/01/2003; JT 06/01/2003).

<sup>24</sup> For more details of Japanese actions, see also "Japanese gunboats foil protest attempt on disputed Diaoyutai islands," *Agence France-Presse*, 23 June 2003.

<sup>25</sup> There were conflicting reports on the figure regarding Chinese naval incursion, with the Web Memo published by the Heritage Foundation citing a declassified Japanese government report in January 2004, numbering the intrusion to six occasions in 2003, which included two violations of Japanese territorial waters by Ming-class submarines (Tkacik, Jr. 2004; see also JT 13/11/2003).

On January 14, 2004, two fishing vessels carrying twenty Chinese activists sailed to Senkaku/Diaoyudao in what was their third attempt since last June to land on the islands (AFP 15/01/2004). The vessels subsequently turned back after being intercepted, and denied by JCG ships on January 15 (JT 16/01/2004). The media reported that the Chinese boats were attacked with water cannon by ten Japanese warships, causing injury to a Chinese crew (BBC 15/01/2004).<sup>26</sup> Interestingly though, the incident was not reported in the Japanese media (Ferguson 2004a). The relatively inconspicuous incident, nonetheless, served as the precursor to the next diplomatic clash over the islands in March 2004, which saw the dramatic arrest of Chinese activists by Japanese authorities following their successful fourth landing attempt. Preceding the incident was the resumption of illegal Chinese activities in the disputed waters, which prompted a MOFA protest.<sup>27</sup>

On March 24, seven mainland Chinese activists from the “China Federation for Defending the Diaoyu Islands” landed on Uotsuri-shima/Diaoyu-dao, after successfully evading the JCG patrol ships (JT 25/03/2004). According to Curtin, after spending hours planting the Chinese flag, giving mobile phone interviews to the Chinese media, and avoiding capture, they were finally taken into custody by the Okinawa Prefectural Police for violating the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Law (2004b; KN 24/03/2004). The incident was significant in that it marked the first time mainland Chinese nationals were directly involved and detained for landing on Senkaku/Diaoyudao (Su 2005:47; Smith 2004). The Japanese government lodged an immediate protest (MDN 24/03/2004), whereas the Chinese authority responded by denouncing the provocative action, and demanded the release of the detainees<sup>28</sup> amid popular Chinese protest outside the Japanese embassy in

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<sup>26</sup> For a comprehensive report, see also “Japanese warship attacked Chinese fishing boats in areas off Diaoyu Island,” *PLA Daily*, 16 January 2004.

<sup>27</sup> A Chinese vessel was sighted on 17 February 2004, conducting “illegal” research activities in Japan’s EEZ, prompting the MOFA to call for a cease in Chinese activities on March 2-4. This was followed by Vice-FM Takeuchi’s statement on March 8, 2004, deeming the Chinese activities as “extremely regrettable” in response to the JDA report, citing 11 instances of Chinese illegal and ostensibly military-oriented research activities, since the beginning of the year (cf. Przystup 2004b:109, 114-115).

<sup>28</sup> The official position of the PRC on the incident can be found in the statement issued by the Chinese MFA spokesperson on 25 March 2004 posted on MFA website at <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/ce/cgme1/eng/yrrh/t80720.htm> (accessed on 10/10/2007). For Japanese and Chinese media interpretations of both governments’ handling of the dispute, see “Free the Diaoyu activists now, Beijing demands,” *South China Morning Post*, 26 March

Beijing, where Japanese flags were purportedly burnt (MDN 25/03/2004; BBC 25/03/2004). In Tokyo, indignation flared up as rightwing politicians and the media engaged in nationalistic rhetoric to assert Japan's claims, while *Nihon Seinensha* announced its intention to send another expedition to the island in a "tit-for-tat" response to Chinese provocation (Curtin 2004b; AFP 25/03/2004). The Japanese government, nonetheless, decided against pressing criminal charges, and instead deported the activists on March 26, in an effort to defuse the situation (BBC 26/03/2004; DY 28/03/2004). The following day, FM Kawaguchi called on her Chinese counterpart, Li Zhaoxing to prevent a recurrence of the incident, and protested the flag burning (KN 27/03/2004). This episode of the ECS dispute not only resulted in the cancellation of a scheduled bilateral talks on the UNCLOS,<sup>29</sup> but also saw the Diet promptly passing an unprecedented resolution addressing Senkaku/Diaoyudao as an issue of Japanese territorial integrity (JT 31/03/2004; DY 01/04/2004).<sup>30</sup> Despite being "diluted",<sup>31</sup> the motion drew instant denunciation from the Chinese MFA (XNA 01/04/2004).

By late May 2004, the territorial row developed into a maritime boundary and energy dispute involving Japanese contestations over Chinese repeated incursions into Japan's EEZ, and more contentiously, exploration activities in the ECS natural gas fields close to, albeit on the Chinese side of the so-called "median line".<sup>32</sup> Bilateral tension began to brew after both sides disagreed over the delimitation issue in the rescheduled UNCLOS meeting on April 22. The Chinese continued their "illegal" research forays, leading to MOFA's official protest on May 13, several days after the JCG discovered a Chinese vessel operating near Uotsuri-shima (BBC 13/05/2004). Despite Beijing's refutation, the ship left the disputed waters a day after MOFA's protest (BBC 14/05/2004).

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2004; "Japan told not to harm Diaoyu Islands activists," *People's Daily*, 25 March 2004; and "Japan grills isle intruders; China demands their release," *Japan Times*, 26 March 2004.

<sup>29</sup> The cancellation was possibly a belated response by the Chinese leadership to divert nationalist political pressure after a perceived soft handling of the March incident (JT 01/04/2004).

<sup>30</sup> A resolution aimed at "preserving [Japan's] territorial integrity" was adopted on March 30, 2004 by the Lower House Security Committee, which requested the Japanese government to "forcefully promote all sorts of measures, including diplomatic efforts" to defend Japanese territorial sovereignty (cf. Przystup 2004c:124)].

<sup>31</sup> The Koizumi administration, represented by CCS Fukuda, reportedly implored the LDP to use non-provocative language in the motion (DY 01/04/2004).

<sup>32</sup> The disputed oil and natural gas fields include Chunxiao/Shirakaba, Tianwaitian/Kashi, Duanqiao/Kusunoki, Longjing/Asunaro and Lengquan/Kikyo (Drifte 2008b:39; see also Masaki 13/03/2007; Curtin 2005c).

However, Japanese media reports emerged late May concerning China's construction of exploration facilities in close proximity to the ECS median line (Liao 2007:40). Confirmation by the Japanese government on June 7, prompted media and LDP pressure for a strong response toward Chinese actions (KN 08/06/2004; Przystup 2004c:125). Concerned that the Chinese exploration activities would siphon off gas from the Japanese side of the demarcation line, Tokyo requested for Chinese exploration data during the Foreign Ministers meeting at the sidelines of the Asia Cooperation Dialogue on June 21 (Takahashi 27/07/2004). Beijing declined, and instead, proposed joint development (Valencia 24/02/2005), but Japan was sceptical, due to concerns over the Senkaku/Diaoyudao sovereignty status (Drifte 2008a/b).<sup>33</sup> The deadlock led to METI chief, Nakagawa Shoichi declaring on June 29 regarding Japan's intention to start its own exploration of the area (AFP 29/06/2004), which the Japanese promptly initiated on July 7, despite Chinese apprehension and mutual calls to resolve the issue through "peaceful consultation" (AFP 07/07/2004; Przystup 2004d:117). Bilateral tension continued to simmer, with China reportedly granting exploration rights to Chinese companies in areas allegedly within Japan's EEZ (BBC 17/10/2004). Mutual consultation did not materialise until late October 2004, when working-level talks finally began in Beijing.<sup>34</sup> Although the talks failed to yield any solution, both sides agreed to maintain the dialogue (BBC 25/10/2004).

Meanwhile, Chinese incursions into Japanese EEZ intensified throughout July-August 2004, with various sightings of research and naval ships conducting oceanographic surveys reported around the vicinity of Senkaku/Diaoyudao and Okinotorishima,<sup>35</sup> fuelling

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<sup>33</sup> According to Drifte (2008a/b), Japan has always insisted on settling the demarcation issue as a pre-condition.

<sup>34</sup> The inaugural director-general-level talks took place on 25 October 2004. Japan was represented by MOFA's AOAB chief, Yabunaka Mitoji, and Kodaira Noboyuki of the Agency for Natural Resources and Energy, while the head of MFA's Asian Affairs, Cui Tiankai, represented the PRC (Jiji 25/10/2004). There were altogether 11 rounds of "Japan-China Consultations concerning the ECS and Other Matter" before a breakthrough was achieved with the announcement for joint development on June 18, 2008 (cf. Drifte 2008b:41; Table 1).

<sup>35</sup> Okinotorishima is the southernmost island of the Japanese archipelago, which became a Japanese-Chinese dispute since 2004, following China's contestation of Japan's definition of Okinotorishima as an "island", which allows the Japanese to establish claim for an extended EEZ, at the expense of Chinese EEZ claims, and maritime/geo-strategic interests. The Chinese refuted Japan's claim, stating that Okinotorishima, used by Japan to establish its EEZ, is more a "rock" rather than an "island", which disqualifies Japanese claims over its EEZ boundary measured from that point (cf. Przystup 2004c:124). Consequentially, China also refuted Japan's claims of its repeated EEZ violations notably near Okinotorishima (Drifte 2008a:20). For a detailed discussion on the Okinotorishima issue, see Yoshikawa (2005; 2007).

speculations over China's intention to expand its naval/submarine operations, not mentioning undermine Japan's maritime resource survey in the ECS<sup>36</sup> (Tkacik Jr. 2004; Przystup 2004d:119). Already reflected in the *Defense of Japan*, approved in July, which called for vigilance over Chinese military development,<sup>37</sup> Japan's security concerns were further heightened on 10 November 2004 by the discovery of an unidentified submarine traveling submerged through Japanese waters off Okinawa (JT 11/11/2004b).<sup>38</sup> Subsequently identified as a Chinese Han-class nuclear submarine, the incursion led to "the highest alert levels" in postwar Japan (Fanell 2006), as MSDF destroyers and planes tracked the vessel for two hours, while it manoeuvred towards Chinese waters (Takamine 2005:440; Ferguson 2004b).<sup>39</sup> On November 12, MOFA protested the incursion and demanded an apology (AFP 12/11/2004), but the Chinese MFA refuse to respond, pending on its ongoing investigation over the incident (Reuters 13/11/2004). Meanwhile, reactive anti-Chinese nationalism unravelled in Japan, fuelled by a barrage of speculations, rhetorical attacks, and critical statements by the Japanese media and political parties (Chan 2004). The controversy finally ended on November 16, when China accepted responsibility, attributing the incident to "technical errors" during training routines (Przystup 2005a:122), and extended what Japan quickly interpreted to be an "apology"<sup>40</sup> (Chan 2004).

The submarine incident nonetheless, exacerbated Japan's perception of China as a security concern,<sup>41</sup> which already saw the JDA developing contingency plans envisaging the

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<sup>36</sup> On July 14, 2004, a Chinese naval vessel allegedly overtook a Japanese resource survey ship in the disputed waters in a hazardous manner, forcing it to alter its route to avoid collision (Tkacik, Jr. 2004).

<sup>37</sup> Apart from this annual JDA white paper, then LDP secretary-general, Abe Shinzo also regarded the perception of Chinese military threat as conventional wisdom in Japan, during an interview with Asahi's *AERA magazine* in late July 2004 (cf. Przystup 2004d:123).

<sup>38</sup> Under Article 20 of the UNCLOS, a submarine is required to surface and display its national flag, while transiting the territorial waters of other foreign countries (cf. Dai 2006:140, *fn.31*).

<sup>39</sup> The MSDF had apparently detected the submarine days earlier, operating submerged near Japan's maritime border. The JDA was alerted when it trespassed into Japanese waters between the remote southwesterly islands of Tarajima, Miyako and Ishigaki, where it was immediately tracked by two MSDF destroyers, and a P-3C aircraft, until it returned to Chinese waters. For specific information regarding how the incident transpired, see Curtin (2004c), and Ferguson (2004b). MSDF commanders later revealed that the incident could have triggered the first Japanese-Chinese naval battle since WWII (YS 22/11/2004 cf. Takamine 2005:440).

<sup>40</sup> The Chinese confirmed and deemed the incident as "extremely regrettable" during a meeting between Chinese Vice-FM, Wu Dawei and the Japanese ambassador, Anami Koreshige in Beijing (see MOFA 2005:37).

<sup>41</sup> Furthermore, China's decision to mark its 16<sup>th</sup> consecutive year of double-digit growth in defence expenditure with a call for another 12.6% increase in 2005 (XNA 05/03/2005) did little in convincing the Japanese regarding its benign ambitions.

possibility of a Japanese-Chinese military confrontation over the ECS resources and territorial claims, in conjunction with the drafting of the new *National Defence Programme Guidelines* (NDPG) (Dai 2006:140).<sup>42</sup> Besides strengthening the US-Japan alliance via the “Two-plus-Two” talks in February 2005,<sup>43</sup> Japanese press also reported in March 2005 on Tokyo’s consideration to establish a stronger military presence in Okinawa’s southernmost islands near Senkaku/Diaoyudao, ostensibly to counter growing Chinese presence in the area (Przystup 2005b:114).

The disputes over EEZ encroachment and natural gas exploration continued to fester during early 2005. In February, Japan accused China of extending its exploration activities beyond the median line into Japanese EEZ,<sup>44</sup> and demanded a cessation of activities and renewed request for the provision of exploration data, which Beijing promptly rejected (Harrison 2005:4; Przystup 2005b:115; Brooke 29/03/2005; Drifte 2008b:37). Bilateral tension was also aggravated by Tokyo’s controversial decision to place the *Seinensha*-built lighthouse on Uotsuri-shima under state control, triggering instantaneous Chinese diplomatic and popular protest (KN 09/02/2005).<sup>45</sup> This was followed by other reported decisions between early March-June to develop, erect a lighthouse, and provide an address for Okinotorishima, to substantiate Japan’s claims to an extended EEZ (AFP 20/06/2005; Yoshikawa 2005; 2007).<sup>46</sup> Japan’s decision to consider the applications and granting of exploration rights in the ECS to Japanese oil companies in April 2005, further exacerbated Chinese consternation (Harrison 2005:4-5). Compounded by several other issues mentioned in previous chapters, bilateral ties spiralled dangerously downward in April 2005, as anti-

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<sup>42</sup> For details of the contingency plans, see “Defense strategists look to China’s attack threat,” *Japan Times*, 9 November 2004.

<sup>43</sup> Although the joint statement of the “Two-plus-Two” talks, officially known as the “Joint Statement of the US-Japan Security Consultative Committee” generally calls for “greater collaboration between US and Japanese forces...in an area stretching from Northeast Asia to South China Sea” (quoted in Klare 2006), the geographical definition also suggests the inclusion of Taiwan and, possibly the ECS (see Klare 2006).

<sup>44</sup> On February 18, METI Minister Nakagawa Shoichi remarked the possibility of two out of three areas currently developed by China in the ECS extending to the Japanese side of the median line, based on the METI’s interim report released that day (Brooke 29/03/2005; see also Drifte 2008b:37).

<sup>45</sup> On 9 February 2005, CCS Hosoda announced the government’s take-over of responsibility and management of the Uotsuri lighthouse. The decision prompted Beijing to call the move as “illegal and invalid”, and “a serious provocation”, while popular anti-Japanese protest began to resonate across China (KN 09/02/2005).

<sup>46</sup> The Japanese Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport officially gave Okinotorishima an address (No.1 Okonotori Island, Ogasawara Village, Tokyo) on June 17, 2005 in an apparent effort to strengthen Japan’s expanded EEZ claims from the island’s baseline (see also Liu Henry C.K. 09/09/2006; Przystup 2005b:132).

Japanese demonstrations spread across Chinese cities. Mutual efforts to de-escalate tensions in the aftermath saw both sides resuming bilateral consultations on the ECS issues on May 30-31. This second-round talks again ended fruitless as disagreement over each other's requests and proposals for joint development stagnated the progress of seeking a resolution to the dispute,<sup>47</sup> prompting METI to grant exploration rights to Teikoku Oil on July 14 (Jiji 14/07/2005).

The ECS gas dispute continued to escalate, with both sides pushing ahead their unilateral development plans. With the third round of consultation on September 30 – October 1 ending in deadlock, while the fourth, planned for October 19 was effectively stymied by Koizumi's Yasukuni visit two days earlier, the prospect of a resolution appeared dim. Meanwhile, the ECS became increasingly volatile as the presence of Chinese navy warships near the Chunxiao/Shirakaba gas fields in September 2005 compelled the LDP to legislate for the protection of Japanese exploration activities, which was subsequently approved on 10 March 2006 (SCMP 14/09/2005; Przystup 2006a:116; Valencia 2006).<sup>48</sup>

Semi-formal talks resumed in January 2006 leading to the recommencement of official consultation in March, but yielded no progress. China advanced a joint development proposal in the Beijing dialogue, which Japanese diplomats agreed to bring back for further study (AFP 07/03/2006).<sup>49</sup> However, the “provocative” proposal, which called for joint development of two areas, one near the median line but in the waters disputed by Japan and South Korea, and the other in the vicinity of Senkaku/Diaoyudao, was immediately rejected by key state-elites like Abe Shinzo and Aso Taro (AP 08/03/2006). It also elicited calls for counter-measures against continuous Chinese exploration activities (KN 15/03/2006), including military response in the event of unprovoked Chinese attack on

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<sup>47</sup> For more details about the second-round consultation, see “China refuses to halt gas projects: Japan refuses proposed joint exploration of the disputed area,” *Japan Times*, 1 June 2005.

<sup>48</sup> It was reported that five Chinese warships were detected in the disputed area in September prior to the Lower House Elections. A Chinese destroyer reportedly targeted its guns on a MSDF P-3C at the vicinity of the Chunxiao/Shirakaba gas field, while Chinese surveillance planes were seen in the area monitoring the operation of Japanese naval ships (Curtin 2005c; Valencia 2006; Fanell 2006; Drifte 2008b:37-38).

<sup>49</sup> Although both sides agreed in principle during this round of talks to pursue joint development in the areas, they remained apart over the specific area where it should take place (see also JT 08/03/2006).

Japanese vessels operating at the disputed waters.<sup>50</sup> Indeed, the SDF planned to conduct joint exercise with the US Marines between January 9-27, 2006, focusing on the ECS, including the defence of the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands (Nikkei 31/12/2005). Despite further working-level dialogues in May and July 2006, a resolution over the ECS gas dispute remained elusive (JT 19/05/2006; 11/07/2006; PD 10/07/2006),<sup>51</sup> as Koizumi's premiership drew to a close in September. Incidents concerning the ECS gas dispute and Senkaku/Diaoyudao continued to occur during the early months of the Abe administration, against the backdrop of improved bilateral ties, as the new PM sought to mend fences with China.

### **7.3. A Neoclassical Realist Interpretation of Nationalism and Japan's China Policy towards the ECS Dispute**

The following section maps the Koizumi administration's perceived position during the related ECS incidents within the four quadrants of the NCR diagram, via the assessment of, and inferences on the prevailing international-domestic conditions and actors/factors, and their interactions that influenced Japan's China policy-making. Although the analysis draws attention to all three aspects of the ECS dispute, empirical attention is devoted to specific incidents, namely the 2004 Senkaku/Diaoyudao debacle involving the detention of Chinese activists, the Chinese submarine intrusion in November of the same year, and the natural gas exploration issue, which is addressed as a protracted dispute between 2004 and 2006.

#### 7.3.1. The Senkaku/Diaoyudao incidents (2003-2004)

Japan's management of the events leading to the March 2004 diplomatic row over Senkaku/Diaoyudao highlights the interaction between domestic nationalist pressure and Japanese state-elites' perceptions/calculations regarding the prevailing external environment and their domestic political resolves, which constrained their policy-options towards China. Internationally, the post-Cold War conditions stipulated in the previous case-

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<sup>50</sup> The SDF, in its "Security and Guarding Plans" has, for the first time, identified China as a potential threat, and planned for contingencies involving Chinese invasion of Senkaku/Diaoyudao (Valencia 2006; IHT 27/09/2005).

<sup>51</sup> Nonetheless, both sides agreed to shelve the EEZ delimitation issue to advance joint development negotiations during the May 2006 talks (Drifte 2008b:40) while the July round saw a mutual agreement to establish a panel of technical experts to facilitate resolution of, as well as a mechanism to avoid "contingencies" in the ECS (JT 11/07/2006; see also Fanell 2006).

study, namely a fluid external environment and strengthening allied resolve (via the US-Japan alliance) provided the Koizumi administration an opportunity to redress Japan's traditionally deferential diplomacy vis-à-vis China. The presence of such an environment, against the backdrop of domestic nationalist undercurrent has had Tokyo demonstrating greater resolve in asserting its sovereignty claims over Senkaku/Diaoyudao since the 1990s. This is reflected by its assertive posturing during the 1996 incident, and subsequently, what observers noticed as an incremental strategy to strengthen its "effective control"<sup>52</sup> over the islands (Su 2005; Chung 2004). Indeed, this Japanese strategy was responsible for the 2004 dispute, beginning with media revelation on Tokyo's controversial leasing of the three islets in January 2003 that instigated a series of landing attempts by Chinese nationalists between June 2003 and March 2004 to challenge the Japanese state's action.

In many ways, Tokyo's decision to lease the islands was ushered by similar external-domestic conditions, as perceived by the Koizumi administration that elicited the premier's third Yasukuni visit in January 2003. So, what were the conditions leading to the March 2004 Senkaku/Diaoyudao dispute, and to what extent was Tokyo's assertive handling of the incident attributed to domestic nationalist pressure? For a start, the prevailing international environment that facilitated Koizumi's New Year's Day 2004 Shrine visit remained relatively unchanged, especially in terms of Japan's growing confidence towards a vastly improved US-Japanese relationship serving as the fulcrum for its more assertive-nationalistic China policy-orientation. Besides providing logistical support in the Indian Ocean and pledging financial assistance for US policy in Iraq, Koizumi's effort to strengthen the US-Japan alliance reached a new threshold in February 2004 with the successful deployment of the GSDF to Iraq, despite growing domestic scepticism (JT 04/02/2004). At about the same time, the debate on constitutional amendment/reinterpretation of the Article IX to facilitate Japan's right for collective self-defence under the alliance framework was also gathering momentum (Przystup 2004b:107), not mentioning, Tokyo's earlier decision in December

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<sup>52</sup> Observers see the Japanese government taking gradual actions since the "Okinawa reversion" to enhance the degree of "effective control" over Senkaku/Diaoyudao, such as its gradual and inconspicuous building of structures (i.e. helicopter pads in Uotsuri-shima in 1979) and endorsement of the navigational beacons erected by nationalist groups like *Seirankai* and *Seinensha* (1989) on the islands (Su 2005:43; Chung 2004:41).

2003 to proceed with the acquisition and deployment of TMD (Hughes 2006:2). Aforementioned, this conspicuous pro-American stance endeared Koizumi to the Bush administration, where the budding “special relationship” between the two leaders, and Washington’s appreciation of its Japanese ally, led to an unusual absence of American *gaiatsu* on Japan’s China policy, which contributed to Tokyo’s boldness in advancing some of its nationalist goals at the expense of Japanese-Chinese ties. On a more specific note, Japanese policy-makers would have taken comfort in the 1997 US-Japan Defence Guidelines<sup>53</sup> implicit acknowledgement, and later on, the “Armitage Doctrine’s”<sup>54</sup> more explicit statement regarding the geographical coverage of the US-Japan Security Treaty that legally included the Senkaku/Diaoyudao archipelago, despite Washington’s enduring neutrality on its sovereignty status (Narayanan 2005:21; Tkacik Jr. 2004; Wu 2000:299-300). The perception of a favourable “allied resolve/commitment” would have emboldened Tokyo to adopt a strategy of “calculated assertiveness” over the ECS disputes.

However, the same cannot be said about the bilateral conditions vis-à-vis China. Their robust economic relationship notwithstanding, diplomatic ties noticeably deteriorated in 2003 following the mentioned history-related incidents, which culminated in Koizumi’s January 2004 visit to Yasukuni. Although China’s “Hu-Wen” leadership had initially appeared pragmatic and prepared to promote better ties with Japan, which included lesser harping over “history”, and its somewhat restrained, if not muted response toward the June 2003 Senkaku/Diaoyudao incident,<sup>55</sup> Koizumi’s obstinate Yasukuni policy instantaneously undermined the prospect for improving political relations as the new year dawned.

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<sup>53</sup> According to observers, the stipulation concerning the “surrounding areas” in the renewed Guideline was taken to mean Taiwan and Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands (see Wu 2000:299-300; Li 1999:11).

<sup>54</sup> The so-called Armitage Report on US-Japan Relations (October 2000) recommended, among others that “The United States should reaffirm its commitment to the defence of Japan and those areas under the administrative control of Japan, including the Senkaku Islands” (quoted in Narayanan 2005:21). Published before Richard Armitage joined the Bush administration, the report has been widely perceived to reflect Bush’s policy towards Japan (and China). For details, see *The United States and Japan: Advancing Toward a Mature Partnership*, U.S. National Defense University, Institute for National Strategic Studies, 11 October 2000. (commonly known as the Armitage Report). Also in late 2001, a senior Bush administration official indirectly hinted possible US support for Japan in the event of a Chinese attack on Senkaku/Diaoyudao (KN 11/12/2001).

<sup>55</sup> The Chinese government responded by reiterating its claims to the islands, but stop short of protesting or criticising Japanese actions with the usual fervent rhetoric. Conversely, the Japanese government was more forthright in its remarks, i.e. Fukuda’s remarks (see JT 24/06/2003; CD 24/06/2003; Urabe 2004a).

That said, the presence of extensive high-level exchanges during the first quarter of 2004 (i.e. China visits by senior members of Japan's ruling coalition, vice ministerial-level coordination for the February 2004 Six-Party Talks, resumption of bilateral defence dialogue after a three-year hiatus, etc.) (Przystup 2004b:107-108) gave the impression that Beijing was willing to maintain a functional relationship, despite the protracted "political chill". Also, China's continued low-key response towards alleged Japanese heavy-handedness during the Senkaku/Diaoyudao incident on January 14-15, despite ongoing Chinese discontent about the Yasukuni visit, equally boosted Tokyo's "quiet confidence" of the Hu-Wen leadership's "new thinking" on Japanese-Chinese diplomacy. Indeed, Beijing's response to the "controlled aggression" of the JCG during the episode was unusually mellow, in that no diplomatic protests were lodged other than the mild rhetoric issued by the Chinese media<sup>56</sup> (Urabe 2004a). Such ambiguous signals from Beijing plausibly encouraged Japanese policy-makers to maintain "cautious optimism" in re-establishing a more realistic relationship with China, which included advancing Japanese interests more forcefully in the ECS. Japanese confidence of Chinese pragmatism was likewise, boosted by their flourishing trade ties and economic interdependence, not mentioning, Tokyo's calculation that its friendly gestures over the Qiqihar poison gas incident, and Koizumi's reassurance to the Chinese following his Yasukuni visit, would have bought Japan some goodwill in Beijing.

In fact, Japan's "low-risk" estimation of an assertive policy-option in the March incident was vindicated by another relatively mild official Chinese response, reflected by "calm and subdued" reporting from the *People's Daily* (cf. Urabe 2004b) and the usual official reiteration of Chinese claims,<sup>57</sup> against the outbreak of "relatively low-key" popular protests (Blanchard 2006:220).<sup>58</sup> Beijing even prevented the departure of another planned Chinese "tour" to the islands in the aftermath, possibly to quell growing anti-Japanese

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<sup>56</sup> According Urabe's comments of the *China Daily* report on the incident, "the tone of the report is, in relative terms, calm and reasonable" with neither condemnation of the JCG's action, nor the usual "hysteria" found in Chinese media reporting of Japanese-Chinese issues (Urabe 2004a).

<sup>57</sup> Beijing also called for calm, while the Chinese ambassador, Wu Dawei reportedly "reminded diplomatically" on China's firm position in his meeting with Vice-FM Takeuchi (JT 27/03/2004).

<sup>58</sup> Even the popular protest outside the Japanese embassy in Beijing was only made possible with permission from the Chinese government, as reported by the BBC, confirming the conventional wisdom amongst Japanese policy-makers that popular anti-Japanese sentiment are predominantly state-abetted (BBC 25/03/2004).

sentiments in China (DY 29/03/2004). Considering the above atmosphere, the Koizumi administration would have anticipated ambiguous diplomatic leverage vis-à-vis China.

Domestically, the Koizumi administration was reaping the fruits of the November 2003 Lower House electoral success, which provided a relatively favourable political environment vis-à-vis its detractors (i.e. left-wingers/pacifists and/or China sympathisers), and more importantly, the mandate to advance an assertive China policy. Meanwhile, the timing of the March 2004 Senkaku/Diaoyudao incident was, according to Curtin (2004b), “particularly unpropitious”, insofar as the general public mood towards China was severely affected by anti-Chinese sentiment triggered by the sensational media reporting on the “macabre” murder trial of Chinese students accused of brutally killing a Japanese family in Fukuoka (see JT 24/03/2004).<sup>59</sup> With the Japanese public appalled by the crime, nationalist politicians/figures exploited the popular mood, inciting anti-Chinese nationalism and their stereotyped “China threat” perception with acerbic rhetoric (Curtin 2004b). Compounded by recent commotions over the resumption and intensification of Chinese vessel intrusion into Japanese waters, the prevailing domestic milieu had undeniably amplified the event that unfolded in Senkaku/Diaoyudao, which received extensive coverage from the Japanese media. Besides the nationalistic actions of politicians and pressure groups, media pressure also constrained Tokyo’s policy-options, with the likes of *Yomiuri Shimbun* blaming as much, the Japanese government’s past inaction, as the Chinese state’s intransigence over the ECS, for the debacle (Katsumata 27/03/2004; Curtin 2004b). The “highly visible” Chinese provocation thus, necessitated a strong, discernible response from a Japanese government under intense media/public scrutiny, which plausibly explained the punitive action taken against the Chinese activists, substantiated by official protest via diplomatic channels.

That said, domestic political apprehension towards Koizumi’s hardline China policy was also evident, especially after his January shrine pilgrimage. Considering the domestic concerns over potential economic repercussions, and the diplomatic cost of a Sino-

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<sup>59</sup> For a description of the gruesome murders, and how it has untimely affected the Senkaku/Diaoyudao incident in March 2004, see Curtin (2004b).

Japanese fallout on the North Korean problem (Daniels 2004:33), the Koizumi government would presumably, need to prudently manage the territorial row that followed. Hence, besides defusing the situation, Tokyo's relatively swift decision to deport rather than prosecute the activists could be interpreted as a conciliatory gesture to undercut the diplomatic damage incurred by the assertive action taken initially (JT 27/03/2004; Mori interview).<sup>60</sup> Indeed, some government officials contend that the wishes of the "China-friendly" CCS, Fukuda Yasuo, may have influenced the decision (DY 28/03/2004), while several senior MOFA officials interviewed defined it as a move out of politico-diplomatic rather than legal considerations (Anonymous interview F and I). Koizumi's "conciliatory tone" and "use of measured words" (Curtin 2004b) in his effort to reduce bilateral tension immediately after the arrest also confirms this observation.<sup>61</sup>

Japan's policy-options during the March 2004 incident were therefore, plausibly made upon the anticipation of an ambiguous external condition posited by enhanced allied resolve via the US-Japan ties, but ambivalent diplomatic leverage over China, insofar as the mixed signals from Beijing, despite recent history-related enmity provided an indeterminate environment for policy flexibility. Meanwhile, an initially encouraging domestic environment, fostered by the electoral victory, and public support for an assertive China policy, which was then, doused with "reactive" anti-Chinese nationalist pressure fuelled by recent events, generated an external-domestic nexus that saw the Koizumi government moving into a position between Quadrant C and D in the NCR framework. The preferences-of-action taken by Tokyo reflected NCR's dictum, which required a mix of assertive-nationalist (highly visible) foreign (China) policy-option to appease nationalist demands, complemented with conciliatory gestures to reduce the diplomatic cost of potential Chinese blowback.

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<sup>60</sup> This is a generally acknowledged view in Japanese media. Indeed, it was reported that the police initially preferred the option of prosecuting the activists, but a police official later said that "At the last minute, politics interfered" (quoted in AS 29/03/2004). Also, Koizumi reportedly instructed government officials on "how to handle the issue from a comprehensive viewpoint", and was quoted as saying that the deportation, instead of prosecution was "to avoid hurting bilateral relations with China" (quoted in JT 27/03/2004).

<sup>61</sup> According to Curtin, Koizumi calmly and carefully address Japan's handling of the incident by saying that "It is unusual, but natural for Japan, a country governed by law and which handles people according to the law...It is necessary for both parties to handle the case in as calm a manner as possible" (2004b).

### 7.3.2. Chinese submarine intrusion (November 2004)

According to the NCR schematics, Japan's management of the submarine incident suggests that Japanese policy-makers may have perceived the external environment leading to the episode to be relatively indeterminate. Japan continued to enjoy exceptionally good ties with the US via the Bush-Koizumi "special relationship", and Tokyo's unprecedented resolve in passing legislations circumventing Article IX to meet the expectations of the alliance. Understandably, a sense of "quiet confidence" did reverberate in Kasumigaseki's corridors-of-power regarding the maturity and value of the alliance as a deterrence against potential Chinese belligerence in the ECS.<sup>62</sup> Indeed, it is not far-fetched to suggest that Japan's assertiveness in advancing its interests in the disputed waters since Koizumi took office was partly, derived from such perception/calculation (Mori interview).

However, such optimism could have been somewhat dampened after the March 2004 Senkaku/Diaoyudao dispute, especially regarding American obligation in meeting Japanese expectation of the alliance to defend Japan's territorial/maritime interest in the ECS. Washington's neutrality and strategic ambiguity, demonstrated by the US State Department's "impartial" response to the March incident (AFP 24/03/2004)<sup>63</sup> could have re-awakened Tokyo to the stark reality of possible US non-commitment/intervention in the event of a Japanese-Chinese confrontation in the contested waters.<sup>64</sup> Japanese policy-makers were also becoming aware of Washington's qualitatively different attitude towards Tokyo's handling of Japanese-Chinese schisms, which appeared more tolerant of Koizumi's

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<sup>62</sup> Based on Japan's recent and sustained efforts to meet the demands of the security alliance, Japanese policy-makers may have been overly optimistic that the US would reciprocate by meeting its obligation to defend Japan against potential Chinese belligerence in the ECS. Furthermore, the enhanced state of the alliance itself serves as a credible deterrence against any risk-taking by the Chinese to rapidly escalate the dispute, which could compel an alliance response. This is the opinion of many interviewees, including Mori Kazuko.

<sup>63</sup> The Deputy spokesperson of the US State Department, Adam Ereli, reiterated the US longstanding stance by telling reporters on 24 March 2004 in the wake of the detention of Chinese activists "that the US does not take a position on the question of the ultimate sovereignty of the Senkaku-Diaoyu Islands" (quoted in AFP 24/03/2004; see also Department of State, USA March 24, 2004: 14; JT 26/03/2004).

<sup>64</sup> According to Tkacik, Jr. (2004), the US State Department has continued maintaining a neutral stance as recent as March 2004, in response to the Senkaku dispute, although the US-Japan Security Treaty does cover "all territories under the administration of Japan", which under the Okinawa Reversion Treaty, legally includes Senkaku/Diaoyudao. He opines that China's forays into Senkaku/Diaoyudao appear partly "designed to probe where the bedrock of US-Japan alliance begins" (Tkacik, Jr. 2004). Washington's reluctance to stand firmly and unequivocally with Japan on the issue, despite Tokyo's efforts to meet the obligations of the US-Japan alliance in Iraq and the Indian Ocean, has certainly disconcerted Japanese policy-makers (Tkacik, Jr. 2004).

obstinacy on “symbolic” disputes like Yasukuni and history, compared to the “real” and potentially explosive nature of the ECS territorial/maritime conflict (Mori interview). With the American military juggernaut overstretched by commitments in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the significance of Chinese partnership in the “war or terror” and North Korean nuclear brinkmanship, it was in the US interest to see the ECS status quo maintained. In this sense, Tokyo’s policy-options during the following submarine row would have been, partly affected by perceptions of an ambiguous allied resolve towards the dispute.

Conversely, bilateral relations with China have been on the decline since the Senkaku/Diaoyudao incident in March 2004, despite burgeoning trade ties<sup>65</sup> and mutual efforts to advance cooperation via multilateral platforms like the ASEAN-Plus-Three and Six-Party Talks. The Chinese leadership tried to maintain a degree of pragmatism towards Japan, but the Yasukuni issue has rapidly developed into a “diplomatic *faux pas*” that constrained its policy-options on other areas of bilateral exchanges (Okazaki interview). Indeed, Chinese activities and incremental encroachment in the ECS demonstrated to an extent, the Hu-Wen leadership’s depleting goodwill towards the Koizumi administration, let alone susceptibility to domestic nationalist pressure to rethink their “new thinking on Japan”. Premier Wen’s belated altercation with FM Kawaguchi over the Senkaku/Diaoyudao incident during a “fence-mending” meeting in Beijing early April (BBC 04/04/2004; JT 04/04/2004), signifies the Chinese leaders’ hardening attitude in the face of growing nationalist pressure at home. China’s decision to start exploration in Chunxiao/Shirakaba since May, and its impertinence towards repeated Japanese requests for suspension of exploration and data sharing on the contested gas fields also ratcheted up bilateral tension. The spectre of heightened competition for energy resources in the ECS loomed throughout the remainder of 2004, with bilateral consultations yielding more frustration than resolution (van Kemenade 2006:71-72). The prickly atmosphere was likewise, aggravated by the resumption and

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<sup>65</sup> On 24 August 2004, Japan’s External Trade Organisation (JETRO) announced a record expansion of two-way trade for the first six-month of the year, for the fifth consecutive year, and a surplus of imports from China for the first time since 1992 (cf. Przystup 2004d:123). These encouraging figures would go on to a record high by year’s end as China overtook US for the first time to become Japan’s largest trade partner in 2004, as mentioned in Chapter 3.

intensification of “illegal” research activities by Chinese vessels, notably between July-August, as well as anti-Japanese fervour during the Asia Cup football tournament that culminated in mob-like demonstrations directed against the Japanese entourage following China’s defeat to Japan in the final. The Chinese also reportedly took exception to Tokyo’s linking of Chinese military development with its decision to reduce ODA loans,<sup>66</sup> and were offended by JDA’s call for vigilance and contingencies to counter China’s military intentions (KN 07/11/2004; CD 10/11/2004). Altogether, these issues set the stage for the diplomatic showdown over the submarine incident in November 2004.

In the domestic context, the Koizumi government faced increased nationalist pressure to act more decisively in asserting Japan’s sovereignty over Senkaku/Diaoyudao, especially after its perceived “docile” handling of the March 2004 incident had left Japanese nationalists fuming. Indeed, pressure began to mount almost immediately, beginning with the first-time adoption of a resolution aimed at “preserving [Japan’s] territorial integrity” by the Diet’s House of Representatives Security Committee on March 30 that requested the government to “forcefully promote all sorts of measures, including diplomatic efforts” to defend Japanese territorial sovereignty (quoted in Przystup 2004c:124). According to Przystup, although “initially cool to the resolution,” the government, presumably under duress, eventually agreed to the committee’s adoption of the revised version (2004c:124).<sup>67</sup>

Nationalist assertions of Japanese sovereignty over the islands continued with Land Minister, Ishihara Nobuteru calling on the government to construct a lighthouse, or heliport on Senkaku/Diaoyudao during a public speech on April 3 (BBC 03/04/2004),<sup>68</sup> followed by the formation of the LDP-DPJ-led, non-partisan Diet-members Association to Defend Japan’s Territorial Integrity, several days later (Przystup 2004c:131). The LDP, through its

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<sup>66</sup> Indeed, Japan has since 1995, strategically utilised ODA as a foreign policy tool towards China in its attempt to put pressure against Chinese military development (Takamine 2005:440). For details of the recent calls, see “State urged to pare, eventually end yen loans to aid-donor China,” *Japan Times*, 11 November 2004a.

<sup>67</sup> CCS Fukuda Yasuo reportedly agreed to the adoption of the resolution, after potentially provocative language that may antagonise China was removed from the initial draft (Przystup 2004c:124).

<sup>68</sup> Ishihara Nobuteru’s nationalist mantle may likely derive from his father, Ishihara Shintaro, the Tokyo governor and infamous nationalist and anti-China figure. He made the call during a speech in Beppu, Oita. See also “Kawaguchi, Wen clash over Senkaku, Yasukuni; Land chief talks tough,” *Japan Times*, 4 April 2004.

working group on maritime interests also pressured the government to adopt a comprehensive national strategy on maritime-related issues, and initiate unilateral exploration on Japan's side of the median line, in June, followed by a proposal to bolster the JCG in terms of personnel and equipment, a month later (KN 11/06/2004; Przystup 2004c:133; 2004d:119).<sup>69</sup>

Meanwhile, on the popular front, a Japanese *uyoku* rammed a bus into the Chinese consulate in Osaka, on 23 April 2004, apparently to protest China's claims over Senkaku/Diaoyudao (MDN 23/04/2004). The media also reported earlier on April 7 that *Seinensha* members would go ahead with initial plans to land on the islands (Reuters 07/04/2004). Popular anti-Chinese sentiment was likewise, heightened by agitated reporting in the Japanese media concerning Chinese activities in the ECS, and widespread anti-Japanese hostility during the mentioned football tournament. Sustained media pressure in reaction to continuous Chinese maritime probing began to constrain the Japanese government's capacity to opt for a moderate approach in managing the debacle.<sup>70</sup> For instance, the conservative and usually pro-establishment *Yomiuri Shimbun* published several scathing editorials in June 2004, attributing the government's failure to decisively address the ECS issues to its fixation on mollifying China. The editorials specifically blamed it on the workings of pro-China forces and MOFA's indifferent attitude, and demanded the PMO "to exert strong leadership on the issue" (cf. Przystup 2004c:125).<sup>71</sup>

In fact, Japan's "nationalist-rightwing" press apparently played a key role forcing Tokyo to abandon its cautious diplomatic response towards the submarine incident. According to observers, the Koizumi administration initially played down the issue when it

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<sup>69</sup> The LDP Working Group on Maritime Interests, chaired by House of Councillor member, Takemi Keizo, was established in 2003, in response to the urgent need for Japan to develop a comprehensive framework for administering its maritime resources. The key impetus was undoubtedly the growing Japanese-Chinese confrontation in the ECS. The Working Group published a report on June 11, 2004, comprising nine proposals to secure Japan's oceanic interests. This was followed by an "emergency proposal" of policy-measures in 2005, which forms the backbone of the proposed Fundamental Maritime Law" scheduled for debate in the Diet in 2007. For more information on these proposals, see Shiraishi (2007) and Terashima (2007).

<sup>70</sup> The JCG reported as many as 14 cases of Chinese maritime intrusions into Japanese EEZ without prior notification during the first nine months of 2004 (IHT 12/11/2004).

<sup>71</sup> *Yomiuri Shimbun's* editorials on June 9 and 19 called on the government to take concrete actions, to protect Japanese sovereignty and interests, and to counter Chinese provocations in the ECS (cf. Przystup 2004c:125).

first occurred on November 10, with the JDA hesitating to speculate the vessel's identity, while MOFA remained tight-lipped about the incident (IHT 12/11/2004; Chan 2004). The Japanese media, led by *Yomiuri* and *Sankei* was less courteous, strongly speculating the "intruder" to be a Chinese submarine, and taking the Koizumi government to task for what was perceived to be its "slow and ineffective" response in defending Japanese oceanic security, with the former demanding "a no-compromise policy" (cf. Curtin 2004c; DY 11/11/2004). Meanwhile, a "united front" of political leaders "up-the-ante" with statements criticising the latest Chinese provocation (Chan 2004).<sup>72</sup> Intensified media pressure, and concerns over domestic repercussions expectedly forced Tokyo to take a more strident approach, as reflected by the subsequent decision to declare the vessel's identity, and MOFA's protest and demand for a Chinese apology (Curtin 2004c). The protest instigated further nationalist outcry that dominated both papers' editorials, in an attempt to incite anti-Chinese nationalism, specifically (DY 13/11/2004; AFP 13/11/2004; Chan 2004),<sup>73</sup> and raise the general level of popular nationalistic sentiment, in anticipation of the ongoing negotiations in Pyongyang over the abduction issue (see JT 10/11/2004; Curtin 2004c).

Although the Japanese government had since taken a hardline posture by adamantly maintaining the vessel's identity as Chinese, despite Beijing's initial refusal to acknowledge, and insufficient "hard" evidence to validate its origin, it also carefully avoided excessively acerbic rhetoric throughout the controversy that could escalate tension (Przystup 2005a:122). Tokyo was equally hasty in accepting Beijing's subsequent admission, even interpreting its "halfhearted" expression of regret as an "apology" to close the episode (Chan 2004). This plausibly indicates the Koizumi government's diplomatic manoeuvres to strike a balance between appeasing nationalist demands and not adversely affecting bilateral ties, based on its perception/calculation of the prevailing external-domestic situations. Indeed, it

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<sup>72</sup> The LDP Secretary-General Takebe Tsutomu, Shin-Komeito Diet Policy Committee head, Higashi Shunji, and DPJ's president, Okada Katsuya and shadow Defence Minister, Maehara Seiji issued statements criticising China for the provocative intrusion and its failure to apologise over the issue (Przystup 2005a:122; Chan 2004).

<sup>73</sup> The *Yomiuri* editorial attacked Tokyo's delayed response as "untenable" demanding a firmer stand, while *Sankei Shimbun* called the Chinese behaviour on the incident as "unforgivable" and also criticised the Japanese government's initial soft handling, demanding more unspecified "counter-measures" if China failed to provide an "honest response" (cf. DY 13/11/2004; AFP 13/11/2004).

could be that Koizumi wanted a swift and amicable settlement to ensure the long-awaited bilateral summit with Hu Jintao would materialise at the APEC's sideline in Chile, days later, after a difficult year of relationship (IHT 18/11/2004; Mori interview). Likewise, Curtin (2004c) opines that the earlier decision to escalate the submarine issue could be based on a "calculated-risk" that this round of Japanese-Chinese altercation would be quickly overshadowed by a fresh eruption of the North Korean abduction issue, soon after.<sup>74</sup>

Japan's policy-options during the submarine episode, again, reflect the NCR model's hypotheses, insofar as the perception/calculation of an increased vulnerability to domestic nationalist pressure, compounded by relatively indeterminate external environment (i.e. unfavourable diplomatic leverage vis-à-vis China/ambiguous allied resolve), locates the Koizumi administration's position more within Quadrant D (see Diagram 4). This explains the measured, albeit moderate response cloaked in visible nationalistic rhetoric/gesture to simultaneously, satisfy both external-domestic imperatives.

### 7.3.3. Natural gas exploration dispute (May 2004-September 2006)<sup>75</sup>

Unlike the other two ECS contentions, the natural gas dispute has not triggered specific bouts of diplomatic clashes/escalation, despite gradually festering into a potentially volatile conflict during the period of investigation, due to unilateral actions and counter-actions from both sides. One can observe that the Japanese government has been maintaining its assertiveness, taking tangible, albeit calculated measures periodically, to assert Japan's claims in response to Chinese effrontery. Yet, such assertions have also been interceded/arbitrated by moderate policy-behaviour that saw Tokyo agreeing to participate in protracted and unprogressive dialogues, even when Beijing continued to defy its request and proceeded with its own devices. The NCR dictum suggests these "ambiguous" policy-preferences as reflecting state-elites/policy-makers' calculation/perception of the prevailing

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<sup>74</sup> Curtin opines that the return of Japan's official delegation and "fact-finding mission" from North Korea on November 13-14 would have put the abduction issue back into the limelight, and at the top of the nationalist list of preoccupations, thus giving a breather to the comparatively "mild" submarine problem (2004c).

<sup>75</sup> For a comprehensive and excellent analysis of the ECS gas dispute, see Drifte (2008a).

external-domestic conditions and processes during a particular time and context, which affected their decisions.

As highlighted, the natural gas issue erupted in May 2004, following Chinese exploration in Chunxiao/Shirakaba that prompted repeated Japanese protests, and requests for suspension of survey and data provision. China's lackadaisical attitude elicited tougher Japanese response, with METI deciding to conduct survey on Japan's side of the median line by July 2004 (KN 09/07/2004),<sup>76</sup> leading to Chinese calls for working-level dialogues on the issue that transpired into several rounds of fruitless consultations between 2004-2006, beginning October 2004 (Drifte 2008a; Valencia 2007). Risking over-generalisation, it is construable that Tokyo's measured responses during the nascent stages of the gas dispute mirrored the perceived external environment and domestic conditions/processes elaborated in the "submarine-incursion" analysis, as both issues occurred at almost the same time and context. This means discernible policy-actions (declaration of intent followed by concrete, albeit low-risk launching of survey), mediated by persistent request for Chinese cooperation and agreement to bilateral exchanges (the dialogues) that were required to keep diplomatic channels open for peaceful resolution, while avoiding serious escalation of the situation.

Nonetheless, the dispute became volatile in 2005 with Japan visibly advancing its interests amid serious declination in politico-diplomatic relations caused by a tempestuous mix of issues. Specifically, bilateral conditions vis-à-vis China became unfavourable, despite the promising "sideline summitries" in Chile and Vientiane in late 2004, and various levels of bilateral contact during the first quarter of 2005,<sup>77</sup> including the establishment of the "Vice-Foreign Ministerial Comprehensive Dialogue".<sup>78</sup> On the security front, China was concerned about the strategic implications of the February "Two-plus-Two" talks, and upset by Japanese attempt to subvert the lifting of the European Union (EU) arms embargo on the

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<sup>76</sup> Beginning July 2004, Japan charted the Norwegian seismic survey ship "Ramform Victory" to survey Japan's side of the line, opposite Chunxiao/Shirakaba, Tianwaitian/Kashi, and Duanqiao/Kusunoki natural gas fields (Harrison 2005:4). For more chronological details, see Harrison (2005), Valencia (2007), Drifte (2008a/b).

<sup>77</sup> For a summary of the high-level bilateral contacts during this period, see Przystup (2005b:110-112).

<sup>78</sup> The Chinese called it the "China-Japan Strategic Dialogue", while the Japanese, for reasons of political sensitivity concerning the use of the term "strategic", initially referred to it as the above. The first round was held on 13-14 May 2005 in Beijing, followed by the second round on 23-24 June in Tokyo (Reuters 24/06/2005).

Chinese, especially with METI chief, Nakagawa, and PM Koizumi lobbying to dissuade their French counterparts from such considerations (JT 15/01/2005; Przystup 2005b:114).<sup>79</sup> The adoption of the Anti-Secession Law in March was clearly a strong Chinese response towards the development in US-Japanese security cooperation, not mentioning Beijing's strengthened resolve to oppose Tokyo's bid for a permanent UNSC seat that started gaining momentum since late 2004 (Marquand 2005b).

The territorial/maritime dispute, likewise, escalated in February, fuelled by the Japanese government's controversial decision to take administrative control of Senkaku/Diaoyudao, and other endeavours to strengthen claims to sovereignty, i.e. Okinotorishima<sup>80</sup> (Yoshikawa 2005), against the backdrop of persistent Chinese encroachment of Japanese-claimed EEZ, and exploration activities at the fringes of the median line. The large-scale, anti-Japanese demonstrations in April, in reaction to the plethora of Chinese grievances, including a fresh eruption of the *Tsukurukai* textbook controversy, further aggravated Japanese-Chinese tension (van Kemenade 2006:72). Although there were mutual efforts to resuscitate the flagging ties, Koizumi's Yasukuni exploit as elaborated in the previous chapter, ensured that political chill remained throughout 2005, which, in the course, effectively subverted the progress of resolving the ECS dispute via consultations. Indeed, Japan's intention to use the scheduled October 19 dialogue to force a definitive solution to the issue was squandered by Koizumi's Yasukuni visit, two days earlier, which saw China temporarily cancelling all diplomatic exchanges with Japan (van Kemenade 2006:73; Curtin 2005c). Whether Beijing was deliberately "buying time" (Curtin 2005c) by keeping the ECS negotiations deadlocked remains to be proven, but China's military presence and provocative actions in the contested waters unquestionably made the

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<sup>79</sup> METI chief, Nakagawa Shoichi expressed to his French counterpart, Herve Gaymard on January 13, 2005 regarding East Asian nation's concern with the prospect of the lifting of China arms embargo (enforced since the 1989 Tiananmen Incident) (JT 15/01/2005), while Koizumi reinforced Japanese concerns during his Tokyo meeting with the French President, Jacques Chirac on March 27 (JT 28/03/2005).

<sup>80</sup> The Tokyo Metropolitan government led by Ishihara Shintaro established extensive plans to develop the Okinotorishima, while the Japanese government also decided in mid-2005 to build a lighthouse on this "barren rock" to support its claim to an extended EEZ (see KN 24/08/2005; BBC 16/05/2005; XNA 20/06/2005).

situation more perilous.<sup>81</sup> The unfavourable bilateral conditions vis-à-vis China suggest the need for Japan to maintain a cautious approach in managing the natural gas issue.

In terms of allied resolve, Japanese policy-makers may have remained doubtful of Washington's alliance commitment, when it comes to defending Japan's ECS claims, the new impetus from the "Two-plus-Two" talks notwithstanding. To be sure, one can argue that Tokyo could have taken heart from the talks, plausibly in the shape of discreet reassurance from its American ally to counter potential Chinese belligerence in the ECS. This is especially so, after the submarine incident which, including the repeated ECS forays, were widely perceived by observers as China's attempt "to probe the bedrock of the US-Japan [allied resolve]" (Tkacik Jr. 2004). Also, one can construe the Joint Statement to be as much a value-added deterrence, as a veiled American caution against potential Chinese "adventurism" in Taiwan Strait and ECS (Anonymous interview F), besides serving as a "safety-valve" to keep domestic nationalist pressure for a more independent Japanese military solution in check.<sup>82</sup> That said, the continuous absence of explicit and firm articulation of the US position, despite Washington's reassurances over the years, and given the other perceived external constraints vis-à-vis China, would have meant that a policy of calculated assertiveness mixed with diplomatic prudence serves Japanese interests best in the ECS. Specifically, while Tokyo would need to demonstrate a degree of assertiveness, it also has to pursue joint development as "the best means for unlocking the impasse" (Curtin 2005c; Takahashi 27/07/2004; Drifte 2008a), and to avoid adversely affecting the ECS status quo.

The Koizumi government is required to demonstrate assertiveness in the natural gas dispute, not only to protect Japan's oceanic resources and security in the name of national

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<sup>81</sup> In September 2005, a PLA-Navy destroyer reportedly aimed its guns at a MSDF's P-3C plane near the Chunxiao/Shirakaba gas fields, while as mentioned, five Chinese warships were spotted manoeuvring in the same area, days before the September 11, 2005 Lower House election (see Masaki 13/03/2007; Curtin 2005c). China also announced the formation of the East China Sea naval fleet on September 27 (KN 27/09/2005).

<sup>82</sup> The "safety valve" function in this context is commonly noted, and was mentioned by several interviewees (Anonymous interview F, Takagi interview, Murata interview). Interestingly, the February 2005 situation was somewhat reminiscent to the Hashimoto administration's widely believed effort to seek for the revised US-Japan Guidelines to cover the Senkaku/Diaoyudao as a "safety-valve" to reduce nationalist-rightwing pressure on the government to seek unilateral remilitarisation to defend Japan's territorial integrity, and realise its overall security interests, following the 1996 Senkaku/Diaoyudao dispute (Green 2001:87-88).

interest, but also to soothe nationalist demands for domestic political expediency. Unquestionably, nationalist pressure continued to mount in reaction to Chinese defiance towards repeated Japanese requests and proposal to facilitate a resolution of the dispute (Tsunekawa 2006:7). From the outset, the reputedly “hawkish” METI chief, Nakagawa Shoichi,<sup>83</sup> has consistently pursued an assertive stance on the issue since mid-2004, and his televised address in February 2005 regarding the likelihood of Chinese siphoning off Japanese resources via their exploits in Chunxiao/Shirakaba fuelled both nationalist and public contempt towards China (AFP 20/02/2005). At the political front, the DPJ advocated a Diet-legislation draft in March, to protect Japanese ships engaged in exploration activities in the disputed area (Przystup 2005b:116), while members from the LDP, Shin-Komeito, and DPJ increased pressure on the Japanese government to proceed with the granting of exploration rights, after aerial observation of Chinese activities in the ECS during early April (Fanell 2006). Nationalist pressure also emerged in the form of reactive popular anti-Chinese nationalism that reached a high, following the anti-Japanese demonstrations in China, with a string of “vandalism and harassment against Chinese businesses, schools, and diplomatic establishments reported across Japan between April 11-19” (Chan and Bridges 2006:129; Przystup 2005c:129). Although chiefly triggered by the Chinese demonstrations, these xenophobic activities also reflected pent-up frustration amongst Japanese nationalists towards perceived Chinese bullying and obstinacy over a range of issues, including the ECS gas dispute (Tsunekawa 2006:7, 19-20). Indeed, Tokyo’s decision to proceed with unilateral exploration plans, soon after, and Koizumi’s dismissal of concerns that it could further strain Japan-China ties (Przystup 2005c:126), suggest the salience of domestic pressure, nationalist or otherwise, in determining the assertive policy-response.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> An LDP politician, Nakagawa Shoichi is well known for his hawkish and nationalistic disposition, and “China bashing” remarks (Masaki 13/03/2007; Mori 2007; Anonymous interview H). See also Curtin (2005c).

<sup>84</sup> The Japanese government maintained its assertive stance, declaring on April 11 that it would proceed with exploration activities despite the massive anti-Japanese demonstration in China (JT 12/04/2005). Indeed, after several advanced notifications that failed to elicit Chinese response, Tokyo finally announced on April 13, 2005 that it would grant exploratory rights in the ECS to Japanese companies, prompting instantaneous protest and strongly worded warning from Beijing. Nonetheless, Tokyo proceeded with the processing of the application for exploration rights by the Teikoku Oil Company on 28 April 2005 (JT 15/04/2005; 29/04/2005).

Japan's posture on the gas issue remained unchanged throughout 2005, as sustained nationalist pressure required the Koizumi administration to stand tall against China. The METI, personified by Nakagawa, continued to pursue a hardnosed approach, accusing China for deliberately prolonging the consultations, while pushing ahead with its exploration activities in Chunxiao/Shirakaba, and then, extending to Tianwaitian/Kashi, despite Japanese protests (YS 21/09/2005; IHT 04/10/2005; Curtin 2005c). Media pressure also derived from *Yomiuri Shimbun's* October editorial that reiterated the conventional wisdom of Chinese "time buying", and questioned the possibility of such manoeuvres as Chinese strategy to turn their continuous development of the gas fields into "a *fait accompli*", especially in the absence of Japanese counter-actions (cf. Curtin 2005c). Such agitated reporting expectedly, galvanised Japanese public opinion, which saw 70% of respondents agreeing that China should cease its operations in the ECS during a mid-October *Yomiuri* poll, with 65% favouring unilateral Japanese development of the disputed area, if Beijing refuses to comply (Przystup 2006a:116). Interestingly, the same poll recorded an "almost evenly divided" opinion on Koizumi's Yasukuni visit (cf. Curtin 2005c), suggesting that public support for a forceful China policy was more cohesive on the ECS dispute, compared to symbolic issues. This inadvertently means greater pressure on the Koizumi government to maintain, if not increase its assertiveness on the former issue, amid mounting public impatience. Aforementioned in Chapter 6, the LDP's landslide victory in the September 2005 Lower House election was, driven as much by Koizumi's domestic reform agenda, as his uncompromising China policy. It is plausible to suggest that Tokyo's posturing before the snap election, which included its assertive stance on the ECS natural gas issue reflected Koizumi's sensitivity towards the prevailing public mood, which he masterfully rallied to his political advantage.

Also, unlike Yasukuni, there was a unified opinion between the LDP and DPJ for a forceful ECS policy, with both parties advocating respective legislations in late 2005 to

protect Japan's EEZ against foreign encroachment.<sup>85</sup> Political elites, namely DPJ's president, Maehara, and FM Aso even amplified the "China threat" theory with their provocative remarks, purportedly in response to China's military development and its related activities in the ECS (Marquand 2005b; CD 03/04/2006).<sup>86</sup> Whereas the LDP-coalition government later backtracked on Aso's remark, the DPJ went ahead adopting the "China threat" perception as its official view on 23 January 2006 (Przystup 2006b:126). Meanwhile, the prospective LDP candidates to succeed Koizumi in September 2006 also began playing to the nationalist tune, with Abe and Aso leading the chorus of criticisms on China over Yasukuni and ECS, ostensibly to boost their nationalist credentials. As revealed, both firmly rejected China's proposal for joint development that was forwarded to the Japanese delegation, when dialogue resumed early March 2006 (AS 09/03/2006). Abe also reportedly chided Sasae Kenichiro, MOFA's AOAB Director-General for not rejecting it outright during the talks<sup>87</sup> (Przystup 2006b:123), while Aso advocated "counter-measures", if China proceeded with gas production in Chunxiao/Shirakaba (KN 15/03/2006). To be sure, these confrontational/nationalistic expressions were often, moderated by conciliatory posturing of other policy-makers, like the "pro-China" METI chief, Nikai Toshihiro, who called for level-headedness in dealing with the ECS issue.<sup>88</sup> In fact, Nikai reportedly rebuked Aso for his provocative, yet unproductive recommendation, highlighting the emerging schism between METI and MOFA over the dispute (AS 20/03/2006). Ironically, METI was perceptively more

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<sup>85</sup> The DPJ announced its intention to submit a bill to have the JCG protect Japanese companies' test-drilling, or developing maritime resources, and prohibiting resource exploration activities in Japan's EEZ by foreign ships (DJN 19/10/2005; Przystup 2006a:116). Meanwhile, the LDP Working Group on Maritime Interest led by Takemi Keizo compiled a bill on December 1, 2005 aimed at protecting Japanese vessels engaged in maritime resource and exploration activities within Japan's 200nm EEZ. Specifically, it was meant to support Teikoku Oil's intended test drilling at the disputed waters (JT 02/12/2005; Przystup 2006a:116).

<sup>86</sup> DPJ president, Maehara Seiji raised the "China threat" notion during his lecture at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in Washington D.C. on December 8, 2005 (Oda 22/12/2005). He then told a *Kyodo News* study group on January 11, 2006 that there exist differences of opinion among party ranks regarding the "China threat" assessment, but he personally would continue perceiving China as an "actual threat"(cf. Przystup 2006b:126). For FM Aso's remark, see "Japan FM calls China a military threat," *China Daily*, 3 April 2006.

<sup>87</sup> The incident was reported in the nationalist-rightwing daily, *Sankei Shimbun* (Przystup 2006b:123).

<sup>88</sup> Replacing the "China-bashing" Nakagawa during the cabinet reshuffle in October 2005, Nikai is widely perceived to be a "pro-China" LDP leader who has developed close contacts with the Chinese political echelon (van Kemenade 2006:74; DY 08/03/2006). A senior METI official interviewed went as far as calling him a "panda-hugger" (Anonymous interview G). Since taking office, Nikai promoted a moderate, less-confrontational approach to resolve the ECS issues, which led to some progress in terms of mutual agreements to shelve the maritime border delimitation impasse and establish a panel of technical experts to facilitate a peaceful resolution during the July 2006 consultations (PD 10/07/2006; see also Drifte 2008a).

confrontational during the earlier stages, notably under Nakagawa, while MOFA, before Aso, was more tactful. This suggests that leadership's "nationalistic" disposition tends to personify the policy-orientation of Japanese bureaucracies (Anonymous interview G).

Overall, it is viable to suggest that the Koizumi government had been under consistent pressure from domestic forces to adopt and maintain an assertive-nationalistic policy-orientation towards China over the ECS gas dispute, since its outbreak in mid-2004. Japan's pressure on China to suspend exploration activities and share geological data on the disputed gas fields as pre-conditions for joint development negotiations, as well as visible moves taken to protect Japanese interests in response to Chinese refusal to cooperate, imply, to an extent, the influence of domestic nationalist impetus on such policy-behaviour. An ex-METI Senior Vice-Minister even conceded that the ECS became problematic following Nakagawa's "nationalistic" overtures and posturing (Anonymous interview H), while a former top diplomat to China conceded that Diet and LDP pressure made any Japanese concession, or "peaceful solution" to the issue difficult (Anonymous interview I). Indeed, Tokyo's tough stance, despite informed opinions that full-scale gas production in the ECS is neither economically viable, nor cost-effective for Japan, compared to importing from cheaper neighbouring sources, i.e. Russia and Southeast Asia, goes on to support such a view.<sup>89</sup>

Conversely, Japanese policy-makers (Chinese as well) would have estimated the risk of a Japanese-Chinese military conflict to be low, since the dispute over natural gas *per se* is arguably "non-zero-sum", insofar as both countries are able to source it from these regional suppliers, and that the calculated costs and benefits favour joint development.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Such was the opinion of several senior bureaucrats in MOFA and METI (Anonymous interviews C, F, G, and H). This viewpoint is also shared by other interviewees, including Prof. Takagi Seiichiro, Prof. Kikuchi Tsutomu, Prof. Ma Xiaojun, and Yoshida Reiji.

<sup>90</sup> From a rational-choice/economic perspective, both countries are more likely to reach for a mutually equitable settlement and engage in joint development, rather than military confrontation over the ECS gas issue, as the mutual economic benefit deriving from the former far outweighs the latter strategy. Moreover, both countries have diversified their respective energy sources over the years to enhance energy security, and are therefore, not over-dependent on the ECS for their energy supply. In fact, the notion of joint development as "the best way to move forward" (Curtin 2005c) is shared by informed Japanese intellectuals, bureaucrats, and political elites (i.e. Noda interview; Anonymous interview H and I).

Thus, a degree of nationalistic “brinkmanship” in dealing with the Chinese would not be overly damaging to Japan’s overall interests. However, the fact that Tokyo has: 1) tolerated Beijing’s continuous defiance, despite its repeated request for cooperation; 2) demonstrated willingness to participate in protracted, yet unprogressive consultations; and 3) hesitated to adopt counter-measures, as reflected by the relatively sluggish/lengthy proceedings in granting exploration rights to Teikoku Oil, let alone permitting actual drilling, also suggest the limits of nationalism vis-à-vis other determinants in Japan’s China policy-making.<sup>91</sup>

A neoclassical realist interpretation would emphasise the prevailing external conditions elaborated earlier, and their interactions with domestic imperatives that plausibly contributed to Tokyo’s “measured” approach of discernible, albeit calculated-assertiveness, mediated by diplomatic prudence, when dealing with Beijing over the issue. Indeed, whilst Japan took incremental counter-actions, Koizumi’s periodic conciliatory tone and calls for both sides to transform the ECS from a “sea of confrontation to a sea of cooperation” (cf. Przystup 2005c:126; Drifte 2008a/b)<sup>92</sup> not mentioning, his decision to replace the so-called “China-bashing” Nakagawa with the “pro-Beijing” Nikai as one of Japan’s key bureaucratic actors in the dispute during the October 2005 Cabinet reshuffle, plausibly reflect perceptions/calculations of a less-sanguine external environment, characterised by ambiguous alliance support and adverse bilateral conditions vis-à-vis China, which require Japanese state-elites to adopt restrained policy-preferences. Arbitrated by relatively intensified domestic nationalist pressure, the external-domestic nexus would have informed their perceived location within the NCR diagram, and therein the stipulated policy-option. This generalised policy-trend is essentially, based on the assessment of the gas issue being a protracted conflict, and therefore, does not account for variations in state-elites’

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<sup>91</sup> However, it is also true that Tokyo’s so-called “foot-dragging” over the ECS negotiation was partly, caused by the lack of “driving force” i.e. limited initial interests from Japanese oil companies to invest in the development of the area due to economic and security considerations, not mentioning that the ECS energy resources were not overly important to Japan, considering the low wholesale price of natural gas, back then (before 2007). I would like to thank senior METI and MOFA officials for pointing out this observation during our interviews (Anonymous interviews G, H and I).

<sup>92</sup> Drifte (2008b) aptly introduces part of this slogan/phrase as the title of his excellent article, “From ‘Sea of Confrontation’ to ‘Sea of Peace, Cooperation and Friendship’?-Japan Facing China in the East China Sea”, to evaluate, and describe the developments in the ECS dispute, and the possible directions following the June 2008 agreement/announcement by both sides to jointly develop oil/gas in the area.

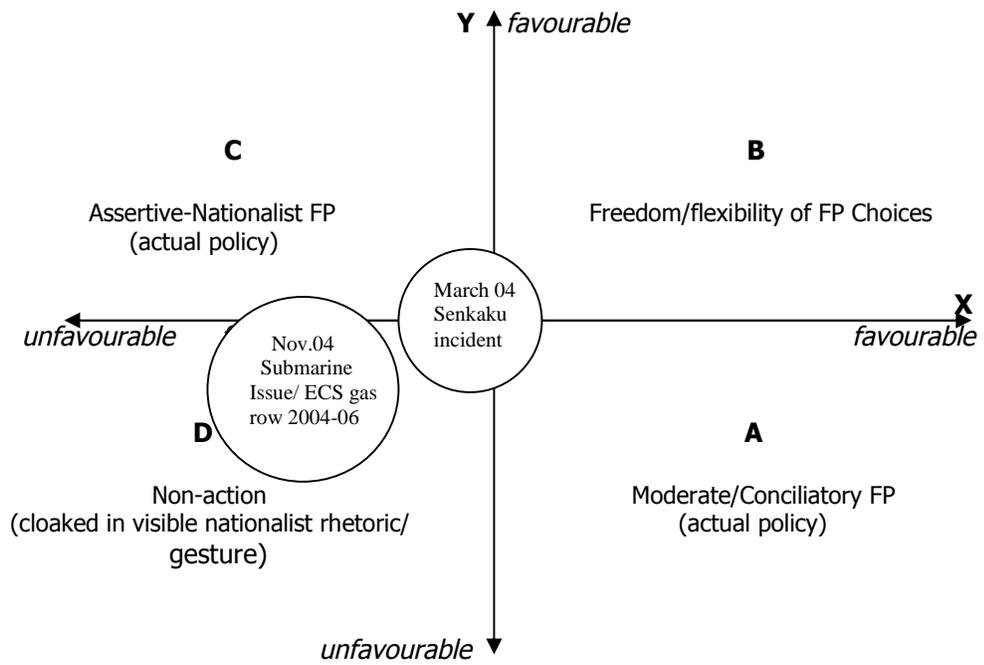
perceptions that lead to specific manifestations of Japanese policy-behaviour at particular points, during the period of investigation (2004-2006).

#### **7.4. Conclusion**

Japan's management of the ECS territorial/maritime issues during the Koizumi administration implies, to an extent, the salience of domestic nationalist pressure affecting its policy-choices. However, unlike the predominantly symbolic nature of the Yasukuni problem, the ECS disputes are real/tangible, and have the potential to escalate into armed confrontations, amid a volatile concoction of chauvinistic nationalist passion and military brinksmanship. Accordingly, NCR's dictum expects Japanese state-elites/policy-makers to be more constrained by the relative determinacy of the ECS issues, to allow nationalistic fervour to dictate decision-making. The measured policy-options and diplomatic manoeuvres undertaken clearly suggest the prevalence of sensibility and reason over sense and passion (Gries 2004), and balancing on Tokyo's part, to simultaneously advance its foreign and domestic policy-goals. This demonstrates the extent to which nationalism determines Japan's China policy-making, which under particular external-domestic conditions and time context, as perceived by Japanese state-elites, can be more, or less salient vis-à-vis other variables in shaping their policy-options. Indeed, the recent breakthrough in June 2008, where both sides reached an agreement to jointly develop the disputed ECS gas fields, further underscores nationalism's limitations (Yoshida and Terada 19/06/2008).

Diagram 4

**NCR MODEL OF NATIONALISM AND JAPANESE STATE BEHAVIOUR/CHINA POLICY PREFERENCES ON THE ECS DISPUTES**



**X = Domestic Political Resolve (vis-à-vis domestic nationalist pressure)**

**Y = External Environment/Relative Power Position (vis-à-vis disputant state/China)**

## **CHAPTER EIGHT**

### **CONCLUSIONS AND REFLECTIONS**

This thesis has striven to assess nationalism's role and salience in shaping Japan's China policy in the context of their post-Cold War bilateral ties, notably during the Koizumi administration. It has earmarked important research questions that required investigation pertaining to the conventional wisdom regarding nationalism's efficacy in engendering the debilitating trend in Japanese-Chinese relations. By incorporating an NCR analytical model, this study has sought to explicate why, how, when, and the extent to which rising/resurgent nationalism has affected Japanese state-elites/policy-makers' perceptions and calculations that determine their policy-options vis-à-vis China, when managing issues of nationalist persuasions, considering the presence of other noteworthy determinants that simultaneously influence their bilateral interactions. As described in Chapter 2, nationalism is commonly marginalised by the IR theoretical straightjackets of neo-realism and neo-liberalism, while over-emphasised in constructivist/Area-studies analysis of Japanese-Chinese diplomacy. To bridge the apparent theoretical/methodological divides, this thesis has operationalised nationalism via NCR's middle-grounding schema, to promote a more comprehensive understanding of the underlying logic behind Japan's China policy-behaviour, where nationalist politics appear ubiquitous in the policy-making process. True to the spirit of NCR, it hypothesised that nationalism is salient, albeit under particular external-domestic conditions and time context, which implies the need to account for the plausible prevalence of other variables in explaining Japan-China relations.

This chapter attempts to firstly, summarise the empirical findings from the case-studies of the Yasukuni Shrine and ECS disputes, by re-engaging the research questions, and identifying the commonalities and differences between the two issue-areas, to establish nationalism's causality vis-à-vis other determinants in Japan's China policy and the bilateral ties. This is followed by an evaluation of the theoretical/analytical approach that focuses on the feasibility and relevancy of the NCR construct in addressing the "national" question, as compared to the conventional IR and constructivist/Area-studies frameworks that dominated

the literature on Japanese-Chinese relations. The concluding section delineates this study's implications for future IR-oriented investigations of Japanese-Chinese diplomacy, and generally, interstate relations that are obfuscated by domestic-ideational problems, like nationalism and identity politics. Perhaps, most emphatically, it highlights the progressiveness of IR realism via NCR in addressing its "Achilles' heel" of domestic-ideational theorising, to advance a more wholesome explanation of state behaviour in international relations.

## **8.1. Empirical Findings**

The analysis of the Yasukuni and ECS disputes reveals a number of cross-case empirical commonalities and differences, with regard to nationalism's impact on Japan's China policy prescriptions for the respective issue-areas. The findings of this section are guided by the central research question, namely the manner, conditions, and the extent to which nationalism affects Japanese state-elites' perception/calculation and policy-options vis-à-vis the Chinese, when managing these nationalistic-nuanced bilateral issues. They are also formulated around the correlated questions regarding its salience vis-à-vis other determinants in constraining Japan's preference-of-action, and whether these other imperatives exacerbate, or mitigate nationalism in the policy-making process.

### 8.1.1. The salience and limits of nationalism

For a start, this investigation found that in both case-studies, nationalism, defined in terms of domestic nationalist pressure, and/or nationalistic-rightwing conviction of key state-elites, was to an extent, responsible for the Japanese government's policy-options that aggravated diplomatic conundrums and periods of sustained political tension with China. For reasons of identity and/or political/strategic expediency, nationalism was unequivocal in fuelling the Japanese-Chinese disputes over Yasukuni and the ECS. Nationalist passion and emotion were indubitably involved in arousing Japanese pride and prejudices vis-à-vis the Chinese, and so were their strategic instrumentalisation by Japanese state-elites in foreign policy-making, to advance both personal political goals, and the nationalist agenda of history revisionism and territorial/maritime sovereignty.

However, nationalism, though salient, did not appear to be the primary determinant of Tokyo's external behaviour. Indeed, neither case-study depicted instances of Japanese-Chinese altercations festering beyond strident rhetorical exchanges and measured diplomatic responses that stop short of hostile actions, despite the nationalistic sensitivities surrounding both issues. The fact that none of the disputes escalated into violent confrontations suggests that nationalist passion and emotions do not automatically render the "rationality" of policy-makers/state-elites obsolete, and that domestic nationalist pressure does not necessarily translate into assertive-nationalist policy-options. A clear example of such behaviour can be drawn from Japan's management of the ECS natural gas dispute. As described, the Japanese government encountered significant domestic nationalist pressure for more decisive actions in dealing with China, following its perceived "soft handling" of the Senkaku/Diaoyudao and submarine incidents, and especially after reports of Chinese encroachment and alleged exploration activities at the fringes of the ECS median line. Yet, despite nationalist pressure and Chinese provocations, the Koizumi administration did not opt for an outright assertive-nationalist policy, in a "tit-for-tat" action to stake Japan's claim that would have risk a high-sea confrontation with the PLA-Navy. Instead, a policy of discernible, albeit calculated-assertiveness modulated by diplomatic prudence was preferred to advance a more pragmatic solution to the dispute.

Similarly in the Yasukuni Shrine row, Koizumi's annual pilgrimages at the expense of Japanese-Chinese political relations demonstrated nationalism's salience in shaping his nonchalant policy towards China. However, notwithstanding fervent nationalist calls for a more forthright treatment of his "original" Yasukuni pledge (annual homage on August 15), the timing, policy-options, and diplomatic manoeuvres undertaken by Koizumi and his government during each of the six Shrine visits suggest the prevalence of state-elites' astute perception/calculation and shrewd statecraft, rather than purely nationalistic passion and emotionally laden decision-making. Koizumi's decision to avoid the contentious date in all but his last Yasukuni visits, most vividly depicted by his "eleventh hour" "change-of-date" strategy in August 2001, further confirms this observation.

The extent to which nationalism affected foreign policy-making were likewise demonstrated by the differences in Japanese state-elites' treatment of, and attitude towards the two issue-areas of history and security (symbolic/intangible versus real/tangible), especially when it came to suppressing, or allowing the neo-nationalist agenda to manifest in China policy-making. It is obvious that the Koizumi administration was generally more prepared to pander to nationalist demands to advance an assertive-nationalist policy over the history-oriented Yasukuni dispute, due to the symbolic and less risk-adverse nature of the issue. Conversely, its inclination to modulate between assertive and moderate policy-options, when managing the security-oriented ECS disputes, connotes its readiness to rein in, or divert excessive nationalist pressure to other less tangible issues, considering the real and potentially explosive nature of the territorial/maritime disputes. The qualitatively different treatment of, and policy approach towards these two issue-areas, as reflected by its cavalier attitude in advancing the neo-nationalist revisionist history agenda via the Yasukuni issue, while embracing a cautious and measured response towards the ECS debacle, evidently highlight the limits of nationalism in affecting Japan's China policy.

Overall, the evidence from both case-studies show that Japan's China policy is determined by much more than nationalistic and emotive goals of reinstating Japanese pride and identity, via the reinterpretation/reinvention of history, and defending Japanese territorial/maritime sovereignty. Rather, foreign policy reflects the broader national interests of the Japanese state/state-elites, defined in terms of realising "an amalgam" of pragmatic external goals and domestic agendas (Bong 2002:260). In both cases, "sensitivity and reason" appeared to override "sense and passion" (Gries 2004) in Japanese policy-making, despite the latter combination being popularly, albeit mistakenly perceived as the driving force behind Koizumi's hardnosed Yasukuni policy towards the Chinese. It is undeniable that Koizumi's obstinacy in the Yasukuni debacle was, to an extent, the result of intense domestic nationalist pressure (*Izokukai*, LDP-rightwing Diet-members etc.), and plausibly his personal nationalist conviction. However, it was also evident that such behaviour only manifested because of the symbolic rather than tangible nature of the dispute, and more

significantly, Koizumi's over-emphasis and dependence on a pro-US foreign policy, where the anticipation of favourable US-Japan relations vis-à-vis China, facilitated his aloof Shrine bravados. It is, likewise, true that Koizumi and several key Cabinet members have been, commonly regarded as "neo-conservatives" and/or "normal-nationalists" (Samuels 2007a), who long for the revival of Japanese pride and prestige in the international arena (see Chapter 4). Yet, in most of the diplomatic incidents discussed, their nationalistic demeanours did not appear to cloud their judgement and policy-deliberation, nor did these so-called "normal-nationalists" indiscriminately pursue nationalistic policy-options vis-à-vis China, to advance the more parochial dimensions of Japanese national interests. These empirical observations, though not denying nationalism's salience in affecting Japanese policy-making, suggest the need to redress the common misinterpretation regarding its primacy in shaping Japan's contemporary relations with China.

PM Abe Shinzo's proactive actions to revitalise political relations with Beijing upon assuming office, further demonstrated nationalism's limits in China policy-making. Despite his renowned hawkish, anti-China stance and nationalist candours, Abe exhibited his pragmatic side by making the PRC his maiden official overseas destination,<sup>1</sup> in an attempt to seize the opportunity to restore leadership summits and mutual state visits that had been, frozen since 2001, owing particularly to Koizumi's Yasukuni intransigence. During their summit, both Abe and the Chinese leadership agreed to build "a mutually beneficial relationship based on common strategic interests", which was a qualitative improvement to the 1998 pledge of "a partnership of friendship and cooperation" (cf. Nabeshima 16/10/2006; IIPS 2008:6). They also agreed to strengthen bilateral relations by "turning the wheels" of politics and economics simultaneously, instead of maintaining the *seikei bunri* principle, and establishing bilateral panels to study the history and ECS issues (Nabeshima 16/10/2006). Perhaps, nationalism's centrality has been most evidently, dismissed by Abe's observation of the Yasukuni moratorium under the pretext of "strategic ambiguity" during his short-lived premiership. Taken together with this hindsight, the empirical evidence does not appear to

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<sup>1</sup> In fact, Abe is the first postwar Japanese premier who chose China as the destination for his first official overseas trip (PD 08/10/2006)

support the conventional/popular wisdom regarding rising nationalism being the dominant feature of their contemporary relationship, or the primary driver of Japan's China policy.

#### 8.1.2. Nationalism's efficacy vis-à-vis other variables

This brings us to a second, correlated conclusion that views nationalism's saliency as being dependent on its interaction with other variables, which can either mitigate, or exacerbate its efficacy, and which, under particular conditions and time context, can be more prevalent in determining Japanese policy-options. Both case-studies evinced that domestic nationalist pressure did not act in isolation to determine Japan's China policy-making, even though both issue-areas are genuinely rooted in the nationalist ideology, and fuelled by nationalist passion/emotions. Rather, nationalism's salience depended on Japanese state-elites' perception of the prevailing external environment, and the domestic political conditions/processes that affected their policy-calculations. In particular, the Koizumi administration's pursuance of a nationalistic-assertive China policy reflected its perception of a sanguine external environment, defined in terms of an advantageous relative power position vis-à-vis China, forged mainly by a combination of favourable allied resolve via the US-Japanese alliance, and bilateral leverage over Beijing, as well as limited economic cost to their deepening interdependence. Conversely, a perceptively disadvantageous, or ambivalent power position, had almost always induced less palpable nationalistic policy-options that came either in the form of non-action masqueraded in nationalist rhetoric, a tangibly moderate-conciliatory policy, or a discernibly assertive policy modulated by appeasing measures. Mediating Tokyo's decision-making were the developments in the domestic political context, namely the magnitude of official and popular nationalist-rightwing vis-à-vis pacifist-leftist/opposition political pressure for a more assertive, or moderate China policy, the personal politico-ideological convictions of state-elites, notwithstanding.

Both cases showed limited instances where the Japanese government had chosen an outright nationalistic policy-option, following its perception of a favourable external condition/power position vis-à-vis China. Instead, the most favoured option appeared to be a combination of assertive-cum-moderate behaviour that reflected Tokyo's predominant

perception of an ambiguous external condition leading to the various diplomatic clashes. However, a more important observation lies with the fact that Japan's behaviour towards China was primarily constrained by external impetus, an observation that is theoretically consistent with the NCR dictum espoused by this thesis. Indeed, in both cases, the choice between nationalistic and moderate policy-options essentially hinged on state-elites' perception of the external environment, which delineated the parameter of Japan's policies in the context of Japanese-Chinese relations. Empirically, the Koizumi administration appeared more willing to support the neo-nationalist agenda, or allow domestic nationalist pressure to affect its China policy, to various degrees, under a perceptively favourable or ambivalent external environment. Conversely, it had exercised diplomatic prudence, suppressing domestic nationalist sentiment, when the external environment was perceptively unfavourable. Such policy-behaviour clearly reflects NCR's presupposition regarding domestic variables gaining salience and assuming a relatively independent function affecting foreign policy, under low-pressured or ambiguous external conditions, and vice-versa, during periods of high external pressure.

Yet, both case-studies demonstrate that the prevailing external environment did not directly translate into specific behaviour/preference-of-action, but had to be mediated by domestic variables in the guise of nationalist pressure and other political processes, and more fundamentally, the "fuzzy" perceptual lenses of Japanese state-elites that served as the final arbiter of the specific policy-options (Gideon Rose 1998; Sterling-Folker 1997:19). In other words, it was unit-level causality in the shape of key decision-makers within the Koizumi administration that subjectively defined the external conditions, which, calculated together with the other domestic impetus, shaped the respective policy-options and diplomatic manoeuvres vis-à-vis China. Again, this conclusion not only conforms to NCR's theoretical underpinnings that posit a causal role for domestic variables like nationalism in foreign policy analysis, but also evidently justify its advocacy for explicit domestic-level theorising, which under particular condition/context, can be affective, or otherwise, in constraining state behaviour/preferences.

As noted, the Koizumi administration mostly perceived the external condition/relative power position vis-à-vis China to be ambiguous, while its domestic political resolve vis-à-vis nationalist pressure leading to the incidents in both cases were largely unfavourable. Straddling in between the external-domestic nexus, the anticipated position expectedly predisposed Tokyo towards its preferred policy-option of visible, assertive-nationalist responses moderated by conciliatory measures, when dealing with Beijing. This apparent “balancing” behaviour of satisfying nationalist demands, domestically, while appeasing the Chinese, externally, also validates the NCR-centred argument in Chapter 1 regarding state-elites’ inclination to strike a balanced foreign policy of simultaneously pursuing nationalistic goals and the broader national interests. In the Japanese case, these potentially divergent goals were defined in terms of the quest for national pride and prestige, and “normal statehood,” on one hand, and a stable Japanese-Chinese relationship for mutual economic and strategic benefits, on the other. Time and again, “trade-offs” occurred in the form of pursuing “damage-control” measures to compensate for the initial provocative actions, i.e. visiting Yasukuni, detaining Chinese activists in Senkaku/Diaoyudao, and pursuing unilateral exploration plans in the ECS, where pragmatic considerations, like preventing further escalations of diplomatic tension, and sustaining their flourishing economic ties to fuel Japan’s economic vitality, were prioritised over narrower nationalist objectives.

Another interesting empirical point to note is that, in most of the contentious episodes, the Koizumi administration had chosen the expected policy-options that reflected its anticipated position resulting from the interplay between external and domestic dynamics. However, Koizumi’s controversial decision to visit Yasukuni on August 15, 2006, seemed anomalous, since the unfavourable external environment and domestic political resolve, would have required him to adopt non-action, or a conciliatory policy-option. Yet, when interpreted from NCR’s perspective, his “nationalistic” action conforms to the assumption that state-elites do not necessarily respond effectively/adequately to the stipulated decision-making constraints, due to domestic “intervening” elements. In this respect, the decision arguably reflected, as much, Koizumi’s anticipation that a shrine visit during his last weeks in

office would not trigger debilitating international and domestic political repercussions, as his intentions to “immortalise” his personal political image as the leader who stood tall against China, and even plausibly, fulfill his nationalist convictions.

As concluded earlier, the perception of an advantageous relative power position vis-à-vis China, forged by a combination of favourable US-Japan allied resolve/commitment, diplomatic/bilateral leverage over China, and sustainable economic interdependence, tended to allow domestic nationalist impetus greater leverage in shaping Japan’s China policy. Individually and collectively, these external dynamics also exhibited mitigating and exacerbating effects on nationalism’s efficacy. In both case-studies, it is apparent that favourable allied resolve/commitment in the shape of a strengthened US-Japanese alliance, was an essentially decisive external factor influencing Koizumi’s foreign/China policy orientation. Both elucidated that the perception of the prevailing external condition/relative power position vis-à-vis China, significantly depended on the Japanese government’s anticipation of the atmosphere of US-Japan ties, the proximity between Tokyo and Washington vis-à-vis Beijing in the US-Japan-China “triangular ties”, and American *gaiatsu*, pertaining to the two issues. Undoubtedly, such estimations were engendered by Koizumi’s “grand strategy” of hitching Japanese foreign policy to that of their American ally to facilitate the quest for “normal” statehood, and greater international role and recognition. Since Japan-China relations have traditionally been, and continued to be greatly affected by their relationships with the US, Washington’s encouragement and appreciation of Japan’s overtly pro-American foreign policy, obviously, have had Tokyo gaining the impression of greater leverage vis-à-vis Beijing in their “strategic triangularity” (Soerensen 2006), thus boosting Koizumi’s confidence in advancing an assertive, and occasionally “aloof” China policy.

Specifically, this study found that Koizumi’s Yasukuni policy was particularly facilitated by the post-“9/11” expansion of US-Japanese security relations under the aegis of their alliance. Japan’s unwavering support for US external/security agenda endeared Koizumi to the Bush administration, where the “Bush-Koizumi special relationship” led to minimal American *gaiatsu* on Japanese diplomacy towards China, at least on history-related

quarrels. Indeed, Washington, for most part, maintained its silence and tolerated the Japanese PM's Yasukuni antics, despite their debilitating impact on Japan's Asia policy, and the corresponding repercussions to US regional strategy. However, when it came to the security-oriented ECS debacles, Washington was more prepared to vocalise its "impartiality", i.e. during the 2004 Senkaku/Diaoyudao dispute, apparently to send a clearer signal to Tokyo regarding possible US "non-commitment" in the event of an ECS contingency, and its preference for status quo, to dissuade further provocative actions from its Japanese ally. Both instances not only demonstrated the prevalence of "allied resolve" impinging on the Koizumi administration's perception/calculation of its relative power position vis-à-vis China, but also, in exacerbating as well as mitigating nationalism's role in Japan's China policy-making. In fact, the general assertiveness of Koizumi's China policy gave the impression that he was willing, to an extent, to marginalise/discount other policy-determinants, to advance the neo-nationalist agenda, and upset the Chinese in the process, for as long as propitious US-Japanese ties were in place. It is therefore viable to deduce that the correlation between Washington's alliance commitment and the "strategic empowerment of nationalism" (Bong 2002:266) by Japanese state-elites denotes what observers acknowledged as Japan's "dependent nationalism", one which is only feasible via American encouragement/sponsorship (McCormack 2007; Tsunekawa 2006; Samuels 2007a/b).

The prevalence of the alliance factor in Japan's external calculus invariably connotes the limits of deepening economic interdependence and other external-domestic determinants in moulding its China policies. As described, his aloofness in continuing shrine visits, despite the threats of Chinese economic retributions, and more ominously, following the massive anti-Japanese demonstrations in 2005, indicates Koizumi's willingness to risk damaging Japanese-Chinese economic ties. Likewise, Tokyo's forceful detention of Chinese activists during the March 2004 Senkaku/Diaoyudao incident, regardless of the earlier Chinese veiled threat to undermine Japanese bid for a lucrative *Shinkansen* project, in the wake of Koizumi's New Year shrine visit, further allude to the limits of economic interdependence in mitigating nationalistic tendencies in Japan's China policy. However, it

has to be clarified that these specific instances do not adequately represent the full impact of economic considerations on Japanese policy-making, especially when viewing their bilateral ties from the broader and longer-term perspective. On the contrary, the “damage-control” measures and swift diplomatic “fence-mending” by Japan (and China, as well) following several of the bilateral altercations, suggest economic interdependence as having much more constraining effect on Japanese state-elites’ decision-making. Thus, despite limited contextual evidence indicating the impact of specific economic consideration on Tokyo’s policy calculation during the various diplomatic contentions, it is still credible to deduce that their flourishing bilateral trade and investment relations did factor into Japan’s pragmatic posturing, especially when its long-overdue economic recovery has much to do with China’s robust economic growth and burgeoning domestic consumption. Moreover, with China becoming Japan’s top trading partner since 2004, and Japanese investments pouring into the Chinese mainland against the backdrop of popular anti-Japanese fervour, rational and calculated policy judgments, rather than purely emotional responses that could undermine Japanese business interests, appeared to be Tokyo’s *modus vivendi* towards Beijing.

Besides, China’s “comfortable” acquiescence of the *seikei bunri*-styled relationship, epitomised by the “hot economics, cold politics” arrangement, gave the impression of both governments plausibly operating on a “double-track” approach, when managing the political and economic dimensions of their diplomacy (Anonymous interview C; Drifte 2003:19). If true, this hypothesis would have offered Tokyo more flexibility in terms of policy-choices towards Beijing without being overly concerned with Chinese economic retributions. It would have equally explained the Koizumi administration’s relatively indifferent perception/calculation of its diplomatic leverage vis-à-vis China, especially in the majority of the Yasukuni incidents discussed, which partly encouraged his obstinate Shrine policy. Similarly, Tokyo’s “calculated assertiveness” in the submarine and gas disputes, despite the unfavourable diplomatic conditions vis-à-vis China, partly reflects its confidence towards Beijing’s economic pragmatism in mitigating against excessive Chinese responses to escalate the disputes. These evidences highlight the correlation between economic

interdependence and Japan's perception of its bilateral leverage over China, where the latter was, to an extent, dependent on Japanese state-elites' consideration of the former. More significantly, they illustrate not only the moderating, but also exacerbating qualities/attributes of economic interdependence on nationalistic tendencies in Japan's China policy-making, where increased confidence towards the positive effects of greater interdependence actually encouraged Japanese state-elites to be less bridled in pursuing nationalistic-inclined policies.

As for domestic politics, both case-studies demonstrated, to varying degrees, the causality of inter/intra-party political competition, and the affective role of domestic, non-state actors in Japan's China policy-making. They also highlighted the intertwined relations between domestic politics and nationalism, where Japanese state-elites demonstrated inclination to indulge in nationalist politics, and propensity to stoke nationalist sentiment for domestic political expediency, all of which contributed to Japan's assertive-nationalist policy-options (actual and rhetorical), when managing the two issue-areas. Indeed, both cases witnessed how the changing dynamics of intra-LDP politics, namely the ascendancy of nationalistic-rightwing and "anti-China" forces, via the "*seiwa-ka*" faction, diplomatic *zoku*, the PARC, and various Diet-members' grouping, had engendered a more assertive and *realpolitik*-oriented China policy. This policy-shift was encouraged by waning leftwing opposition, and the resulting drift of Japanese mainstream politics to the right. Furthermore, despite its political opposition on symbolic issues like the Yasukuni visits, the largest opposition party, DPJ, has revealed that it can be as, if not more, nationalistic than the LDP, when it came to defending Japanese interests in the ECS, or fuelling the "China threat" notion (see Chapter 7). Meanwhile, PM Koizumi's promotion of neo-conservative elites to key cabinet positions also saw China policy-making becoming relatively dependent on these central decision-makers' political resolve vis-à-vis domestic nationalist pressure, their own nationalistic convictions aside. Additionally, the enhanced foreign policy-making leverage of the Cabinet and the PMO saw MOFA's traditionally moderating influence on China policy diminished, while Koizumi's pro-US external orientation facilitated the ascendancy of the so-

called “American school” bureaucrats at the expense of “China school” officials within the MOFA setup (Sasajima interview). These domestic political transformations, among others, have allowed the mainstream neo-nationalist/neo-conservative version of “American-dependent” nationalism to take root at the apex, the legislative, and the bureaucratic levels of Japanese policy-making during Koizumi’s premiership.

Moreover, in both cases, nationalist pressure groups, the Japanese media, and public opinion became important sources of nationalistic-oriented political pressure affecting Tokyo’s policy-deliberations, and state-elites like Koizumi, Abe, Aso, and Nakagawa, all demonstrated inclination to instrumentalise “anti-China” nationalism to appease these non-state actors, in their efforts to advance both neo-nationalist and their personal political/nationalist agendas. Conversely, the traditionally salient, non-official mitigating forces of pacifist pressure groups and *zaikai* appeared less effective in suppressing nationalist tendencies, as vividly demonstrated by the Koizumi administration’s rebuff on their calls for a moratorium of prime ministerial Yasukuni visits.

Overall, one can conclude that domestic politics has remained a salient determinant, exhibiting both exacerbating and mitigating influence on nationalistic tendencies in Japan’s China policy-making. However, like nationalism, it appeared more affective under sanguine, or ambiguous relative power position vis-à-vis China, as perceived by Japanese state-elites, who were more prepared to consider, or accommodate to domestic political imperatives in their policy decision-making, under such external conditions. This again, corresponds with NCR’s assumptions regarding the primacy of external constraints in delineating the parameters of state behaviour, and the causality of domestic political processes in determining the specific preference-of-action.

## **8.2. Theoretical Findings and Reflections on Neoclassical Realism**

It was argued in Chapter 2 that the mainstream IR theories of neo-realism and neo-liberalism were handicapped in explicating nationalism in the analysis of foreign policy and interstate relations, due to their privileging of external and structural-material variables, and

marginalisation of domestic-ideational theorising. Conversely, constructivism and Area-studies that favoured domestic-ideational analysis, though empirically rich and deep in their explanations of nationalism and identity politics, commonly discounted the constraints imposed by the external environment, and tended not to incorporate clear analytical frameworks to systematically theorise state behaviour/preferences. Both approaches have been used in existing studies of Japanese-Chinese relations, and both have been found wanting, to varying extent, in generating a fuller explanation that accounts for nationalism and other equally important external-domestic determinants that concurrently affect the bilateral relations. To overcome this apparent “analytical myopia” (Berger 2000), the middle-grounding NCR was introduced to operationalise nationalism within its essentially realist-based construct, to shed light into the stipulated research questions.

#### 8.2.1. General evaluation of the NCR Model of Nationalism and State Behaviour

Overall, the NCR framework fared relatively well in answering, and meeting the research questions and objectives of this thesis. First, and foremost, it was accommodative towards the “national question”, in that nationalism and identity politics were aptly, and deductively operationalised as a “domestic” variable within its construct, as well as systematically assessed in terms of their interaction with, and salience vis-à-vis structural-material determinants that conventionally governed mainstream theories. Indeed, unlike the mainstream realist and liberal constructs’ inclination to either discount, or introduce it as an addendum in their analysis, the NCR model gave nationalism adequate emphasis by juxtaposing it within its external-domestic nexus to demonstrate its interplay with the external constraints and domestic political process involved in Japan’s China policy-making. Although foregrounding on basic realist assumptions, NCR’s hospitality towards non-material, unit-level variables helped theoretically bridge the supposedly incompatible assumptions of structuralist and cultural-ideational theories, which enabled this study to generate relatively novel, realist-based conclusions about nationalism in Japan’s relations with China.

NCR's unequivocal acceptance of nationalism's function in foreign policy-making, expectedly, helped realise two fundamental objectives of this thesis. They were: i) to determine the meanings and manifestations of nationalism in contemporary Japan, and reveal its correlations with Japanese domestic politics and foreign policy; and ii) to systematically assess its impact vis-à-vis other variables on Japan's China policy that defined the atmosphere of their bilateral relations. Specifically, the "bridging qualities" of NCR assumptions facilitated this thesis' responses to the related central research question of why, how, when, and to what extent nationalism affected Japanese external behaviour, interests, and goals vis-à-vis China, all of which, I contend, were adequately dealt with in the preceding chapters. On why nationalism and nationalist politics mattered in Japan's China policy-making, the NCR analysis employed the constructivist-akin methodology of scrutinising the ideational (history, culture, ideology), psychological (perception, images, attitudes), and material (power, capabilities, prestige) dimensions of Japanese nationalism, to cultivate a deeper appreciation of its contemporary meanings, agendas, driving forces, and typically anti-Chinese-manifestation in post-Cold War Japan. This exercise was deliberately, meant to bring to light the underlying passion and emotion that drove the nationalist logic that made Japanese nationalists, and to an extent, the general public, so resolute in defending what they perceived to be their national identity and territorial sovereignty, and their eagerness to defy the Chinese. In so doing, it also alluded to nationalism's growing influence within Japanese domestic politics and its anticipated impact on Japan's behaviour towards China.

The analysis also dealt with the "unit-level" intricacies of identifying the actors and processes involved, to infer the linkage between nationalism and foreign policy, namely how nationalism intersected with actor interests, and wielded its influence in policy-making. To be fair, the empirical findings were not affirmatively conclusive, both in ascertaining the nationalistic convictions of key actors, and establishing a direct linkage between nationalist

convictions/pressure and policy-decisions, due to limitations of scope and analytical tools.<sup>2</sup> It was also difficult to objectively, verify that nationalist passion drove Japanese state-elites to behave the way they did during the instances of diplomatic contentions. Yet, both case-studies demonstrated that nationalism's saliency did not solely derive from unadulterated passion and emotions. Japanese state-elites also invoked nationalism's instrumentality for political/strategic purposes, underscoring its efficacy in foreign policy-making, when strategically empowered by the power-wielders as a political tool (Bong 2002:266). Moreover, the widely reported personalities, political/ideological dispositions and affiliations, and actions/reactions of, as well as opinions and statements by key actors, before, and during the periods of disputes, provided ample evidence that enabled the credible assertion of nationalism's affective role in Japan's China policy-making.

In responding to the questions of when, and the extent to which nationalism affected Japanese state-elites' China policy decisions, both cases, as concluded in the previous section, largely conformed to NCR's assumptions regarding nationalism's causality under particular external conditions and domestic political process. In so doing, the NCR schema also shed light into the inquiries concerning the saliency of other relevant variables, and their exacerbating/mitigating impact on nationalism in Japanese policy-making. True to its realist pedigree, the NCR analysis, although recognising the causality of nationalism and/or other domestic sources on Japanese behaviour/preferences vis-à-vis China, also firmly identified power "at the heart of international politics" (Davidson 2002:3). To reiterate, NCR "holds that the international environment in which states interact is the primary determinant of their interests and behaviour" (Taliaferro 2006:479-480), and that relative power position establishes "the basic parameter of a country's foreign policy" (Gideon Rose 1998:146). The Koizumi administration's external behaviour/preferences, when dealing with China over the Yasukuni and ECS disputes, echoed these assumptions, in that its policies largely hinged on its perception/calculation of the external environment, defined in terms of relative power position vis-à-vis the disputant-state, China. Domestic politics and nationalist pressure

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<sup>2</sup> See the following section on "Implications for future research" for an elaboration on this caveat, and the opportunities for future research on this aspect.

obviously factored into Tokyo's calculations, and key members of the Administration did exhibit willingness to satisfy nationalist demands and/or their personal nationalist passion, or gain political mileage by advancing nationalistic policies to varying degrees. However, the extent of nationalism's manifestation, and the level of policy assertiveness were constrained by the external conditions noted earlier, indicating consistency between the empirical findings and NCR's realist-centred premise. That said, NCR's auxiliary assumptions also indicate that external constraints limit, but do not determine specific foreign policy-choices, and that states do not always respond effectively to the exigencies of the impending environment. One can thus explain the supposed anomaly to the realist dictum in the case of the 2006 Yasukuni visit via this NCR notion regarding the likelihood of states/state-elites responding inappropriately to external imperatives, due to unit-level "intervening" factors, which during that instance, was arguably attributed to Koizumi's perception, nationalist conviction and personal expedience.

#### 8.2.2. Comparative evaluation: nationalism vis-à-vis power politics, and interdependence?

From a comparative perspective, NCR's "integrative framework" certainly has its advantages over the rigid constructs of "Waltzian" realism and neo-liberalism in understanding nationalism and other domestic-ideational sources that, together with the preferred variables of these orthodoxies, concurrently influenced Japan's relations with China. As noted in the general evaluation, its foregrounding on realism's fundamental tenets, and deductive incorporation of unit-level variables, endowed the NCR analysis with "operational flexibility" and greater explanatory power that made it robust, yet meticulous and better equipped to analysing variations in state behaviour/preferences, and international relations.

Specifically to this thesis, NCR offered far better insights into the workings and internal attributes of Japanese (nationalist) politics and China policy-making that both neo-realist and neo-liberal studies commonly missed out, or marginalised, due to their presupposition of such sources as a given. It facilitated the systematic assessment of nationalism as both a power and ideational variable without negating the significance of the constraints imposed by the external environment on Japanese policies towards China. This

provided a more inclusive explanation of the parameters, and variations in Japanese policy-options, especially with regard to nationalism's impact, during particular conditions and time contexts, compared to neo-realism's preoccupation with systemic-structural constraint/international system, which in Waltz's own admission, "does not dictate exactly how each state will respond within those parameters" (cf. Taliaferro 2006:482). Similarly, the neo-liberals' central variables also proved deficient on their own, in explaining the anomaly of worsening Japan-China relations against the backdrop of deepening economic interdependence ("cold politics, hot economics"), without the necessary domestic inputs espoused by NCR. Hence, rather than attributing Japan's deteriorating relationship with China solely to the intricacies of balance-of-power politics and shifting power dynamics, or the downside of interdependence and under-institutionalisation of their bilateral framework, the NCR analysis evinced that domestic nationalist wherewithal and political exigencies were, as much causal in Tokyo's China policy-deliberations, as with the exacerbating consequence of their interaction with these neo-realist/neo-liberalist interpretations that led to the contemporary outcome in Japanese-Chinese ties.

Although its advocacy for unit-level explanation brought accusations of "reductionism," the NCR analysis proved critics wrong by demonstrating that the causes of the bilateral outcomes and Japan's behaviour towards China did not rest solely on the causal properties of unit-level variables, and unlike "reductionist" theories, it did not rely on domestic attributes to do most of the explanation (Taliaferro 2006:481-482; Gideon Rose 1998). Meanwhile, the charges of NCR's so-called violation of realism's structural logic is, in Taliaferro's contention, due to their widely misinterpreted notion that IR realism is a rigid research schema "whose "hard core" is synonymous" with neo-realism, whereas in actuality, both NCR and neo-realism are part of its broader research programme (2006:480; 482).

NCR also fared better than constructivism in explaining why nationalism/identity politics, though efficacious, was not the primary driver of Japanese policy towards China. Although embracing the constructivist approach of scrutinising domestic-ideational sources, it did not forsake the international forces that equally constrained Japan's policy-making, nor

over-emphasise sense over sensibility, or passion over reason (Gries 2004), on the part of Japanese state-elites, which explained their reluctance to pursue determinative policies to defend Senkaku/ECS, or be forthright in visiting Yasukuni. Moreover, unlike constructivist studies, NCR does not dispense with the services of a working analytical model, which in this thesis, allowed the systematic theorisation of the relevant variables that helped generate comparatively more intelligible explanations of how, when, and to what extent nationalism affected Japan's China policy-making.

It is, henceforth, reasonable to conclude that the NCR analysis has generated robust interpretations, and relatively insightful explanations of nationalism's functions and impact on Japan's relations with China. Its merits included: 1) the provision of a clear, operational framework, through which the interplay between nationalism and power politics became intelligible and assessable in Japanese foreign/China policy-making; and 2) its fostering of both intra- and inter-paradigm exchanges/interactions helped reduce the "analytical myopia" within mainstream and alternative IR constructs, when theorising their nationalism-tainted bilateral relationship. Together, they facilitated the formulation of reasonably fresh IR-based conclusions about the stipulated research problems.

### **8.3. Implications for Future Research**

This dissertation has demonstrated via NCR, the continued relevance and progressiveness of IR realism in the analysis of Japan's post-Cold War relations with China. By deductively introducing non-traditional reasoning, it has taken steps to address the "Achilles heel" of mainstream realism, and enhance the explanatory power of the realist paradigm on the international relations of regions like East Asia that are facing emerging power competitions, and baffled by clashing nationalisms, memories, and identities (Berger 2003).

There are, however, noticeable caveats to this modestly defined study. Theoretically, critics may argue that although the domestic "black box" was exposed, some areas of unit-level theorising remained inconspicuous in this investigation. Specifically, the linkage between nationalism, and the intersubjectivity of state-elites perceptions and socio-

psychological dimensions of decision-making, were not thoroughly developed and exhaustively elaborated,<sup>3</sup> and so were the aforementioned difficulties in affirmatively linking nationalism and intention to specific policy-decisions, following the limitations of research scope and empirical materials. Indeed, it is difficult to make objective inferences on such intersubjective dimensions of policy-making and validate them, without substantial written, and/or verbal evidence from the protagonists themselves, or those closest to them (i.e. personal memoirs, interviews), an “empirical luxury” that, to my knowledge/effort, remains unavailable, due to the recentness of, and the sensitivities that still surround the issue-areas.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, as purported in Chapter 1, this was never intended to be a socio-psychological/ideational study of Japanese nationalism and/or policy-making *per se*, but a modest attempt to introduce an IR-oriented analysis that operationalised nationalism as both a power and ideational determinant, to assess its causality vis-à-vis other variables in Japan's China policy-making. This explains the modest theorisation of the intersubjective linkages mentioned, as the study's limitation called for emphasis to be given to theorising the external-domestic interplay, and lesser on those domestic linkages. Undoubtedly, these caveats and limitations require further treatment, via a more advanced NCR construct, and hence the avenue for future research on this topic, when “first-hand/primary-level” empirical information becomes more accessible. Also, the NCR model can be utilised to investigate similar research problems, from either the Chinese, or a comparative perspective, which were beyond the scope of this dissertation.

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<sup>3</sup> Considering the technical constraints (i.e. word limit, size of dissertation) that limited the research scope of this dissertation, the questions of how these other unit-level, non-material factors, under the mediation of nationalism, affected Japanese state-elites perceptions of Japan's relative power position vis-à-vis China, and how they were, then, translated into specific policy-options, were not thoroughly explicated. This caveat would have to be left for future theorisation, via a more expansive NCR construct and analysis.

<sup>4</sup> Specifically, the recentness of the scope of investigation meant that official documents/records pertaining to the issue-areas were mostly unavailable/inaccessible to validate the inferences/observations made regarding the nationalistic convictions and intentions of the key state-elites, and the extent to which nationalist pressure from various domestic sources affected their policy deliberations. Also, to achieve that would necessitate first-hand/personal accounts that come from none other than the so-called “horse's mouth”. However, interviews with the key protagonists were difficult to arrange, while those interviewed, with few exceptions, were cautious and hesitant to reply and reminisce at length about, or validate/invalidate the related events, due to the sensitivity that still surround the issues. These constraints meant that the study largely depended on credible media sources/reports, and expert interviews with renowned scholars/observers as the main primary sources for the reconstruction of the related policy-making environment and process.

Lastly, with its relative capacity to generate predictions of state behaviour, students of Japan-China relations and NCR should look at developing more elaborative models, to guesstimate the future direction of the bilateral ties. Based on this thesis' findings, it is credible to envisage nationalism becoming increasingly salient in Japanese politics and foreign policy, for the foreseeable future, as Japan drives towards "normal statehood." For that reason, relations with China would continue to struggle, as domestic nationalist pressure increasingly constrain Japanese (and Chinese) state-elites' management of issues endemic to the bilateral ties. However, nationalism's dynamism would largely depend on American encouragement, considering its contemporary attributes and Japan's trademark dependency on its ally, and for as long as the "neo-conservative/normal-nationalist" (Samuels 2007a/b) discourse remains dominant.

With the future of Japanese-Chinese ties and East Asia's well-being partly resting on Tokyo and Beijing's ability, and political will to suppress their confrontational nationalisms, the onus would be on Washington to prudently manage the US-Japan alliance, and promote more equidistant relations with both governments within their emerging "triangular" framework, to control overly nationalistic tendencies in one's policy towards the other. On Japan's China policy, *gaiatsu* from the US, together with other strategic and economic considerations, and domestic actors that act to preserve their interests in maintaining good relations with China, would remain credible mitigating factors against excessive nationalistic preoccupations in Tokyo's policy-making process. One would therefore expect a kind of "pragmatic nationalism tempered by diplomatic prudence" (Zhao 2005:132) to prevail in Japan, where parochialism is mediated by sensible considerations that befit the behaviour of an interdependent and status quo power. On that note, Japanese-Chinese diplomacy would remain volatile, as Japanese policy-makers strive to delicately balance their pursuit of both nationalist and pragmatic goals, but in a "trade-off" situation, the former is unlikely to supersede the latter, or become the primary driver of foreign/China policy-making in Japan.

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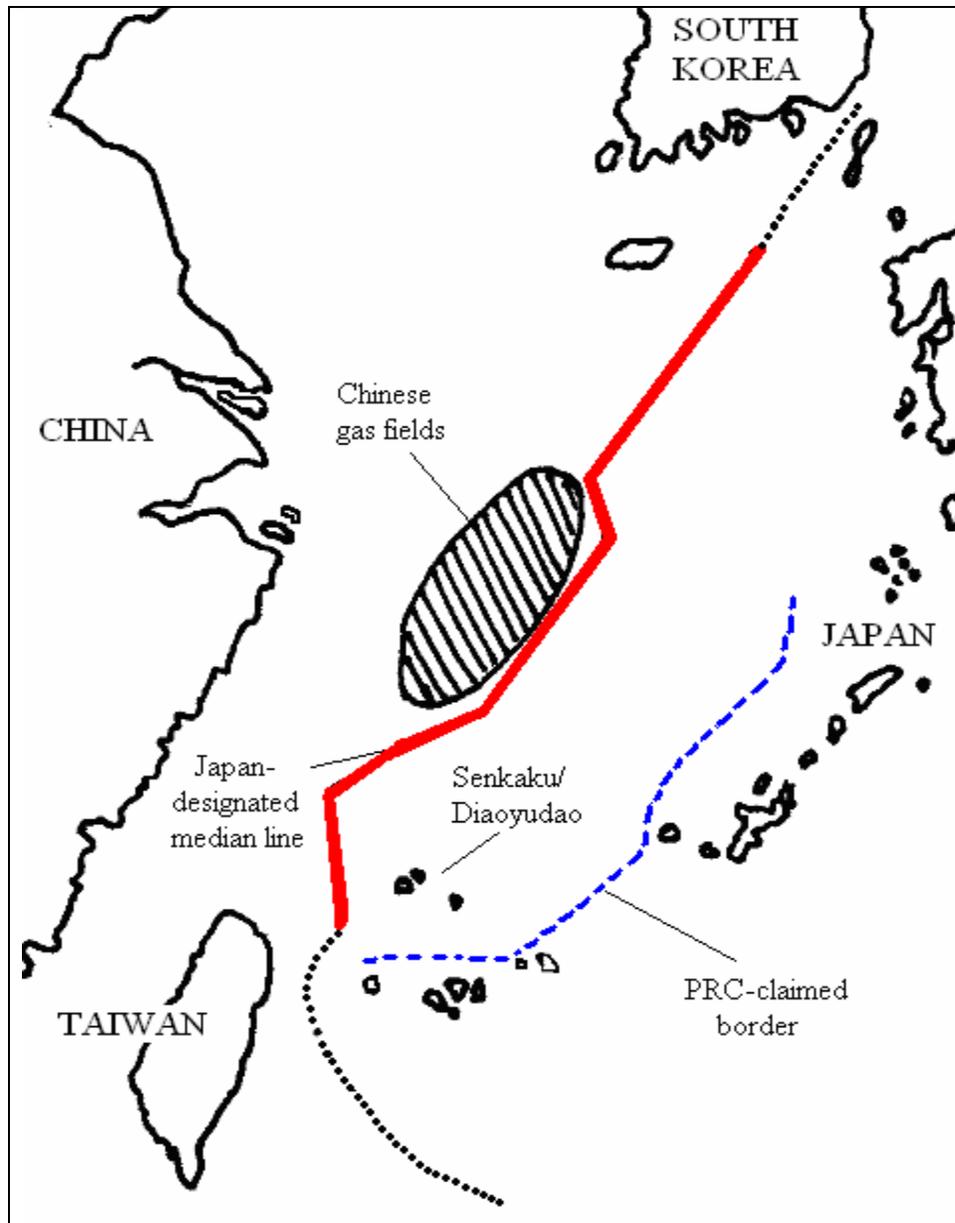
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APPENDIX 1

MAP OF EAST CHINA SEA



Source: Adapted and modified from *Japan Times*, 19 June 2008.

## APPENDIX 2

### KEY CHRONOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS SHAPING JAPAN'S EXTERNAL AND DOMESTIC CONDITIONS IN RELATIONS TO CHINA POLICY-MAKING (APRIL 2001- SEPTEMBER 2006)

TIME PERIOD	EXTERNAL DEVELOPMENTS	DOMESTIC DEVELOPMENTS
Before April 2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Revision of the US-Japan Guidelines for Security Cooperation and Japan's participation in TMD; the "Armitage Report" calling for stronger US-Japan alliance commitments; Condoleeza Rice's remarks on China's potential challenge in <i>Foreign Affairs</i> - signified the new Bush administration assertive China policy</li> <li>- US-China diplomatic tension over Belgrade embassy bombing, EP-3 incident; and US-Japan concerns over China's challenge.</li> <li>- China sought improved ties with Japan after the 1998 "war apology" issue; i.e. Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji's diplomatic "charm-offensive" during Japan visit in 2000</li> <li>- High frequency of Chinese research vessels intrusion into Japanese EEZ; advance notification mechanism for maritime research activities established</li> <li>- History textbook issue began (mid February)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Nationalism regaining currency in Japan following changes in domestic terrain, i.e. impact of "Lost Decade" on Japanese confidence/identity; generational change; weakening of pacifist forces; growing insecurity, etc.</li> <li>- Decline in Japanese perception of China since Tiananmen 1989, and Taiwan Straits crisis (1996); etc.</li> <li>- China's rise exacerbated "China threat" perception in Japan</li> <li>- Japanese images of China undermined by Chinese president Jiang Zemin's actions during Japan visit (November 1998)</li> <li>- Japanese government passed security bills in 1999 to expand security activities under the US-Japan alliance</li> <li>- "historical revisionism" movement becoming pro-active</li> </ul>
April 2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Chinese lodged protest over textbook issue</li> <li>- Tokyo granted visa to ex-Taiwan president, Li Denghui; China protested decision, postponed ex-Premier Li Peng's Japan visit</li> <li>- Japan imposed temporary safeguards on Chinese agricultural produces; China threatened retaliation</li> <li>- Chinese research vessels returned to disputed waters in ECS</li> <li>- Beijing voiced concerns over new PM Koizumi Yasukuni pledge.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Political/administrative reforms/bureaucratic restructuring began</li> <li>- MOE/MEXT approved <i>Tsukurukai's</i> history textbook</li> <li>- LDP presidential candidate, Koizumi Junichiro pledged domestic political/economic reforms, and visit to Yasukuni Shrine; contender Hashimoto Ryutaro ruled out Yasukuni visit.</li> <li>- Koizumi won the LDP presidential election; appointed Japan's PM</li> </ul>
May 2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Chinese kept up pressure on Yasukuni issue i.e. Jiang Zemin criticised Koizumi's shrine plans during meeting with South Korean delegation; criticism from the China's MFA spokesperson.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Mainichi's</i> public poll recorded overwhelming public support of above 90% for Koizumi's planned Yasukuni visit</li> </ul>
June 2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- China retaliated on Japan's "protectionist" trade measures by raising 100% tariff rates on Japanese automobiles, mobile phones, and air-conditioner</li> <li>- China's ambassador to Japan urged Koizumi to reconsider Yasukuni visit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Public support for Koizumi's Yasukuni pledge favourable - <i>Mainichi's</i> poll</li> </ul>
July 2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Secretaries-general of Japan's ruling coalition visited China and South Korea; Yasukuni and textbook issues discussed; Chinese reportedly indicated willingness to tolerate one Yasukuni visit by Koizumi on date other than August 15</li> <li>- FM Tanaka met FM Tang Jiaxuan in Hanoi, Tang asked to Tanaka to prevent Koizumi's Yasukuni visit; Chinese maritime activities/intrusion into Japan's EEZ also topic of discussion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- FM Tanaka expressed personal opposition to Koizumi's Yasukuni plan</li> </ul>

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Aug. 2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- LDP's Nonaka Hiromu visited China; Yasukuni main issue</li> <li>- China protested Yasukuni visit; refused bilateral summit with Koizumi; Jiang planned to avoid Koizumi in Shanghai's APEC summit</li> <li>- US relatively quiet over Yasukuni issue, as with most ASEAN states</li> <li>- Chinese vessel incursions temporarily halted</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cabinet members called for caution over Yasukuni visit; group of 105 diet-members supported visit</li> <li>- Public opinion polls in early August generally supportive of PM Yasukuni visit</li> <li>- Koizumi met key political allies Yamasaki Taku, Kato Koichi, and CCS Fukuda Yasuo for final deliberation on date of Yasukuni visit; <i>Izokukai</i> chief Koga Makoto consented to change-of-date; Chinese reportedly acquiesced to date change; FM Tanaka not involved.</li> <li>- Koizumi visited Yasukuni on Aug. 13; issues statement of remorse for Japan's war role</li> <li>- <i>Mainichi's</i> public opinion poll conducted soon after revealed continuously favourable support for Yasukuni visit</li> </ul>
Sept. 2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Terror attacks on the US (Sept. 11)</li> <li>- US preparing to launch "global war on terror" (GWOT); sought international support, including Japan and China</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Japanese government passed security bills enabling Japan to support US in UN-sanctioned GWOT</li> </ul>
Oct. 2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Koizumi made one-day visit to China; met Chinese leaders and made friendly gestures; sought understanding for Japanese support on GWOT</li> <li>- US launched Afghanistan "anti-terror" campaign</li> <li>- Koizumi met Jiang at Shanghai's APEC summit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cabinet Office annual polls noted decline in Japanese public perceptions/images of China - first time since 1997</li> </ul>
Nov. 2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Koizumi met Jiang Zemin at Brunei's ASEAN+3</li> <li>- China and Japan agreed on bilateral defence exchanges and mutual navy visits</li> </ul>	
Dec. 2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- JCG detected, pursued, and sank <i>fushinsen</i> in China's EEZ; Japanese-Chinese diplomatic exchanges ensued</li> </ul>	
Jan. 2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Chinese media expressed concern over bilateral ties following FM Tanaka's resignation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- FM Tanaka resigned following conflict of interests with Koizumi</li> </ul>
Feb. 2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Japan sought China's understanding on Japanese interest to probe sunken <i>fushinsen</i></li> </ul>	
March 2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- China raised concern regarding Japanese actions in Chinese EEZ regarding <i>fushinsen</i> issue</li> <li>- Resumption of Japan-China security dialogue</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Japanese media reported US intelligence suggesting possible indirect Chinese involvement in supplying the sunken <i>fushinsen</i></li> </ul>
April 2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- CNPC chairman Li Peng visited Japan</li> <li>- Koizumi attended Boao Forum in Hainan; made positive remarks on China's rise (China not a threat)</li> <li>- China lodged protest over Koizumi's Yasukuni visit; cancelled defence exchange and navy visit; nonetheless, senior CCP official, Zeng Qinghong visited Japan</li> <li>- US remained silent over Yasukuni issue</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Koizumi faced strong opposition/anti-reform forces within LDP over postal privatisation</li> <li>- Koizumi's political ally, Kato Koichi resigned from Diet and LDP following scandal over improprieties involving ex-aide</li> <li>- Koizumi's public approval rating declined significantly since 2001; public scepticism of his ability to advance reform</li> <li>- Koizumi made second Yasukuni visit</li> </ul>

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May 2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Japanese-Chinese diplomatic stand-off - "Shenyang incident"</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- "Shenyang incident" triggered intra-LDP factional debate over present course of Japan's China policy and MOFA's ineptness; DPJ sent delegation to investigate incident, further revealed MOFA's weak handling during the course of event; Japanese media coverage heightened popular anti-Chinese sentiment</li> </ul>
June 2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Japan and China reached agreement to raise sunken <i>fushinsen</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 5 Cabinet members visited Yasukuni on August 15</li> </ul>
July 2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- FM Kawaguchi met Chinese counterpart at ARF</li> </ul>	
Aug. 2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Koizumi announced decision to skip 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration in Beijing</li> </ul>	
Sept. 2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration on Japan-China normalisation</li> <li>- Koizumi met Zhu Rongji at ASEM sidelines</li> <li>- Koizumi's made a visit to North Korea</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Koizumi's North Korea trip backfired; Japanese abduction issue fuelled nationalistic sentiment in Japan</li> </ul>
Oct. 2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Koizumi met Jiang at Mexico's APEC summit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cabinet Office annual polls on foreign relations noted another year of decline in Japanese public perceptions/images of China</li> </ul>
Nov. 2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Koizumi met Zhu Rongji at ASEAN+3 in Cambodia</li> <li>- Li Denghui applied for Japan visa; withdrew application later on</li> </ul>	
Dec. 2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ma Licheng's "new thinking on Japan" article; indication of China's "4<sup>th</sup> generation" leaders' pragmatic Japan policy-direction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Advisory group set up by CCS Fukuda in August 2001 concluded report recommending establishment of secular war memorial as alternative to Yasukuni</li> <li>- Koizumi re-iterated intention to continue visiting Yasukuni</li> </ul>
Jan. 2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Japanese government reportedly leased three islets in Senkaku/Diaoyudao; Chinese lodged protest</li> <li>- China lodged protest over Yasukuni visit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Koizumi made 3<sup>rd</sup> Yasukuni visit</li> <li>- Koizumi re-iterated to Diet his intention to continue Shrine trip</li> </ul>
April 2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- SARS epidemic in China and Southeast Asia</li> <li>- FM Kawaguchi met new Chinese Premier, Wen Jiabao; failed to arrange Koizumi's meeting with China's new President, Hu Jintao; Hu met DPJ leader, Kan Naoto, his first with Japanese leaders as China's president.</li> <li>- METI's 2002 trade statistics showed Japan's imports from China surpassing those from US for the very first time</li> <li>- Japan launched anti-SARS assistance to China</li> </ul>	
May 2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Koizumi met Hu Jintao in St. Petersburg</li> </ul>	
June 2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- JCG blocked Chinese activists landing attempts on Senkaku/Diaoyudao</li> </ul>	
Aug. 2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- abandoned chemical weapons hurt Chinese citizens in Qiqihar</li> <li>- CCS Fukuda met Hu-Wen leadership in Beijing; meanwhile Chinese FM Li Zhaoxing met Koizumi in Tokyo</li> <li>- Japan sought China's help in resolving abduction issue in Six-Party Talks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Japanese nationalists responded to Chinese failed attempt by landing on Senkaku/Diaoyudao to assert Japan's claims</li> </ul>

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Sept. 2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- JDA chief Ishiba Shigeru visited China-resumption of top-level bilateral defence exchange</li> <li>- 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of Japan-China PFT</li> <li>- Zhuhai "sex orgy" involving Japanese tourists</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Koizumi re-elected as LDP president</li> </ul>
Oct. 2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Koizumi met Wen Jiabao at Bali's ASEAN+3 and Hu Jintao at APEC in Bangkok</li> <li>- Japan made settlement on Qiqihar poison gas incident</li> <li>- Lewd performance by Japanese students in Xian; public uproar</li> <li>- Japan pledged monetary support to Iraq's reconstruction</li> <li>- Chinese activists made second unsuccessful landing attempt on Senkaku/Diaoyudao</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cabinet Office annual polls revealed a consistent declining trend in Japanese public perceptions/images of China since 2001</li> </ul>
Nov. 2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- MSDF spotted Chinese submarine on surface in international waters off Japan's coast</li> <li>- <i>Keidanren</i> delegation to China lobbied for Chinese decision for <i>Shinkansen</i> technology in the Beijing-Shanghai high-speed railway project</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- LDP victory in Lower House election; mandate for Koizumi to continue China policy</li> <li>- Tokyo defied public disapproval over plans for GSDF dispatch to Iraq, under the US-led campaign</li> </ul>
Dec. 2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Tokyo announced decision to deploy GSDF to Iraq</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Koizumi's aide publicly announced Koizumi's contemplation to visit Yasukuni on August 15, 2004</li> </ul>
Jan. 2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- China protested over Yasukuni visit; postponed mutual navy visit again; however, Japan-China vice-ministerial defence dialogue resumed after long hiatus</li> <li>- Koizumi's conciliatory measure – instructed Japanese delegation to China to convey message of friendship</li> <li>- JCG blocked Chinese landing attempt on Senkaku/Diaoyudao; Beijing did not lodge formal protest; mild rhetoric in Chinese media</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Koizumi made fourth Yasukuni visit on New Year's Day</li> <li>- <i>Mainichi's</i> opinion poll recorded decline in public support for Yasukuni visit, dropping below 50%.</li> <li>- LDP declared adoption of Yasukuni visit as political platform, together with other "nationalistic" issues</li> </ul>
Feb. 2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Japan-China mutual high-level exchanges transpired</li> <li>- Chinese indicated possibility of Japan losing bid for high-speed train project due to Yasukuni fallout</li> <li>- Chinese research vessel sighted in Japan's EEZ</li> <li>- J-GSDF deployed to Iraq; US-Japan alliance boosted</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Osaka District Court dismissed Yasukuni lawsuit</li> </ul>
March 2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- MOFA requested China to cease research activities in disputed waters (Japan's EEZ)</li> <li>- FM Kawaguchi failed to arrange Koizumi state visit during meeting with Chinese Vice-FM</li> <li>- 7 Chinese activists landed on Senkaku/Diaoyudao; arrested by Okinawa Prefectural Police; popular Chinese protests and diplomatic stand-off ensued leading to their eventual deportation</li> <li>- Chinese postponed scheduled UNCLOS meeting with Japan following Senkaku/Diaoyudao incident</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Matsuyama District Court dismissed Yasukuni lawsuit</li> <li>- Fukuoka murder trial involving Chinese students triggered anti-Chinese sentiment; fanned by nationalist politicians and media</li> <li>- Nationalist-rightwing politicians and media engaged in more nationalist rhetoric to assert Japan's claims in response to Chinese "illegal" landing on Senkaku/Diaoyudao; Media blamed Japanese government for past inaction in dealing with ECS issues, pressured for punitive actions against Chinese detainees</li> </ul>

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March 2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Beijing reportedly prevented departure of another planned Chinese visit to Senkaku/Diaoyudao</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Diet's Lower House Security committee adopted unprecedented resolution to protect Japan's territorial integrity following Chinese landing on Senkaku/Diaoyudao</li> </ul>
April 2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Japan-China resumed UNCLOS meeting postponed last month</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Land Minister Ishihara Nobuteru called for the building of lighthouse and heliport in Senkaku/Diaoyudao</li> <li>- LDP-DPJ Diet-members established Diet-members League to Defend Japan's Territorial Integrity</li> <li>- Fukuoka District Court ruled PM's Yasukuni visit unconstitutional</li> <li>- Japanese <i>uyoku</i> rammed bus into main gate of Chinese consulate in Osaka in protest of Senkaku/Diaoyudao</li> </ul>
May 2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Chinese research vessel intrusion on Japan's EEZ; left on the day Tokyo lodged protest to Chinese MFA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Osaka District Court ruled Koizumi's Yasukuni visit as private</li> <li>- Japanese media reported China's construction of natural gas drilling platforms in ECS</li> </ul>
June 2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Japan voiced concerns over Chinese activities in ECS; demanded sharing of data on Shirakaba/Chunxiao natural gas field</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- LDP Working Group on Japan's Maritime Interests report urged government to begin natural resources exploration on Japanese side of median line in ECS, and establish comprehensive strategy to safeguard Japan's maritime interests</li> <li>- Japanese media reported Chinese construction of test-drilling facilities near disputed area in ECS</li> <li>- <i>Yomiuri Shimbun</i> editorials criticised Tokyo's weak response and failure to decisively address ECS issues</li> <li>- METI minister, Nakagawa Shoichi confirmed Chinese natural gas exploration activities following aerial inspection</li> <li>- Nakagawa informed Japanese media of intention to launch unilateral exploration on Japan's side of median line</li> </ul>
July 2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Chinese vessels detected in Japanese EEZ</li> <li>- China protested Japanese exploration in ECS</li> <li>- Anti-Japanese sentiments during Asia Cup tournament in China; Tokyo urged Beijing to protect Japanese football team and fans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Japanese launched survey activities in Japanese EEZ</li> <li>- LDP Working Group on Japan's Maritime Interests urged expansion of JCG to protect Japan's maritime interests</li> <li>- <i>Defense of Japan</i> called for vigilance over Chinese military development</li> </ul>
Aug. 2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Further Chinese vessels intrusion reported</li> <li>- Anti-Japanese fracas following China's defeat to Japan in Asia Cup final; Japan lodged protest</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Japanese media reported alleged Chinese activities in laying gas pipelines in ECS gas fields</li> </ul>
Sept. 2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Koizumi re-launched Japan's bid for permanent UNSC seat; negative reactions from Chinese MFA</li> </ul>	
Oct. 2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Inaugural round of Director-general level dialogues on ECS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- METI chief Nakagawa accused China of granting exploration rights in Japanese EEZ</li> <li>- Koizumi insisted Yasukuni visits not an obstacle to Japan-China ties during Diet sessions</li> <li>- Cabinet Office annual polls noted drastic decline in Japanese public perceptions/images of China</li> </ul>

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Nov. 2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- MSDF detected submarine intrusion into Japanese waters, eventually identified to be of Chinese origin; diplomatic stand-off ensued; Beijing initially denied, but subsequently acknowledged responsibility and offered an "apology"</li> <li>- Japanese delegation in North Korea to address abduction issue</li> <li>- Koizumi met Hu Jintao at Chile's APEC sidelines; and then, Wen Jiabao at Laos' ASEAN+3 meeting; Yasukuni issue raised by Chinese leaders on both occasions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Diet called for eventual termination of ODA to China</li> <li>- Japanese media and nationalists increased pressure on submarine intrusion issue, called for more assertive action; nationalistic sentiment also raised by Japanese abduction issue</li> <li>- Chiba District Court dismissed Yasukuni lawsuit</li> <li>- Koizumi informed media of China's time for graduation from ODA</li> <li>- Asahi opinion poll recorded significant level of Japanese public distrust towards China</li> </ul>
Dec. 2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continuation of Chinese vessels intrusions; Japanese lodged protest yet again</li> <li>- Japan granted visa to Li Denghui, Chinese protested decision</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Japan released new NDPG, included contingency plans regarding possible Japanese-Chinese military confrontation over ECS</li> <li>- <i>Yomiuri</i>-Gallup polls recorded dramatic increase in Japanese public distrust towards China</li> <li>- <i>Mainichi's</i> poll on support for Koizumi's Yasukuni visit ambiguous, those approving slightly lower than those disapproving visit.</li> </ul>
Jan. 2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- METI minister Nakagawa expressed concerns to French counterpart over EU plan to end China arms embargo</li> <li>- MOF revealed China as top trade partner in 2004 statistics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- LDP launched platform calling for continuation of Yasukuni visits by PM during 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary convention.</li> <li>- Tokyo Governor Ishihara Shintaro announced plans to develop Okinotorishima</li> </ul>
Feb. 2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Tokyo assumed management of lighthouse on Uotsuri-shima; China protested decision</li> <li>- US-Japan Joint statement in "2+2 Talks"</li> <li>- Japan again requested cessation of Chinese exploration activities in ECS, and data sharing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- METI released interim report on Chinese activities in ECS</li> <li>- METI's Nakagawa told media regarding strong possibility of Chinese exploration activities extending into Japanese EEZ</li> </ul>
March 2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Discussion on EU's China arms embargo during Koizumi meeting with French President Jacques Chirac</li> <li>- China introduced Anti-Secession Law</li> <li>- Popular Chinese internet petition against Japan's UNSC bid</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- DPJ announced intention for legislation to protect Japanese exploration activities in Japan's EEZ</li> <li>- Japanese NGO began research activities on Okinotorishima</li> <li>- Japanese press reported Tokyo's consideration to establish stronger military presence in Okinawa's southernmost islands to counter Chinese presence in disputed waters</li> </ul>
April 2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Massive anti-Japanese demonstrations in Chinese cities opposing Japan's UNSC bid, textbook revision and other bilateral grievances</li> <li>- Diplomatic quarrel heightened over "responsibility" for anti-Japanese demonstrations</li> <li>- Demonstrations subsided following Beijing's effort to control anti-Japanese activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- MOE/MEXT approved revised <i>Tsukurukai's</i> history textbook</li> <li>- METI minister Nakagawa announced government preparation to grant exploration rights in ECS to Japanese companies</li> <li>- Popular anti-Chinese sentiment and reprisal in reaction to anti-Japanese demonstrations in China</li> <li>- Tokyo District Court dismissed Yasukuni lawsuit</li> <li>- <i>Mainichi's</i> poll for Koizumi's Yasukuni visit remained ambiguous; those approving slightly lower than those disapproving</li> <li>- Teikoku Oil company applied for ECS exploration rights</li> </ul>
May 2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Chinese Vice-Premier Wu Yi visited Japan for Aichi Expo and "fence-mending" meetings; abruptly cancelled summit with Koizumi following his Yasukuni remarks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Koizumi said Yasukuni visits had not undermined Japanese-Chinese relations during Diet Lower House budget committee session.</li> </ul>

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May 2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Japan-China 2<sup>nd</sup> round of dialogue/consultations over ECS issue</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Governor Ishihara conducted inspection tour of Okinotorishima</li> <li>- <i>Mainichi's</i> poll on Koizumi's Yasukuni visit showed slight decline in support compared to previous month, but remained ambiguous</li> </ul>
June 2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- China's NPC Standing Committee chairman insinuated Japan's unfavourable prospect for participation in the Beijing-Shanghai high-speed railway project during meeting with head of Japan-China Parliamentary Friendship Association</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ex-Japanese PMs met Diet Lower House speaker, Kono Yohei over Japanese-Chinese relations and Koizumi's Yasukuni visits</li> <li>- Ex-PM Nakasone voiced concern and disapproval over Koizumi's Yasukuni visits</li> <li>- <i>Nihon Izokukai</i> called on Koizumi to consider sentiments of Japan's neighbours regarding Yasukuni visits; subsequently reaffirmed support for prime ministerial homage</li> <li>- Koizumi received boost from Diet-member groups in support of Yasukuni visits</li> <li>- METI announced preparation to grant ECS exploration rights to Teikoku Oil</li> <li>- Koizumi rejected growing calls for establishment of alternative war memorial</li> <li>- Official postal address granted to Okinotorishima</li> </ul>
July 2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- China protested Japan's granting exploration rights in ECS to Teikoku Oil</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Tokyo approved granting of ECS exploration rights to Teikoku Oil</li> <li>- Osaka High Court dismissed appeal to Yasukuni lawsuit</li> </ul>
Aug. 2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- MOFA protested Chinese gas exploration activities in ECS; requested for exploration data and ceasing of activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Koizumi called for Lower House Election, following lack of political support to advance postal reform agenda</li> <li>- Koizumi told media Yasukuni not an election issue</li> <li>- Teikoku Oil announced preparation for ECS exploration; sought protection from possible Chinese reprisal</li> </ul>
Sept. 2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 5 Chinese warships detected close to ECS median line</li> <li>- Signs of US signalling for Japan's re-assessment of China policy following US Deputy Secretary Zoellick's speech to national committee on US-China relations</li> <li>- 3<sup>rd</sup> round of Japan-China consultations on ECS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- JCG asked funding of lighthouse development on Okinotorishima</li> <li>- LDP secured landslide victory in Lower House Election</li> <li>- Japanese media reported China had begun gas production at Tianwaitian/Kashi gas field near median line</li> <li>- METI's Nakagawa assured Teikoku Oil of protection to ECS exploration activities</li> <li>- Tokyo High Court dismissed Yasukuni lawsuits; conversely, Osaka High Court ruled Koizumi's visit as "official"</li> </ul>
Oct. 2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Beijing protested Koizumi's Yasukuni visit; cancelled FM meeting; Chinese anger over timing of visit, coincided with China's successful second manned space mission</li> <li>- China postponed 4<sup>th</sup> round of ECS consultations in reaction to Koizumi's Yasukuni visit.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Koizumi made his fifth visit to Yasukuni during Autumn Festival</li> <li>- <i>Keidanren</i> chairman Okuda Hiroshi suggested Koizumi's Yasukuni visits negatively affected Japanese-Chinese political relations, but economic ties remained robust.</li> <li>- Cabinet Office annual polls noted unprecedented decline in Japanese public perceptions/images of China; 63.4% feeling no closeness to China</li> <li>- Koizumi reshuffled cabinet; hawkish and nationalistic figures i.e. Abe Shinzo and Aso Taro appointed to key cabinet position.</li> </ul>

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Nov. 2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Koizumi met President Bush; Yasukuni amongst discussion topics, Bush hinted that Koizumi should consider relations with Asian neighbours when deciding on shrine visits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Koizumi re-iterated intention to stop China from using Yasukuni as diplomatic card during address at LDP headquarters</li> <li>- <i>Mainichi's</i> poll on public support for Yasukuni visit rose significantly; nearly 70% approving visit.</li> </ul>
Dec. 2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Beijing and Seoul agreed postponement of tripartite dialogue with Japan under ASEAN's auspices, following Yasukuni fallout</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- LDP Working Group on Maritime Interests proposed and subsequently adopted draft legislations to protect ECS exploration activities by Japanese companies</li> <li>- JCG planned to upgrade vessels/aircrafts to enhance protection of Japanese interests in ECS</li> <li>- DPJ's chief Maehara Seiji, and FM Aso labelled China a "threat"</li> </ul>
Jan. 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Informal Japan-China consultations on ECS</li> <li>- FM Aso toned down "China threat" rhetoric, welcomed China's "peaceful rise" in foreign policy address</li> <li>- J-SDF conducted joint-exercise with US Marines; partly focused on defence of Senkaku/Diaoyudao and ECS maritime claims</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- LDP adopted platform supporting Yasukuni visits</li> <li>- DPJ adopted official China's threat view</li> <li>- FM Aso called for Emperor to visit Yasukuni</li> <li>- Koizumi administration adopted position paper rejecting China threat notion</li> </ul>
Feb. 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- China conveyed message "writing off" Koizumi administration for making progress in bilateral relations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Diet study group established to contemplate secular war memorial</li> <li>- <i>Yomiuri's</i> chairman criticised Koizumi's Yasukuni policy in <i>New York Times</i> interview and <i>Asahi's Ronza</i> journal; <i>Yomiuri-Asahi</i> jointly called for moratorium on Yasukuni visits; agreed for joint-project on question of Japan's war responsibility</li> </ul>
March 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ECS dialogue resumed; China again advanced joint development; CCS Abe rejected Chinese proposal, reasserted Japan's rights to conduct unilateral exploration</li> <li>- Hu Jintao conveyed to the heads of seven Japan-China friendship organisations on top-level summit resumption if Japanese PM halts Yasukuni visits.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- METI minister Nikai called for further diplomatic efforts to resolve ECS issues; FM Aso suggested possible counter-measures in the event of further Chinese gas field development.</li> <li>- LDP's anti-Yasukuni visit study group established</li> <li>- LDP's legislation to protect exploration activities in ECS approved</li> </ul>
April 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- METI chief Nikai met Chinese Vice-President; both re-iterated desire to seek peaceful resolution to ECS issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Shin-Komeito leader, Kanzaki Takanori called for improvement in Japanese-Chinese ties</li> </ul>
May 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ECS dialogue failed to make progress, both sides agreed to continue with consultations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Keizai Doyukai</i> called for moratorium on PM Yasukuni visits; proposed establishment of alternative war memorial. Koga Makoto <i>Izokukai's</i> head, called for a halt, proposed separation of class-A war criminals from Yasukuni.</li> </ul>
June 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Hu Jintao re-iterated to Japanese ambassador his interest to visit Japan under "favourable" conditions</li> <li>- Strong congressional opposition towards Yasukuni visits – Koizumi ostensibly denied chance to address Congress during farewell tour to the US</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Japan's Supreme Court upheld Osaka High Court's decision in dismissing Yasukuni lawsuit/compensation claims</li> <li>- FM Aso toned down Yasukuni position, called for government to consider separation of class-A war criminals</li> </ul>
July 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Chinese research vessels in Japan's EEZ; MOFA lodged protest</li> <li>- ECS dialogue/consultations resumed in Beijing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Koga Makoto called for secular war memorial as solution to Yasukuni impasse</li> <li>- <i>Mainichi</i> and <i>Sankei's</i> polls saw public support for Koizumi's Yasukuni visits dropping to less than 40%</li> </ul>

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July 2006		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Nikkei</i> published memoir revealing reason behind Emperor Showa's decision to stop visiting Yasukuni</li> <li>- LDP presidential hopeful, Abe Shinzo, opted ambiguous position on Yasukuni visit, if appointed as PM; Tanigaki reaffirmed decision to avoid Yasukuni visits</li> </ul>
Aug. 2006	- China lodged protests over Koizumi's Yasukuni visit on August 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Koizumi re-iterated intention to fulfill pledge to visit Yasukuni on August 15, which he eventually did.</li> <li>- <i>Mainichi's</i> poll on public support for Yasukuni visit conducted immediately after Koizumi visit = ambiguous, those approving equalling those disapproving.</li> </ul>
Sept. 2006	- China adopted "wait-and-see" approach regarding new PM Abe's China policy-orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Abe, Aso and Tanigaki declared candidacy for LDP presidency; all three declared respective Yasukuni positions; Abe opted for strategic ambiguity; Aso to visit only when Yasukuni's legal status is changed; Tanigaki declared a moratorium</li> <li>- Abe emerged victorious in LDP presidential election; elected as LDP president and Japan's PM</li> </ul>

Sources: Przystup (2001-2006) – multiple volumes; News reports between 2000-2006 (various media sources)  
(See Bibliography for full information)