

## Japan's Balanced Strategy to Face China's Threat in South China Sea Dispute

---

*Received: 5<sup>th</sup> June 2020; Revised: 21<sup>th</sup> October 2020;*

*Accepted: 25<sup>th</sup> October 2020; Available online: 30<sup>th</sup> October 2020*

---

**Arief Bakhtiar Darmawan**

Department of International Relations, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences,  
Universitas Jenderal Soedirman, Jl. Prof. Dr. H. R. Boenyamin 993, Purwokerto, 53122,  
Indonesia

### **Abstract**

*This paper aims to analyze Japan's foreign policy related to the dispute in the South China Sea (SCS). Even though Japan has no sovereignty claims, it has considerable interests in the SCS region. Japan, which is poor in natural resources, depends on energy imports, most of which are shipped through SCS. As an advanced industrial state, Japan must continue to meet domestic energy demand. However, the SCS area has a potential conflict due to Chinese assertive behavior as the main factor that could threaten Japanese interests. The author use qualitative method with relevant literature studies and official government documentation to conduct a descriptive analysis of the research findings. The results of the study indicate that Japan is implementing a balanced strategy to deal with the potential threat of China. Balancing against threats is conducted in internal ways, e.g. internal reinforcement, and external ways, e.g. forming and strengthening cooperation with other countries outside the United States (US). Since Japan's limitations in military aspect hindered their internal reinforcement, this study emphasizes Japan's external balance strategy. The increasingly dubious US commitment in the Asia Pacific has made Japan strengthen defense cooperation with Southeast Asian countries such as Indonesia, the Philippines and Vietnam. The three countries have interest in SCS and provide access that conforms to Japanese interests.*

**Keywords:** *Balance of Threat; Energy Security; Foreign Policy; Japan; South China Sea Dispute*

---

**How to Cite:** Darmawan, A. B. (2020). Japan's Balanced Strategy to Face China's Threat in South China Sea Dispute. *Jurnal Ilmu Sosial*, 19 (2): 137-160 (doi: 10.14710/jis.19.2.2020.137-159), [Online]

**Permalink/DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.14710/jis.19.2.2020.137-159>

**Corresponding Author:** [arief.darmawan@unsoed.ac.id](mailto:arief.darmawan@unsoed.ac.id) (Arief Bakhtiar Darmawan)

---

## INTRODUCTION

Japan is one of the countries that have considerable interest in the dispute of the South China Sea (SCS), although not involved in the direct claim and sovereignty issues in SCS from the beginning. Japan's interest in the SCS issue is related to energy. Despite a renowned industrial country, Japan is considered lacking natural resources. Therefore, to fulfill domestic demands, Japan places a great interest in energy import. Japan is one of the four biggest oil exporters in the Asia Pacific, together with China, India, dan South Korea (OPEC, 2017: 55). To date, most energy import is dispatched to Japan through the SCS trade route. The anti-piracy operation to secure oil imports engages Japanese battleships in a regular patrol along the SCS route and lies at anchor in Singapore (Drifte, 2016: 4). Accordingly, regional stability and security in SCS play a vital role in the sustainable import of natural resources to Japan.

Despite its strength in the economic sector, Japan is weak in the military field due to the prohibition to build an army. Being the defeated country in World War II, Japan was subjected to an accord with the US to adopt Article 9 of the Constitution that prohibits Japan from declaring war to address international disputes and building an army that potentially joins wars. Alternatively, Japan is allowed to develop self-defense forces and granted security guarantees from the US. The constitution came into effect on May 3, 1947, until today. Although the Japanese military budget is among the top ten countries (\$47,6 trillion or 0,93% of the total 2019 GDP), Japan finds it difficult to defend its interests in the SCS region (Duffin, 2020; Trading Economics, 2020). Therefore, Declan Hayes (2013: 24) named Japan as "*The Toothless Tiger*" When other countries in East Asia (China and South Korea) keep building their offensive military forces, Japan can only construct self-defense forces. As the defeated country in the war, Japan obtains security guarantees from the US military base in Okinawa to balance the military power of China. Additionally, the Japanese' delicate geopolitics is an easy target for nuclear missiles from the US, Rusia, or China.

Accordingly, Japan must formulate independent strategies unaided by the US forces. Although perceived as the world's largest military force, the US military is often challenged by contemporary security. For instance, the US had to launch excessive military forces, i.e., 75% tactical fighter aircraft, over 40% modern tanks, and almost 50% navy personnel only to defeat Saddam Husein in Iraq (Hayes, 2013: 32).

It is by all means not comparable to international acclaim that the US is a global hegemony. The crisis in the SCS region may indirectly lead to war, and the US security commitment for

Asia under the administration of Donald Trump is seemingly dubious. Additionally, President Trump hardly spoke about Southeast Asia and SCS (Poling, 2018: 86). He even failed to attend crucial multilateral meetings in the SCS region, such as the *East Asia Summit* (EAS) dan *Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation* (APEC).

Studies on Japan's strategies to deal with China are mostly non-comprehensive. Previous research on Japan's strategies regarding SCS issues tends to focus on economic diplomacy and formal institutions. Tomotaka Shoji (2014) shows that since 2010, Japan exercises more proactive approaches to address SCS issues. In September 2010, a Chinese ship intentionally crashed into Japanese Coast Guard patrol boats in Senkaku, which escalated tension. Since then, Japan realized that they have to remain vigilant for Chinese assertive behavior in the SCS region. His view is supported by Hidetaka Yoshimatsu (2017) that Japan attempted to accomplish its strategic-political objectives through the economy and formal institutions. Regarding the economy, the *Official Development Assistance* (ODA) granted to the Southeast Asia countries is a Japanese diplomatic tool to build a closer relationship with countries in the regional SCS. According to Zulkifli & Forbes (2016), Japan's economic force is the key factor to face the rise of China. In terms of a formal institution, Japan is actively promoting maritime cooperations and security in *ASEAN Regional Forum* (ARF) or EAS. Yoshimatsu's analysis of Japan's strategy through formal institutions is in line with Reinhard Drifte (2016) in *Japan's policy towards the South China Sea – Applying "Proactive Peace Diplomacy?"* which highlights Japan's relentless effort to bring SCS issues into light in G-7, G-20 or APEC forums.

Other researchers managed to connect Japan's strategy with defense and security. Christopher W. Hughes (2016) stated that Japan used to contain itself to the rise of China. However, China's aggressive behavior in SCS started to bother Japan. Consequently, Japan shifted its policy to more proactive measures in balancing forces in the region. Japan's *National Defense Program Guideline* Japan in 2013 mentioned that Chinese maritime activities have been the concerns of global and regional security. Ulupi Borah (2020) explains that it is rather difficult to predict Japan's shifting security culture. Borah concludes that Japan encourages SCS disputes to be addressed with peaceful measures and improves the offensive capability.

There are at least two aspects that we need to scrutinize while observing the analysis. First, the current study focuses on Japan's diplomatic strategies and economic measures, such as aids and supports for other countries to join forces to face Chinese political approaches in SCS. Previous studies also reported Japan's internal efforts to improve defense capability, such as updating the remote missiles and innovations in defense capability to face SCS disputes. The

novelty in this research is analyzing Japan's external efforts, despite the non-existent military forces, to encourage defense cooperation. Secondly, studies that focus on Japan's effort to develop domestic renewable energy are limited. Japan's measures to encourage the increased production of renewable energy are often perceived as merely an approach to detach themselves from nuclear power dependency. Apart from external threats, the internal analysis of these issues is the key to understand Japan's strategy more comprehensively. The author managed to contribute novelty by bridging the measures for developing renewable energy as part of Japan's strategy to prepare the worst scenario in SCS.

The author used the *energy security* concept to observe Japan's primary interest in the SCS issue. The import shipping routes of the previous resources for domestic demands and the stability of security in the routes are the driving force of Japanese foreign policy. Experts are divided over the definition of energy security. The first definition perceives energy security as the low risk of damage to energy supply (DECC UK, 2009). The second definition attempts to tell between safe and unsafe from the sustainability viewpoint, namely the supply energy is available to meet the desired demands (IEA, 2001). The third definition regards it from its effects on price, sustainability, and economic welfare (Noel & Findlater, 2010; Bohi, Toman, & Walls, 1996). To some extent, energy security is perceived by the policymakers as a protection to the economically-challenged group of people from the fluctuating energy price. Similarly, some countries regard energy security in the context of economic protection against any entities that potentially threaten the availability of energy.

From these definitions, the author elaborates on energy security as the secure availability of energy with affordable prices for the domestic community, economy, and industry sustainability. The availability is related to the security of the routes for energy supply because when the shipping route is detained, it may cause energy scarcity and render a higher price for the community and industry. This definition is relevant to Japan's context as one of the weakest countries in energy security (Toyoda, 2012). Japan is a country with limited natural resources and highly dependent on energy imports (METI Japan, 2018: 4). The energy import uses sea routes that rely on the stable security and transportation routes in SCS .

Additionally, the author engages *balancing* and *balance of threat* as the subtle knife to dissect Japan's foreign policy regarding the SCS issues. In this case, the so-called 'threat' to the shipping routes and stability in SCS is China's assertive behavior. Meanwhile, the analyzed balancing strategies include internal and external balancing. The theory of *balancing* and *balance of threat* is closely related to the realistic perspective that perceives international situation under an

anarchy condition. As such, a weak country cannot be definite that other countries would not exercise their superior power to impose harm to them. When the harm from the strong country becomes more imminent and obvious, the weak country would reinforce their military capability, form an alliance, or co-create military development with the allies for balancing power. Accordingly, the balancing theory focuses on distributing material capability, such as population, economy, natural resources, military forces. The theory managed to predict that countries would exercise balancing strategi to defeat strong countries with enormous material capability (Walt, 2002: 124).

However, the existence of superpower countries is not sufficient to encourage a country to perform a balance of threats. Material capability indeed carries a potential threat to other countries, but the extent of the threat from a country cannot emerge solely from the power distribution. The other contributing factors include geographic close distance, offensive power, and the intent of a strong country to exercise aggression (Watson, 2002: 9-10). The intensified either factor would encourage a country to initiate a self-defense measure. To face such a threat, the balance of threats argues that countries form alliances or cooperation with other countries to balance power with the countries that impose offensive and aggressive forces (Walt, 2002: 133). A country may take either of two options in the balancing. First, internal balancing, in which a country would reinforce its resources. Second, external balancing is when a country allies with other forces or countries (Tziampiris, 2015: 28). According to Mearsheimer (2001: 148), any measures taken are strongly influenced by a particular international system.

Based on the background, this study aims to answer the research questions on how Japan's foreign policy address the SCS disputes, and why Japan needs to depart from the US security dependency. The author argues there are at least two amendments in international politics in SCS that encourage Japan to modify its foreign policy. First, Japan needs to conduct a balancing effort (internally and externally) to China's aggressive economy. Secondly, Japan needs to carry out other strategies because the US influence that once promoted 'Pivot Asia' has started to decline, such as forming a security alliance with other countries in Southeast Asia.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This study used a descriptive qualitative method - an investigative process where the author makes meaning of a phenomenon or situation by analyzing the corresponding issue. In a qualitative method, the author conducts a two-step analysis. The first is a literature study that refers to a hypothetical observation of the development that occurs in the field by analyzing journal articles or other forms of scientific publication. Secondly, document analysis collects data related

to Japan's security and energy strategy and factors related to China that is perceived as a threat to Japan's interest in SCS, particularly data in the past ten years. The sources included books, scientific articles, Japanese government documents, and other valid sources, such as news and research papers relevant to the research issues.

Applying this method, the author conducted the three discussion analysis. To begin with, they explained the theoretical framework of *energy security* and *the balance of threats*. Next, performing data validation and building energy security concept on Japan's energy security and its relation to the SCS issues from Japanese government documents and other valid sources. And the third, analyzing the approaching threats from China and Japan's strategies to address the threats in line with the theory of balance of threat.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **The Interests of Japan in Energy Security**

In 1951 Japan signed the Treaty of San Francisco as the defeat of the war. Since then, Japan handed over the sovereignty claim over the SCS region they used to rule during the Pacific War. Post World War II, Japan focus on rebuilding the economy and diplomacy with neighboring countries. To reconnect the international relations in the region and to restore the relationship post-war, Japan managed to provide economic support in form of ODA. Japan no longer plays a role as a country with strong military forces, but a strong economy. Besides, Japan no longer has particular interests in the SCS region.

Towards the 21st century, the situations in the region are strategically changed, due mainly to the economic and military development in China and India. Accordingly, Japan amends its foreign policies towards SCS. Japan let go of the ambition to be a 'respected' country in the international community. Instead, they place higher importance on the security in SCS, including how to face the rise of China and their assertive behavior in the sea (Shoji, 2014: 130-131). Japan is concerned about two issues regarding China. First, Japan's sovereignty over Senkaku island in ECS is directly bordered by China. China ships have continuously entered Senkaku waters to disrupt Japan's sovereignty claim. The second concern is the freedom of navigation in SCS. SCS region is the routes of Japan import of oil and coal; therefore, SCS plays a vital role in Japan energy Security. Lastly, Japan has considerable interest in the natural resources in SCS, such as oil, natural gas, and fish. Some Japanese companies involved in oil and natural gas exploration in the disputing region are presented in Figure 1. Japan places

great importance on tapping into additional resources from SCS, mainly due to the prospect, enormous off-shore exploration in the region.



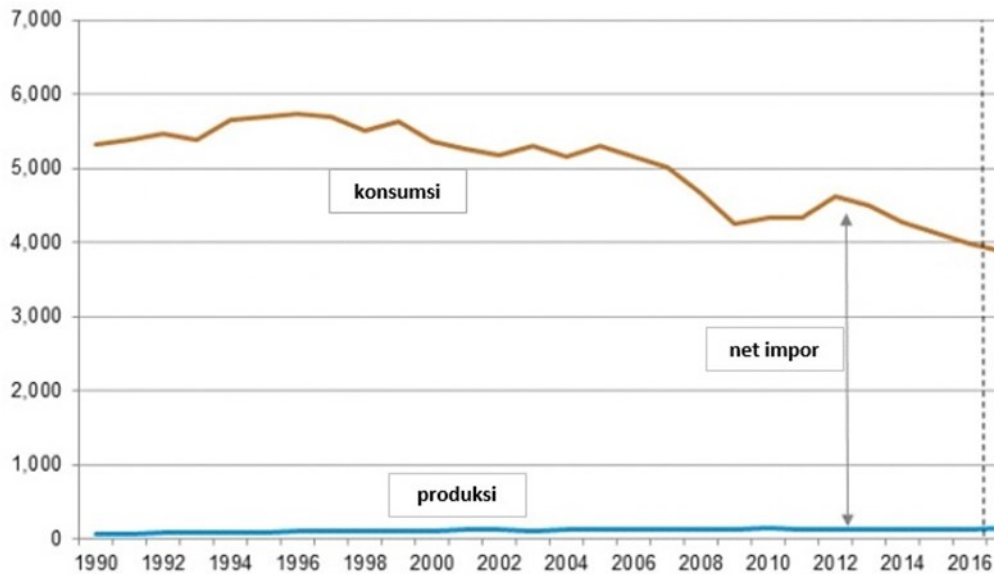
**Figure 1.** The Map of Blocks Involving Japanese Oil/Gas company within Chinese claimed regions

*Source: Reinhard Driete (2016: 9)*

Japan is a developed, industrial country but without abundant natural resources. Before terminating the nuclear program after the Fukushima incident, Japan had a domestic energy resource that only fulfilled 20% of the total domestic demand. Since 2012, the production of energy resources in Japan has continued to decline to around 10% of the total national energy demand (U.S. Energy Information Administration, 2017).

Although domestic efficiency has made energy consumption in Japan decline, the gap between domestic supply and demand for energy remains large in Figure 2. To meet energy demand, Japan imports coal and oil. Each year in the last decade, Japan has reduced crude oil imports to decrease dependency (CEIC Data, 2018). In 2008, Japan imported 3.972 bar-

rels/day. In 2018, the number declined to 3.235 barrels/ day. Additionally, Japan provides or exports modern tools in the energy sector and intensive research in energy for other corporates or countries in need.



**Figure 2.** The Comparison of Japan Production and Consumption of oil and other liquid natural resources, 1990-2016 (in thousand of barrels per day)

*Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration (2017)*

Accordingly, Japan’s energy sector managed to survive, especially after the Fukushima incident in 2011 that significantly increased energy resources imports. This issue posed an implication in the trade deficit. For example, Japan suffered a \$116 trillion-deficit in 2014, reported by Buckley & Nicholas (2017: 5) as the first deficit in Japan in 30 years. Previously, Japan succeeded in getting through the oil crisis in the 1970s with a high technology and efficiency experience in the environment and energy sector (Chong, 2010: 18). Today, Japan needs a new strategy to overcome this issue.

Considering the importance of safe routes and a stable energy supply, Japan solemnly responds to China’s behavior in the SCS dispute (Drifte, 2016: 7). First, Japan incorporated the photos of China's reclamation over Johnson Reef and Subi in the Japanese Defense White Paper 2015. Then, Prime Minister Shizo Abe relentlessly emphasized the Japanese three principles in understanding the laws and regulations in SCS: the territorial claim must in line with international laws, refrain from using military forces or coercive measures in defending the claims, and the stakeholders involved in the claims must address the dispute in peaceful manners. Japanese leaders have consistently exercised genuine efforts to the territorial dispute with China (Cáceres,



2014: 65). Third, Japan supported the arbitration of the Philippines over China's claim in the international tribunal.

Based on the exposition above, it is clear that Japan has vital interests to protect with proper forces and strategy. In the next section, the author explains how the Rise of China grows into a threat to Japan's interests. The answer to this question becomes the foundation of the main analysis, namely Japan's strategy corresponds to the development of China. Here the author observes that the rise of China is not the ultimate factor to China's threat.

### **The Sources of Threat from China**

Regarding the theory of balance of threat, strong countries are not necessarily a threat. Similarly, China has been growing into a strong country in the Asia Pacific in the past two decades. The author analyzed how China becomes a threat to Japan's interests regarding the SCS issue using the concept of threat by Stephen Walt (2002), namely power, geographical proximity, offensive forces, and intent of aggressive behavior.

*First, the power of China.* The power of China is the combination of economic growth that surpasses the global average and military modernization over the past decade. China's budget of military spending is linear to economic growth (Tian et al., 2019). Approaching the new century, China experienced a two-digit growth in their economy for five years, from 10% in 2003 to 14,2% in 2007 (World Bank, 2019a). Despite the fluctuations and delays, the economy of China remains above the global average. In 2018, economic growth in China reached 6,6% and the average growth globally was only 3%. China maintains progressive economic growth by initiating a big project *Belt & Road Initiative* (BRI). The project managed to construct new trade routes to optimize connectivity and accelerate the trading rate to and from China and into Europe and Africa (Prakoso, Murtyantoro, Cahyani, 2019: 83).

In addition to the economic sector, China remains a strong military force in the globe. In 2018, China among the US, Saudi Arabia, India, and France was the country with the highest military spending. China was estimated to allocate \$250 trillion for the military budget in 2018. It was 5% higher than in 2017 and increased by 83% in 2009. (SIPRI, 2019). Among 15 countries with the highest military expenditure, China places the first ranking of the highest increase in the budget over the past decade, followed by Turkey (Tian, et al., 2019: 3). China's military spending is far beyond that of other Southeast Asia countries in the same year, such as Singapore (\$11,2 trillion) or Indonesia (up to \$7,5 trillion), as the first and second biggest military expendi-

ture (World Bank, 2019b; World Bank, 2019c). After years of importing weapons, China became an exporter of conventional weapons in 2013 and continues until 2017. Data from 2008 to 2017 show that China's export value reached \$14,4 trillion. Weapon sales increased from \$650 million in 2008 to \$1,13 trillion (China Power Team, 2018). With this regard, China places the 5th biggest global supplier of conventional weapons after the US, Russia, France, and Germany.

*Second, geographical proximity.* Regarding geographical proximity, Japan is directly bordered by China. Besides the dispute in SCS issues, Japan is involved in a territorial dispute with China in the Senkaku Islands/Diaoyu in the south of Japan and the East China Sea (ECS). In this region, China defends its interest to expand the fishing resources and oil exploration (Lee & Ming, 2012: 2; Smith, 2012: 380). Therefore, sharing maritime borders with China is a challenge to Japan's foreign policy. Japan needs stability in the ECS and SCS because these are the main routes for China's import. Meanwhile, China built a port in Gwadar, Pakistan to overcome the delicate issues of sharing two routes, as well as establishing an alternative land route from the Indian Ocean to the mainland of China in the future.

*Third, offensive forces.* The offensive forces may refer to a specific military capability, such as a remote weapon system, or political capacity, like a propaganda campaign that potentially creates political instability in the region. In the Chinese context, political ideas like communism are no longer a threat to regional stability. Since the end of the Cold War, the spread of communism propaganda is considered finish. In their cooperation with other countries, China no longer scrutinizes the countries' choice of politics or ideology. Therefore, China leans its offensive power on military forces, especially military modernization. In the military, China is one of five countries with the highest military spending in the world (SIPRI, 2019). Navy reinforcement becomes the national strategic priority of China to build maritime forces mentioned by President Hu Jintao in 2012. The statement was emphasized through China's 2015 Defense White Paper that highlighted military forces with national sovereignty in the sea (People's Daily, 2015). The shifting military orientation from "coastal defense" to "offshore defense" makes China, especially the *People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN)*, commit modernization, such as producing long-range ballistic missiles and submarines equipped with ballistic missiles and anti-detection, building a mothership to transport battleships, and developing battleship explorer that can go up to 1.200 km.

*Fourth, the intent of aggressive behavior.* China's aggressive behavior in SCS is a crucial factor that makes Japan take precautions against China's development. According to CSIS data, there have been 70 major incidents in SCS from 2010 through 2016. At least one Chinese ship

was involved in 73% of the incidents (China Power Team, 2016). China's aggressive behavior in SCS includes the terror of patrol boats, arrest and expel of seamen with bullet shootings, and disconnection of the seismic survey cables that belong to other countries. In SCS, China even dared to clash with the US. On April 1, 2001, two Chinese military aircraft were shadowing the US military aircraft and forcing them to land on Hainan Island. China captured 24 people and released them only on April 11, 2011. In 2009, Chinese boats carried out some maneuvers to expel the USNS *Impeccable* that was on a regular patrol in the international waters.

These four factors are the reason for Japan's immediate actions to protect their interests in SCS. According to the theory of *balance of threat*, a country tends to seek a balancing when another country seems to carry an intent to act aggressively. Aggressive behavior is unacceptable. An effort to address aggressive behavior is by forming a strong coalition to stop, or at least balance, the extent of aggression. It is what Japan is trying to do.

### **Balancing Strategy in Japan Foreign Policy**

Countries with great power generally seem more threatening than other countries because the latter cannot be certain of how the former will harness their capability. It is apparent from the rise of China. China starts to materialize its desires as "the Middle Kingdom" in Asia, referring to the previous historical era (Hayes, 2013: 30). To prepare for the glory, China hastily built the military forces. At the same time, Japan and China are the biggest importers of oil in Asia Pacific. These two countries are obliged to manage domestic energy security. OPEC (2017: 55) mentioned that crude oil demand in Asia is steadily increasing and will remain the future trend. On the other hand, Japan cannot do much about China's development (Hayes, 2013: 25). As the political map in Asia is changing, Japan needs to adjust its policy by reducing dependency on the US. The situation has changed, and Japan needs to make some changes. More specifically, the fundamental question Japan is facing is how to respond to China's assertive behavior in SCS (Darmawan, 2018: 100-102).

When facing the perceived threatening countries, the balance of threat theory proposes some likely options. The weak countries usually prefer alliance to the balancing strategy for the sake of their security. Such as it is, vulnerable countries would not take too much risk that potentially destroys their countries. Countries with equal power to Japan choose the balancing strategy to face the threats. For these countries, bandwagoning is too risky because both countries have an enduring, historical trauma that potentially escalates the regional tension. According to a survey by Pew Research Center (2018), only 13% (in 2017) and 17% (in 2018)

of Japanese respondents possess a positive perception of China. It is the reason for to trust-deficit between China and Japan. Accordingly, the author observed that Japan managed to carry out both internal balancing and external balancing.

### *Internal Balancing*

Japan reinforces its defense by looking for alternatives to boost domestic energy resources through renewable energy projects. The ratio of oil reserve to production in the Asia Pacific is only 18 years, while Saudi Arabia is 104 years (Hayes, 2013: 41). Japan has been attempting to harness combined nuclear, thermal, and renewable energy (Hughes, 2018: 63). Following the Fukushima nuclear incident, Japan closed all the nuclear reactors that previously supplied around 25% of electric power in the country before the inc. Since then, Japan has shifted gears and relied on importing fossil fuels. As a result, dependency on fossil fuels increased by over 80% of the total electrical power. Furthermore, it changed the surplus in Japan's trading balance in the past 30 years to a deficit of \$116 trillion in 2014 (Buckley & Nicholas, 2017: 5).

In the energy sector, Japan carried out balancing by improving the production of renewable energy. In 2014, Japan adopted the Strategic Energy Policies, targetting 70% self-sustained energy supply and a 70% decline in emission ratio in 2030. The document is a strategy to address Japan's vulnerability in the large-scale import of fossil fuels. In 2015, the Japanese government issued another important document – the Long-term Energy Supply and Demand Outlook. Japan emphasized the importance of renewable energy to reduce dependency on oil and gas imports. As a long-term projection, the Japanese government would boost renewable energy supply up to 22-24% of total Japanese energy in Table 1. Although not entirely substituting the demand for oil and gas, the balancing energy strategy would help Japan when the SCS region faces turbulence that disrupts Japan's crude oil supply.

**Table 1. Japan Long-Term Strategy of Energy Supply**

Sources	Sources in 2030	% in 2030
Renewable	Geothermal	1,0-1,1%
	Biomass	3,7-4,6%
	Wind	1,7%
	Solar	7%
	Hydro	8,8-9,2%
Total		22%-24%
Thermal	Gas	27%
	Coal	26%
	Oil	3%
Total		56%
	Nuclear	20-22%

*Source: Reprocessed Data from the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry Japan, 2015*

Concerning defense expenditure, Japan is a world country with the highest military spending despite not having any army. In 2017, Japan was 8th in the ranking of the highest defense expenditure and down to 9th in 2018 (Tian et al., 2019: 2). The budget takes 1% of the total Japan GDP and only one-fifth of China's total military expenditures. Despite the seemingly stagnant military spending, Japan also modifies the defense guidance and creates innovation to military capability as part of defense forces. In 2004, Japan composed the *National Defence Program Guidelines* and stated that Japan National Defence Forces must change the course of capacity in response to scenarios, such as ballistic missile attacks, invasions to the outermost islands as well as the violation of Japan sovereignty over territorial air space and waters. This statement is indirectly referring to China's military activity in either ECS or SCS. The Japan Defence Program Guidelines of 2010 and 2013 stated that military modernization and the intensification of China's maritime and air force were the main concerns of regional and global security (Hughes, 2016: 144). With this regard, Japan started to improve its technology and capability of defense personnel and equipment. Additionally, Japan relocated military assets to the south as self-defense against China's growing maritime forces. Japan increased the number of destroyers and battle-

ships that could carry up to 14 attack helicopters (Hughes, 2016: 145).

In March 2018, Japan built amphibious forces of 3.000 personnel trained by the US Navy. This force is part of Japan's defense forces that focus on launching the army ground force (Brown, 2018). Although not comparable to the capacity of the Chinese Navy, it is Japan's positive efforts to protect the small islands within the disputed borders with China. Additionally, in December 2018, Japan bought a large quantity of self-defense equipment. Japanese government-initiated five-year defense plan worth \$240 trillion includes purchasing the F-35 Stealth Fighter from the US. It is the embodiment of the statement from Japan Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to US President Donald Trump in September 2018 that Japan would allocate a defense budget to purchase aircraft from the US. Accordingly, the purchase made Japan the largest stakeholder outside the US that ordered the stealth fighter from Lockheed Martin (Steger, 2018). Besides, Japan reinforces its defense with the anti-missile radar system Aegis Ashore worth \$1,2 trillion (Cameron-Moore & Tait, 2018).

### *External Balancing*

In response to the changing situations in the region, Japan carried out two strategic amendments to its foreign policies. *First, Japan shifted from high dependency on the US to proactive multilateral cooperation.* After the Pacific War, the bilateral treaties between the US allies stay connected to the US. This system resembles a wheel where the US is the axis, and the other countries are the spokes. The structure of the axis and the spokes optimize the dependency of countries like Japan, Korea, South Vietnam, Taiwan, and others on the US (Hayes, 2013: 127). In the long run, the structure would eternalize the US hegemony in the Asia Pacific. However, in the past two decades, the US could no longer serve as the balancing power to China in the region (Hayes, 2013: 31). The US only contributed insignificant action to terminate China's aggression in both ECS or SCS. The current US development contributes to this issue. The newly appointed President, Donald Trump was selected as the domestic populist figure, and his priority of foreign policy placed importance on the Middle East, Russia, and China. Trump hardly raised the issues in Southeast Asia and SCS, and there is a seemingly small chance that Southeast Asia and SCS issues would be the focus of the US foreign politics (Poling, 2018: 99). After declaring his termination from the *Trans-Pacific Partnership* (TPP) in 2017, President Donald Trump failed to attend the EAS and APEC meetings in 2018. It shows that Trump was not bound to the US foreign commitment to Southeast Asia, ASEAN, and APEC (Storey & Cook, 2018: 2). Therefore, Japan started to doubt the US commitment to contribute to the Asia Pacific under the Trump administration.

Previous studies investigated Japan's proactive steps in the multilateral forum and remain close to the US (Yoshimatsu, 2017). Yoshimatsu (2017: 309) stated that Japan believed in the urgency of extending the membership of the ASEAN Maritime Forum (AMF), hoping that the US would partake as a member. However, ASEAN dismissed this suggestion. In 2014, Japan and the US made a joint statement to support ASEAN as a regional economic community and EAS as the main political and security forum in the region. Similarly, Shoji (2014) perceived that Japan would find it difficult to escape from the US influence in the region, considering Japan's diminishing authority in the Asia Pacific. However, the present study showed that the development in the SCS region inspired Japan to detach dependency on the US. Japan must be prepared when the US 7th Navy leave the Asia Pacific. Therefore, to solve the issue, Japan reinforces its alliance with potential countries in the regions, especially Southeast Asia. Japan and Southeast Asian countries share precautions against the US influence and China's emerging behavior. A survey by ASEAN Studies Center ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute to 1000 experts, analysts, and entrepreneurs reported that 68% of the respondents were doubtful of the US role in the security stability of Southeast Asia. Also, only 8.9% of the respondents perceived China as a "benign and benevolent power". China has become a big, untrusted country above the US, so said 51% of the respondents (McDermid, 2019).

To emphasize the multilateral strategy, Japan managed to prioritize economic integration. First, Japan attempted to initiate and promote the integration of Asia-Pacific through the *Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership*, known as TPP 11. Then, Japan brought issues of economic integration in regional East Asia through the *Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership* (RCEP). These strategies managed to build an integrated region through the ASEAN countries by encouraging ASEAN centrality. Japan apparently tried to adopt the Indo-Pacific strategy to balance the influential rise of China in the economic and political sectors in the SCS region (Oba, 2018).

*Secondly, Japan focuses on economic support in Southeast Asia and cooperation in the energy and defense sectors.* Japan's foreign policy post-World War II focuses on the economy. The policy known as The Yoshida Doctrine has three main targets (Edtsröm, 2011: 12-13). First, Japan's primary national goal is economic rehabilitation. Secondly, Japan must prevent involvement in strategic, international political issues. Thirdly, to obtain long-term security guarantees, Japan would provide a military basis for the US forces. After Japan's defeat in World War II, The Yoshida Doctrine has successfully made Japan a big country. Since Japan only grew significantly from the economic sector and without military forces, Japan is often called the "unbalanced great power" (Edtsröm, 2011: 15). Harnessing its economic power, Japan manages

The previous studies by Hughes (2016), Shoji (2014), and Borah (2020) only discussed Japan's collaboration with the Southeast Asian countries or the multilateral forum in East Asia. Hughes (2016: 149) argued that the country outside Southeast Asia that Japan must engage to address the SCS issue in the US. This study is confirmed by Shoji (2014: 131-132) and Borah (2020: 15-19) that discussed Japan's multilateral cooperation with Southeast Asia and the US. In fact, in the past decades, China not only strengthens its position in East Asia but also emerges as the new global superpower. Accordingly, it is crucial to observe Japan's effort with countries outside the region regarding the cooperation in energy and defense sectors proven crucial in the balance of power.

In the present study, Japan collaborates with India and five ex-Soviet countries in Central Asia to secure natural resources supply. In 2012, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe complimented the Indian Government for approving the collaborative treaty in the energy sector. India is ready to provide the raw materials as the main component for the manufacturing process (Abe, 2012). In May 2013, Abe returned to India to discuss the collaborative defense sector and agreed to joint regular military practice (Prestowitz, 2015: 66). In 2015, Shinzo Abe was the first Japanese Prime Minister to visit five countries in Central Asia, namely Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Kazakhstan. During his visit, Japan provided economic aid and loans for the democratic consolidation and the construction of nuclear and gas plants in the region. Furthermore, in 2013 and 2015, Abe visited Mongolia, a country rich with natural resources (Hughes, 2016: 141). Japan's dependency on oil and gas from the Middle East has reinforced their bilateral cooperation. For example, in 2007, the Japanese Government represented by Shinzo Abe visited Saudi Arabia (for the first time in the past four years), Qatar (first time in 29 years), and Kuwait (inaugural visit). In Africa, Japan multiplied its ODA support in 2012 and visited several countries with potential energy resources.

Additionally, Japan builds defense cooperation with Indonesia, Vietnam, the Philippines, India, and Australia to balance China's power in the SCS. Indonesia, Vietnam, and the Philippines are the main partners of Japan's security cooperation in Southeast Asia (Pajon, 2013: 18). Japan signed "*strategic partnerships*" with Indonesia in 2006, Vietnam in 2010, and Filipina in 2011. Japan and Indonesia are historically cooperating in the defense sector. Japan helps Indonesia increase its maritime capability to overcome maritime piracy. Despite the overlapping claims with China over Natuna, Indonesia perceives itself not as the party who claim sovereignty in SCS (Ramadhani, 2016: 86). Japan always supports Indonesia in workshops for SCS to end the dispute since 1990. Therefore, when Indonesia eased its effort in SCS issues, Japan was disappointed.



In 2016, the representation of the Japanese Ambassador for Indonesia, Kozo Honsei, perceived Indonesia as overly quiet in the SCS issue. Kozo highlighted the speech of Indonesia Minister of Foreign Affairs, Retno Marsudi that only mentioned that Natuna belongs to Indonesia. Kozo expected a more decisive statement than that (Wahyuni, 2016). In contrast, in the era of Marty Natalegawa as the former Indonesia Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Fumio Kishida, Japan Ministry of Foreign Affairs praised Indonesia's neutral but loud assertiveness for opposing the use of weapons in SCS (Muhaimin, 2014).

Besides Indonesia, Japan has a close relation to the Philippines – a country directly involved with the sovereignty claim in SCS and opposing China's existence in the SCS region. In July 2013, Japan visited the Philippines and offered ten patrol boats to help guard around SCS (Prestowitz, 2015: 66). Although the Philippines President Duterte stated that China is the “partner” of the Philippines, he emphasized that China remains a threat. In internal affairs, the Philippines always engaged the coastal patrol forces and the Navy in any off-shore activity, such as the exploration of natural resources and seismic tests. In external affairs, the Philippines has always encouraged ASEAN to exercise assertiveness with China and to protest China for its aggressive behaviors in the seas. In September 2011, Japan and the Philippines agreed to carry out a joint maritime practice and maritime defense consultation (Pajon, 2013: 19). In 2017, Duterte said that the relationship between Japan and the Philippines almost reached the “golden age” (Galang, 2017). The strong partnership between Japan and the Philippines is evident from the alliance context with the US.

Although the Japan-Vietnam partnership is not as strategic as Japan with Indonesia and the Philippines, the bilateral cooperation shows progress in the past few years. In October 2011, Japan and Vietnam signed a Memorandum of Understanding to promote defense cooperation. China regards Vietnam as the most aggressive country in ASEAN (Lee, 1991: 157). Vietnam improves its military function and open access to the maritime base in Cam Ranh Bay to address China's aggressive behavior. In August 2018, Japan's navy ship, *Kuroshio* sailed to Cam Ranh Bay. In September 2018, the Japan Minister of Defence announced that *Kuroshio*, together with a helicopter carrier *Kaga* and two destroyers *Inazuma* and *Suzutsuki* partook in the military practice in SCS. Although the location was not specified in detail, it was the first time Japanese defense forces announced a military exercise in SCS (Zhou, 2018).

In May 2012, Japan and Australia signed the *Information Security Agreement*, and in April 2014 agreed to partner in cybersecurity and exchange defense technology.

Furthermore, in 2015, Japan participated in the procurement tender of the new Australian ships, promoted by Mitsubishi Heavy Industries and Kawasaki Shipbuilding Ltd. With India, Japan carried out a trilateral discussion with the US and produced a treaty to conduct a joint practice in the sea (Hughes, 2016: 147). Analyzing the strategies above, Japan modified its approach because the old ways are not relevant to face the rise of China in the region. Therefore, Japan carries out two crucial steps regarding foreign policies: traditional security defense (maintain regional stability with the US military) and a diversified security alliance (ease dependency with the US).

## **CONCLUSION**

The current development in the Asia Pacific, especially SCS, has encouraged Japan to adjust its approach to foreign policy regarding SCS. The key situations behind the changing strategies are the uncertain commitment of the US in the Asia Pacific region, also under the Trump administration. Additionally, China's development and behavior concerning the maritime and SCS issues in the past two decades are considered a threat that requires some balancing strategies. Therefore, Japan conducted both internal and external balancing.

In internal balancing, Japan has a limited power to form military personnel or forces. It potentially imposes Japan at risk of becoming an aggressive, dangerous country like it used to. It also made Japan difficult to strengthen the defense with military-related material resources. If Japan seems military aggressive, it must get ready to face pressures from the Southeast Asian countries that may feel threatened. A good relationship that has been built may shatter instantly. Accordingly, Japan's efforts to develop the industry of renewable energy is a smart move to reduce dependency on thermal energy, like oil and gas.

Regarding external balancing, Japan builds a more intense partnership with Asian countries rich in natural resources, especially the Middle East and Africa. In Asia Pacific, besides economic support, Japan also builds defense cooperation to strengthen its alliance to face China's threats. Japan is not entirely turning its back on the US, but be prepared for its future security.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

The author expresses his gratitude to two anonymous *peer-reviewer* for their invaluable feedback to the initial draft of this article, as well as to colleagues in the Laboratory of International Relations, Jenderal Soedirman University as the thinkspace for brainstorming ideas of this manuscript.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abe, S. (2012, 27 Desember). Asia's Democratic Security Diamond [online]. Retrieved from <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/a-strategic-alliance-for-japan-and-india-by-shinzo-abe?barrier=accesspaylog> [Accessed February 20, 2020].
- Bohi, D. R., Toman, M. A., & Walls, M. A. (1996). *The Economics of Energy Security*. Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- Borah, Ulupi. (2020). The South China Sea dispute: Will it impact Japan's security policy?, *Maritime Affairs: Journal of the National Maritime Foundation of India*, 16(1): 6-29 (doi: 10.1080/09733159.2020.1785033), [Online].
- Brown, P. (2018, 20 March). Japan's new 'marines' fill important hole in military capabilities [online]. Asia Times. Retrieved from <https://www.asiatimes.com/2018/03/article/japans-new-marines-fill-important-hole-military-capabilities/> [Accessed February 20, 2020].
- Buckley, T. & Nicholas, S. (2017). *Japan: Greater Energy Security Through Renewables*. Cleveland: Institute for Energy Economic and Financial Analysis.
- Cameron-Moore, S. & Tait, P. (2018, 30 Juli). Japan picks \$1.2 billion Lockheed radar for Aegis Ashore batteries [online]. Reuters. Retrieved from <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-northkorea-usa-japan-aegis/japan-picks-12-billion-lockheed-radar-for-aegis-ashore-batteries-idUSKBN1KK0AV> [Accessed March 15, 2020].
- CEIC Data. (2017). Japan Crude Oil: Imports [online]. Retrieved from <https://www.ceicdata.com/en/indicator/japan/crude-oil-imports> [Accessed April 17, 2020].
- China Power Team. (2018, 26 April). How dominant is China in the global arms trade? China Power [online]. Retrieved from <https://chinapower.csis.org/china-global-arms-trade/> [Accessed April 18, 2020].
- China Power Team. (2016, 18 August). Are maritime law enforcement forces destabilizing Asia? China Power [online]. Retrieved from <https://chinapower.csis.org/maritime-forces-destabilizing-asia/> [Accessed April 18, 2020].
- Chong, Y. (2010). *East Asian Integration and Japan's Regional Policy*. Tokyo: The Japan Forum on International Relations, Inc.
- CNN Indonesia. (2015, 19 March). RI-Jepang Akan Tandatangani Traktat Pertahanan [online]. Retrieved from <https://www.cnnindonesia.com/internasional/20150319164903-106-40383/ri-jepang-akan-tandatangani-traktat-pertahanan> [Accessed February 20, 2020]

- Darmawan, A. B. (2018). Perubahan Perilaku Politik Luar Negeri Tiongkok Terhadap Isu Laut Tiongkok Selatan, *Jurnal Sospol*, 4(2): 85-108 (doi: 10.22219/sospol.v4i2.6220), [Online].
- Department of Energy & Climate Change (DECC) UK. (2009). Energy Markets Outlook [online]. Retrieved from <http://www.officialdocuments.gov.uk/document/hc0910/hc01/0176/0176.pdf> [Accessed April 18, 2020].
- Dossani, R. & Harold, S. W. (2018). *U.S. Policy in Asia—Perspectives for the Future*. Santa Monica: RAND Corporation.
- Drifte, R. (2016). Japan's Policy towards the South China Sea – Applying Proactive Peace Diplomacy? *Peace Research Institute Frankfurt Report*, No. 140.
- Duffin, Erin. (2020, 11 May). Countries with the highest military spending in 2019 [online]. Retrieved from <https://www.statista.com/statistics/262742/countries-with-the-highest-military-spending/> [Accessed October 20, 2020].
- Edtsröm, B. (2011). The Yoshida Doctrine in Unchartered Waters. In Edtsröm (Ed.), *Japan's Foreign Policy in Transition: The Way Forward for Japan as an International Actor In a World in Flux*. Sweden: Institute for Security and Development Policy: hal. 6-20.
- Hayes, D. (2013). *Japan: The Toothless Tiger*, Second Edition. Tokyo: Tuttle Publishing.
- Hughes, C. W. (2016). Japan's 'Resentful Realism' and Balancing China's Rise, *The Chinese Journal of International Politics*, 9(2): 109-150 (doi: 10.1093/cjip/pow004), [Online].
- Hughes, L. (2018). Japan's Radical Incrementalism in Power Market Regulation and Renewable Energy. In Yoshida, P. G. (Ed.), *Japan's Energy Conundrum: A Discussion of Japan's Energy Circumstances and U.S.-Japan Energy Relations*. Washington, D.C.: Sasakawa Peace Foundation USA: hal. 59-68.
- International Energy Agency (IEA). (2001). Towards a Sustainable Energy Future [online]. Retrieved from <http://www.iea.org/textbase/nppdf/free/2000/future2001.pdf> [Accessed April 18, 2020].
- Jakarta Globe. (2017). FM Retno Marsudi on Indonesian Foreign Policy in 2017 [online]. Retrieved from <http://insight.jakartaglobe.id/fm-retno-marsudi-on-2017-foreign-policy/> [Accessed April 18, 2020].
- Lee, I., & Ming, F. (2012). Deconstructing Japan's Claim of Sovereignty over the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands, *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, 10(1): 1-49.

- McDermid, C. (2019, 7 January). Southeast Asia has major doubts about US reliability in the region, but still wary of China: survey [Online]. South China Morning Post. Retrieved from <https://www.scmp.com/news/asia/southeast-asia/article/2180924/southeast-asia-has-major-doubts-about-us-reliability-region> [Accessed May 4, 2020].
- Mearsheimer, J.J. (2001). *The tragedy of great power politics*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.
- Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry (METI) Japan. (2018). Strategic Energy Plan [online]. Retrieved from [https://www.enecho.meti.go.jp/en/category/others/basic\\_plan/5th/pdf/strategic\\_energy\\_plan.pdf](https://www.enecho.meti.go.jp/en/category/others/basic_plan/5th/pdf/strategic_energy_plan.pdf) [Accessed February 20, 2020].
- Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry (METI) Japan. (2015). Long-term Energy Supply and Demand Outlook [online]. Retrieved from [https://www.meti.go.jp/english/press/2015/pdf/0716\\_01a.pdf](https://www.meti.go.jp/english/press/2015/pdf/0716_01a.pdf) [Accessed April 18, 2020].
- Muhaimin, M. (2014, 12 August). Soal Konflik Laut China Selatan, Jepang Puji Ketegasan RI [online]. Sindo News. Retrieved from <https://international.sindonews.com/read/890479/40/soal-konflik-laut-china-selatan-jepang-puji-ketegasan-ri-1407839448> [Accessed February 20, 2020].
- Noel, P. & Findlater, S. (2010). *Gas Supply Security in the Baltic States: A Qualitative Assessment*. Cambridge: EPRG Working Paper.
- Oba, M. (2018, 19 April). Japan's multilayered, multilateral strategy [online]. Japan Times. Retrieved from <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/opinion/2018/04/19/commentary/japan-commentary/japans-multilayered-multilateral-strategy/#.XR2vZugzbIV> [Accessed February 20, 2020].
- Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). (2017). *OPEC Annual Statistical Bulletin*, 52<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Vienna: OPEC.
- Pajon, C. (2013). *Japan and the South China Sea: Forging Strategic Partnerships in a Divided Region*. IFRI Center for Asian Studies: Asie.Visions 60.
- People's Daily. (2015). Full Text: China's Military Strategy [online]. Retrieved from <http://en.people.cn/n/2015/0526/c90785-8897779-4.html> [Accessed March 15, 2020].
- Pew Research Center. (2018). Opinion of China [online]. Retrieved from <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/database/indicator/24> [Accessed May 4, 2020].

- Poling, G. (2018). Southeast Asia Policy Under the Trump Administration. In Dossani, R. & Harold, S. W. (Ed.), *U.S. Policy in Asia—Perspective for the Future*. Santa Monica: RAND Corporation: hal. 86-105.
- Prakoso, S.G., Murtyantoro, A.P., Cahyani, M.P.I. (2019). China–Pakistan Economic Corridor: China’s Strategic Ambition, *Jurnal Ilmu Sosial*, 18 (1): 81-92 (doi: 10.14710/jis.18.1.2019.81-92), [Online].
- Prestowitz, C. (2015). *Japan Restored: How Japan Can Reinvent Itself and Why This is Important for America and the World*. Singapore: Tuttle Publishing.
- Ramadhani, M. A. (2016). Indonesia’s Maritime Vision and the Prospect of Cooperation in the South China Sea, *Jurnal Hubungan Internasional*, 5(1): 78-99.
- Shoji, T. (2014). The South China Sea: A View from Japan, *NIDS Journal of Defense and Security*, 15: 127-141.
- Smith, S. A. (2012). Japan and the East China Sea Dispute, Foreign Policy Research Institute, Summer 2012: hal. 370-390.
- Steger, I. (2018, 18 Desember). This pacifist nation is now the biggest foreign buyer of American F-35 fighter jets [online]. Quartz. Retrieved from <https://qz.com/1499253/japan-is-now-the-biggest-foreign-buyer-of-lockheeds-f-35-fighters/> [Accessed May 4, 2020].
- Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). (2019). Sipri Yearbook 2019: Military expenditure [online]. Retrieved from <https://www.sipri.org/yearbook/2019/04> [Accessed May 4, 2020].
- Storey, I. & Cook, M. (2018). The Trump Administration and Southeast Asia: America’s Asia Policy Crystallizes. *ISEAS Perspective*, No. 77.
- Storey, I. (2012). Japan Steps Up to the South China Sea Plate [online]. The Wall Street Journal. Retrieved from <https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052702303567704577516252626896574> [Accessed May 4, 2020].
- Tian, N., Fleurant, A., Kuimova, A., Wezeman, P. D., & Wezeman, S. T. (2019). *Trends in World Military Expenditure, 2018*. Sweden: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.
- Toyoda, M. (2012). *Energy Security and Challenge for Japan*. Tokyo: The Institute of Energy Economics.
- Trading Economics. (2020). Japan – Military Expenditure (% of GDP) [online]. Retrieved from <https://tradingeconomics.com/japan/military-expenditure-percent-of-gdp-wb-data.html> [Accessed October 20, 2020].

- Tziampiris, A. (2015). *The Emergence of Israeli-Greek Cooperation*. Berlin: Springer.
- U.S. Energy Information Administration. (2017, 2 February). Country Analysis Brief: Japan [online]. Retrieved from [https://www.eia.gov/beta/international/analysis\\_includes/countries\\_long/Japan/japan.pdf](https://www.eia.gov/beta/international/analysis_includes/countries_long/Japan/japan.pdf) [Accessed April 18, 2020].
- Wahyuni, N. C. (2016, 20 January). Jepang: Indonesia Terlalu Pendiam in Isu Laut China Selatan [online]. Berita Satu. Retrieved from <http://www.beritasatu.com/asia/343167-jepang-indonesia-terlalu-pendiam-in-isu-laut-china-selatan.html> [Accessed April 18, 2020].
- Walt, Stephen M. (2002). Keeping the World ‘Off-Balance’: Self-Restraint and U.S. Foreign Policy. In G. J. Ikenberry (Ed.), *America Unrivaled: The Future of the Balance of Power*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press: hal. 121-154.
- Watson, M. P. (2002). *Balance of Power vs Balance of Threat: The Case of China and Pakistan*. Thesis. Virginia: Marine Corps University.
- World Bank. (2019a). GDP growth (annual %) [online]. Retrieved from <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG?locations=CN> [Accessed May 4, 2020].
- World Bank. (2019b). Military expenditure (current USD) [online]. Retrieved from <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/MS.MIL.XPND.CD?locations=SG> [Accessed October 20, 2020].
- World Bank. (2019c). Military expenditure (current USD) [online]. Retrieved from <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/MS.MIL.XPND.CD?locations=ID> [Accessed May 4, 2020].
- Yoshimatsu, H. (2017). China, Japan and the South China Sea Dispute: Pursuing Strategic Goals Through Economic and Institutional Means, *Journal of Asian Security and International Affairs*, 4(3): 294-315.
- Zhou, L. (2018, 17 September). Japan challenges China with submarine military exercise in South China Sea [online]. South China Morning Post. Retrieved from <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/military/article/2164580/japan-challenges-china-submarine-military-exercise-south-china> [Accessed February 20, 2020].
- Zulkifli, Noraini & Forbes, Vivian Louise. (2016). Japan and The South China Sea, *Andalas Journal of International Studies*, 15(1): 61-83.