

NEW STRATEGY JAPANESE MILITARY IN THE ASIA PACIFIC REGION AND THE IMPACT ON INTERNATIONAL SECURITY STABILITY

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine the new Japanese military strategy in the Asia Pacific region and its impact on international security stability. The South China Sea conflict is one of the major conflicts for the Southeast Asia region and also the Asia Pacific region. Japan has a role in supporting countries involved in the conflict such as Vietnam. Japan promised Vietnam six patrol boats during Prime Minister Abe's visit to Southeast Asia. The approach used in this research is a qualitative approach and the type of research carried out is descriptive by explaining certain phenomena systematically, actually and accurately regarding facts, characteristics, and relationships. The patrol boat is aimed at enhancing Vietnam's capability in maritime law enforcement related to the South China Sea conflict. Japan, which is Vietnam's biggest foreign investor after South Korea, has no territorial claims in the South China Sea conflict. The South China Sea region has a big role in geopolitics because it is a meeting point between China and countries within the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in terms of territory, security, natural resources and energy security. Disputes in the region include territorial sovereignty and maritime sovereignty. The South China Sea area consists of, among others, several small islands that are widely distributed, but there are two groups of islands that are much contested, namely the Spratly Islands and the Paracels. In addition, the South China Sea area is an important shipping lane and is often referred to as the maritime superhighway because it is one of the busiest international shipping lanes in the world.

Keywords: Military; Politic; Stability.

A. INTRODUCTION

Japan increased its presence in the South China Sea area in 2016. The presence was in the form of air patrols with Japanese P-3C aircraft and making stops in several countries involved in South China Sea disputes such as the Philippines and Vietnam. The plane was previously used for pirate deterrence activities off the coast of Somalia.¹

Japan's support for other countries involved in conflicts in the South China Sea, namely the Philippines. Japan provided 10 patrol boats to the Philippines to assist the Philippines in enhancing maritime security and law enforcement in the South China Sea. The ship can only be used for maritime

1 Prashanth Parameswaran, *Japan Eyes Bigger South China Sea Presence in 2016*, The Diplomat accessed 29 August 2018, available at: <https://thediplomat.com/2016/01/japan-eyes-bigger-south-china-sea-presence-in-2016>

security operations and is not intended for combat. In addition, these ships are also used for humanitarian purposes such as natural disaster management².

Japan experienced a security dilemma against China where Japan considered China as a threat to its security. This assumption is based on the first being the problem of Chinese Nationalism by showing an attitude that is considered excessive, resulting in a reaction that tends to judge China to be aggressive in dealing with countries in the East Asia region, especially countries that are considered not in line with China's political interests in the South China Strait and in Taiwan. Second, China has succeeded in developing sophisticated weaponry that is able to balance Japan's defense armaments as well as developing war machines for offensive actions. Third, China's economic and industrial progress has led to competition with Japan for energy supplies. Meanwhile, China is concerned with the advancement of Japanese military technology because first, the capabilities and advances possessed by Japan will be easily used to build war machines, including developing nuclear weapons. Second, the construction of Japan's war machine aims, among other things, to hinder any Chinese ambitions in building its naval power because China believes that Japan is also building a naval and air force³. Third, Japan is estimated to be preparing a force capable of balancing China's military capabilities without the assistance of the United States, especially when the United States reduces its role in the East Asia region.⁵⁵ Japan's capabilities and advances will be easily used to build war machines, including developing nuclear weapons. Second, the construction of Japan's war machine aims, among other things, to hinder any Chinese ambitions in building its naval power because China believes that Japan is also building a naval and air force. Third, Japan is estimated to be preparing a force capable of balancing China's military capabilities without the assistance of the United States, especially when the United States reduces its role in the East Asia region.⁵⁵ Japan's capabilities and advances will be easily used to build war machines, including developing nuclear weapons. Second, the construction of Japan's war machine aims, among other things, to hinder any Chinese ambitions in building its naval power because China believes that Japan is also building a naval and air force. Third, Japan is estimated to be preparing a force capable of balancing China's military capabilities without the assistance of the United States, especially when the United States reduces its role in the East Asia region.⁵⁵

B. RESEARCH METHODS

The approach used in this research is a qualitative approach and the type of research carried out is descriptive by explaining certain phenomena systematically, actually and accurately regarding facts, characteristics, and

2 Khmer Times, *Japan Gives Patrol Boat to Philippines*, accessed February 4 2018, available at <http://www.khmertimeskh.com/news/28681/japan-gives-patrol-boat-to-philippines/>

3 E Agustini, Yaya Kareng, Ong Argo Victoria, The Role of ICAO (International Civil Aviation Organization) in Implementing International Flight Safety Standards, *KnE Social Sciences*, 2021, page 100–114-100–114

relationships. The subjects in this study were described descriptively to see the relationship between related subjects and to answer the research questions.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Increasing Japanese Military Strength, A Balance of Power in the Asia Pacific Region

The increase in Japanese military strength is a form of military normalization carried out by Japan. This is one of the influences, namely China. China is increasing its military budget slowly, as seen from 2014 to 2016 the average increase in its military budget is 138335 US dollars. This shows that China can at any time become a threat to security stability.

Since 2014, Japan has increased its military budget from 4.78 trillion yen, 4.82 trillion yen in 2015, 4.86 trillion yen in 2016 and 4.90 trillion yen in 2017. More specifically, the increase in Japan's defense budget occurred on maintenance costs, facility development and research and development. Moreover, the budgets of each section of the Japan Self Defense Force such as the Ground Self Defense Force (GSDF), Maritime Self Defense Force (MSDF), and Air Self Defense Force (ASDF) also increased from 2014 to 2017.⁴

According to Waltz, despite international anarchy, stability does not depend on whether the international system is bipolar or multipolar, but depends on several constant poles in the system. The rise and fall of the poles will trigger changes in the setting of the international system.⁵

Security stability can be threatened at any time. Barry Buzan defines security as a phenomenon that is always related. The security of a country or region must be understood through understanding the pattern of security interdependence between these countries.⁶

The biggest potential threat to Japan is China⁷. China is included in the top priority of security threats to Japan from the military and economy. Japan's efforts to prevent threats from China are by developing its military capabilities through alliances centered on the Japan-US alliance and strengthening relations with Australia, India, and ASEAN member countries.⁸

In an anarchic international world, China is a threat to Japan. When compared, the maritime power between Japan and China was too

4 *Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)*, available at: <https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/Milex-constant-2015-USD.pdf>.

5 *Defense Programs and Budget of Japan: Overview of FY2017 Budget Bill*, Japan Ministry of defense, accessed 19 August 2018, available at http://www.mod.go.jp/e/d_budget/pdf/290328.pdf

6 Liselotte Odgaard, *The Balance of Power in Asia-Pacific Security*, Routledge, New York, 2007, page. 15

7 Xenia Dormandy, *Asia Pacific Security A Changing Role for the United States*, Chatham House Report, April, 2014, page. 15

8 Yoshikazu Watanabe, Masanori Yoshida, Masayuki Jironaka, *The US-Japan Alliance and Roles of The Japan Self-Defense Forces: Past, Present, and Future*, Sasakawa Peace Foundation Washington, 2016, page 36.

far away in 2015. China with a total of 303 naval combat fleets which are divided into 79 large combat fleets, 107 small combat fleets, 53 types of land and sea two-field vehicles (amphibious) and 64 submarines. . Meanwhile, Japan only has 67 fleets with 46 large combat fleets, 3 amphibious types, and 18 submarines.⁹

China, which has greater power than Japan, requires a balancing effort so as not to create a hegemony from one country. Japan's balancing includes Hard Balancing and Soft Balancing. Security stability will be disrupted by the imbalance of power between Japan and China, therefore Japan tends to realize a balance of power in the region by using instruments to strengthen the cooperation of the Japan-US alliance. In addition to the United States, Japan also has cooperation with several countries in the Asia Pacific region such as India, Australia, South Korea, the Philippines and Indonesia. The forms of such cooperation are the Japan - Australia Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Joint Exercise in 2016, Exercise Corp North Guam in 2017, Exercise Southern Jackaroo in 2017,¹⁰ The cooperation in the form of joint exercises is carried out by the Japan-United States alliance with countries in the Asia Pacific region. This is included in the form of soft balancing carried out by Japan because it is in the form of a joint military exercise.

In addition to joint exercises, Japan also increased air patrols in 2016 around the South China Sea area using P-3C aircraft.¹¹ The appearance of the P-3C patrol aircraft shows the movement of the Japan Self Defense Force in the region, especially to monitor the military escalation carried out by China in the South China Sea. The patrols were carried out in conjunction with patrols conducted by the United States.

When viewed from the region, Japan has facilitated the continued presence of the United States in the Asia Pacific so as to encourage alliances between the two countries to create stability for the region.¹² In addition to being faced with threats coming from China, strengthening Japan's alliance with the United States is also a form of balance of power against North Korea that increases its nuclear capabilities. At least from February to October 2016 North Korea has conducted five ballistic missile tests of various types such as Hwasong (KN), Scud ER, Nodong, Scud-C, and Unha-4. The classification of ballistic missiles also varies, such as intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM), intermediate-range ballistic missile (IRBM), medium-range ballistic missile (MRBM), and short-range

9 US Government, *Asia-Pacific Maritime Security Strategy*, 12.

10 *Chapter 2: Active Promotion of Security Cooperation*, Defense of Japan 2017, accessed 20 May 2018, available at: http://www.mod.go.jp/e/publ/w_paper/2017.html

11 Prashanth Parameswaran, *Japan Eyes Bigger South China Sea Presence in 2016*, The Diplomat accessed 29 August 2018, available at: <https://thediplomat.com/2016/01/japan-eyes-bigger-south-china-sea-presence-in-2016/>

12 Evelyn Goh, *How Japan Matters in The Evolving East Asian Security Order*, *Royal Institute of International Affairs*, Vol.87, July 2011, page 900.

ballistic missile (SRBM).¹³ Strengthening the alliance is not out of the principle of Japanese pacifism.

The principle of pacifism tends to limit Japan's military capabilities, including the role that Japan has in the Japan-US alliance. After Japan reinterpreted the principle of pacifism, the Japan-US alliance cooperation based on a guideline was further expanded by Japan's role with the Proactive Contribution to Peace policy.¹⁴

The strengthening of this cooperation is also a form of increasing Japan's military capability during the reinterpretation of Article 9 of the Japanese constitution. The Guideline for Japan - US Defense Cooperation issued in 2015 contains guidelines for the alliance of the two countries in acting within the framework of defense cooperation. Japan can play a wider role in protecting its airspace, preventing ballistic missile attacks, protecting maritime areas. As well as protecting attacks that occur on the ground.¹⁵

War can occur if there is no balance of power in an area. As in Waltz's thinking, war can be used by states as a method to obtain basic needs from states such as security and because anarchic international conditions allow states to fight even if there is no aggressor against the state.¹⁶ The increase in Japanese military capabilities is used as a support for strengthening defense cooperation with the United States so that Japan can realize a balance of power in the Asia Pacific region. This is in line with the assumption of realist thinking that the state is basically a unit, so that in an anarchic international condition that does not offer protection, states must make their own efforts to increase their security through their relative capabilities.¹⁷

2. Increasing State Military Strength in the Asia Pacific Region as a Security Dilemma

Security dilemma or the security dilemma is a theoretical idea in international relations developed by thinkers such as Herbert Butterfield, John Herz, and Robert Jervis. Security dilemma theory in the broader spiral model is a strong theory of war and peace and is seen through interaction. According to Herbert Butterfield, security dilemmas can drive countries to war even though neither of them has the belief to harm the other. Butterfield put forward propositions about security dilemmas, first that the main source of security dilemmas is fear, secondly security dilemmas require uncertainty, third security dilemmas arise by accident,

13 *Chapter Six: Asia*, The Military Balance, accessed 21 May 2018, available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/04597222.2017.1271212>

14 Mataka, *Nothing New About Japan's Proactive Contribution to Peace*, page. 24.

15 *The Guidelines for Japan-US Defense Cooperation*, Japan Ministry of Defense, accessed 15 May 2018, available at: http://www.mod.go.jp/e/d_act/anpo/shishin_20150427e.html

16 Odgaard, *The Balance of Power in Asia-Pacific Security*, page 14.

17 Peter Toledo, Classic Realism and the Balance of Power Theory, *Glendon Journal of International Studies*, accessed 16 May 2018, available at: <https://gjis.journals.yorku.ca/index.php/gjis/article/viewFile/35205/31924>

fourth security dilemmas produce tragic results, fifth security dilemmas can be exacerbated by psychological factors,

Japan raises concerns for China over the South China Sea dispute. These concerns could create tension in the South China Sea region and expand confrontation between countries that have claims to the South China Sea area.¹³⁶ Japan participated in the Malabar exercise with India and the United States. One of the Japanese military equipment that was included in the exercise was the Izumo warship. The Izumo warship made stops in four countries before participating in the Malabar exercise and passing through the South China Sea area where tensions are going on in the region. This is in line with Butterfield's proposition regarding security dilemmas, namely that security dilemmas arise by accident.

The route chosen by the Japanese warship Izumo was close to the area being disputed, so there was a perception that the warship was a new threat to parties who did not have the same interests as Japan or one of the countries involved in the dispute. The specifications of the Izumo ship are 248 meters long and 38 meters wide, larger than ships of the same type operating in the Spanish and Italian navies. The ship also has the latest radar system and is capable of carrying around 14 helicopters such as the MCH-101 and SH-60K with anti-submarine warfare equipment.

Japan makes China worry about its security and position in the South China Sea. The Spratly Islands, which have been developed in the form of military escalation by China, are feared to be vulnerable to attack if Japan wants to carry out an attack, as stated by Butterfield's proposition regarding uncertainty in the security dilemma.

According to Jervis, the essence of the security dilemma argument is that increasing security from one country makes other countries feel less secure, not because of a misinterpretation of the impression of hostility, but because of the anarchic nature of international relations. If China perceives Japan is increasing its security by increasing its military capabilities such as "showing off" the strength of its Izumo warship fleet, then there is a security dilemma for China. The Izumo ship is dangerous because it can be said to be a helicopter destroyer and is also a combatant or fighter ship in the largest sea level area operating with the Japanese military.

In addition to the specifications of the Izumo ship, the deployment of the Izumo ship is also a new thing for the Japanese Navy (Japan Maritime Self Defense Force) with the aim of protecting the assets of its alliance, namely the United States in terms of strengthening security cooperation between the two countries. They have a tendency as a security dilemma for Japan. Japan sees the escalation of military power carried out by China in the South China Sea as something that can threaten security stability in the Asia Pacific region. The South China Sea conflict could turn into a war despite the uncertainty in the security dilemma. According to Butterfield,

The increase in the level of military budgets from countries in the Asia Pacific region also shows that these countries feel insecure about the strengthening of Japan's security and capability, which is known as a country that adheres to the principle of pacifism. Countries in the Asia Pacific region that have increased their military budget from 2014 to 2016 are India, South Korea, China, and Australia.

In 2014, Japan reinterpreted Article 9 of the Japanese constitution with the aim of enabling Japan to carry out collective self-defense and participate in the United Nations (UN) collective security operations. The Japanese Izumo warship in the South China Sea area did not have the aim of carrying out attacks on Chinese military assets in the area which could later cause instability.

In fact, Japan's military strength ranks 7th out of 133 countries in 2017. The total population of Japan is 16,702,133 people with a total military personnel of around 311,875 people. The strength of Japanese aircraft is 1,594 units, which are divided into several types and the most types of aircraft are transport aircraft as many as 481 units. Japan's naval assets amounted to 131 with the largest type of destroyer (destroyer) as many as 42 units. The most common types of assets from the Japanese army are armored fighting vehicles with 2,850 units and battle tanks with 700 units.

Although the number of Japanese aircraft is counted, Japan is more focused on the development of its military strength in Japanese naval assets (Maritime Japan Defense Force). This was done because in the Asia Pacific region there are territorial conflicts related to marine areas such as the South China Sea dispute, Dokdo Island, and also the Senkaku islands.

The security dilemma according to Herz is described as a "structural idea" where a country makes efforts to maintain its country's security needs. Regardless of the intentions, these efforts trigger discomfort for other countries, especially those around them.

According to Nick Wheeler and Ken Booth, a country's military preparation can create a security dilemma so that uncertainty arises in the views generated by the other party whether it is only for defense purposes or is aimed at weakening the security of the other party.

Territorial conflicts in the South China Sea escalated after China continued to build military facilities, namely missile shelters and radar communication facilities at Fiery Cross, Mischief, and Subi reefs in the Spratly archipelago. This military preparation makes security stability in the region threatened because the facility can be used at any time by China through an aggressive attitude towards other countries.

In addition, the development of North Korea's nuclear power is also a form of military preparation. The nuclear capability of the Hwasong-13 and Hwasong-14 is more than 10,000 Km. North Korea seems to have a goal of weakening security for countries in the Asian region, especially when North Korea conducted a nuclear test fired from

Sunan through Japan and landed in North Korea. Pacific Ocean 2,200 km east of the Cape Erimo region, Japan.

D. CONCLUSION

Japan revised its pacifist constitution which allowed Japan to increase its military capabilities. The revision was a reinterpretation of Article 9 of the Japanese constitution. Increasing Japan's military capability is needed to strengthen Japan's defense from threats. In addition to threats, Japan also wants more contributions to the United States which is its alliance by implementing Collective Self Defense such as helping the United States in a war and easing the burden of the United States in protecting Japan or the United States alliance when it gets attacked from other countries. Japan has developed this military capability through the 2014 National Defense Program Guidelines (NDPG) and the 2014-2018 Medium Term Defense Program. The reinterpretation of the pacifist constitution made Japan expand its role in the Asia Pacific region. Tensions in the South China Sea conflict are one reason for the expansion. The importance of the South China Sea area requires Japan to take part in providing support. Japan provides assistance to countries in dispute with China in the South China Sea conflict. Such assistance is the provision of patrol boats to Vietnam and the Philippines. Moreover, China's aggressiveness in dealing with countries that are not in line with its interests and the development of offensive weapons have caused concern in the region. The importance of the South China Sea area requires Japan to take part in providing support. Japan provides assistance to countries in dispute with China in the South China Sea conflict. Such assistance is the provision of patrol boats to Vietnam and the Philippines. Moreover, China's aggressiveness in dealing with countries that are not in line with its interests and the development of offensive weapons have caused concern in the region. The importance of the South China Sea area requires Japan to take part in providing support. Japan provides assistance to countries in dispute with China in the South China Sea conflict. Such assistance is the provision of patrol boats to Vietnam and the Philippines. Moreover, China's aggressiveness in dealing with countries that are not in line with its interests and the development of offensive weapons have caused concern in the region.

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