

CHAPTER IV
DEVELOPMENT OF JAPAN - PHILIPPINES STRATEGIC
PARTNERSHIP IN 2015

Japan has experienced dynamic changes in its foreign policy since the arrival of Commodore Matthew Perry in 1853 which has marked the first period of Japan starting to open and interact with the modern world. Since then Japan foreign policy was changed based on the condition of the current international situation, and also the demand of its closest ally the United States. Japan Relationship with China probably, were the most important theme in Japan's foreign policy at the outset of the 21st century. For both countries, the relationship is one that interweaves "cooperation and coexistence" with "competition and friction." (Task Force on Foreign Relations for the Prime Minister, 2002).

President Aquino and PM Abe signed a joint declaration on “A Strengthened Strategic Partnership for Advancing the Shared Principles and Partnership and Goals for Peace, Security, and Growth in the Region and Beyond”, and agreed to enhance the strategic partnership between their countries on shared principles and goals. The areas of cooperation in the security realm includes the sharing of information on security environment and challenges; information exchange and policy coordination on respective security policies; collaboration on maritime matters; and humanitarian assistance; and most importantly, the terms regarding defense equipment and technology. The Philippines and Japan are currently exploring a strategic partnership to

complement their respective bilateral alliances with the U.S. (Rodulfo-Veril, 2012).

China's military buildup pose a serious threat to Japan and other countries of the region thus, Japan demands for transparency regards China's burgeoning military budget to lower the existing tension. There has been increasingly large mutual dislike, hatred, and hostility between Japanese and Chinese people in recent years. A 2014 survey conducted by the Pew Research Center showed 85% of Japanese were concerned that territorial disputes between China and neighboring countries could lead to a military conflict¹¹. This tension were not only in the East China Sea region where Japan is located, but also spread to the south to the region of Southeast Asia country surrounding the South China Sea, where China claims almost 80% of the South China Sea by its U-shape nine-dash line map that along with the Paracels and Spratly Islands, which are also claimed in parts by the Philippines, Brunei, Malaysia, and Vietnam (Castro, 2013). By this maritime claim, China ensures its national security and enhances its territorial integrity. The other states view this development as an sign of Chinese maritime expansionism in an area of key strategic location and potential resources (Scott, 2007).

The Philippines has the same concern with Japan towards China's aggressive claims in South China Sea. China claims almost over the entire sea as the sovereign territory of China. Japan together with its key-allies United States,

¹¹Pew Research Center. (2014, July 14). *Pew Research Center, Global Attitudes and Trends*. Retrieved February 14, 2016, from Pew research center web site: <http://www.pewglobal.org/2014/07/14/chapter-4-how-asians-view-each-other/>

concern China's assertiveness because of strategic position of South China Sea, which connects the Indian and Pacific Oceans. Guaranteeing freedom of navigation in these waters is vital to the global economy. President of The republic of the Philippines Benigno S. Aquino III paid an official state visit to Japan, and held a meeting with prime minister of Japan Shinzo Abe on 4 June 2015. Both countries are fully committed towards strengthening the Partnership between both countries and aware of the increasing and complex challenges facing the region and the international community, the state leaders declared that the relationship between the two countries has entered the stage of Strengthened Strategic Partnership¹².

This Chapter will discuss the hypothesis proposed in the first chapter of this undergraduate thesis, by analyzing data collected in the first, second, and third chapter by using the theoretical framework that has been explained in the first chapter.

A. The strengthening of Japan Philippines Strategic Cooperation as the national interest of Japan to ensure its Economic well-being and military security from China's influence.

A countries foreign policy will be closely related to its national interest, Japan's foreign policy is also governed by the same principle, in which its national interest determine how the foreign policy will be conducted. According

¹²Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. (2011, September 27). *Speeches and Statements by Prime Minister; Japan-Philippines Joint Statement on the Comprehensive Promotion of the "Strategic Partnership" between Neighboring Countries Connected by Special Bonds of Friendship*. Retrieved May 28, 2016, from Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan website: http://www.mofa.go.jp/announce/pm/noda/joint_statement110927.html

to Jack C. Plano, national interest is a vital interest of a state that should be fulfilled in order to preserve its existence. Further, he define five states's vital needs as the main reasons of a state's interest, which is; Self-preservation, independence, territorial integrity, military security, and economic well-being(Jack C. Plano, 1988).

In the case of Japan foreign policy towards the Philippines, in the strengthening of its strategic cooperation, we will use only military security, and economic well-being as the most vital needs, that become Japan's main interest in conducting those specific foreign policy towards The Philippines.

1. Military Security

A state's military security needs can be determined by its need to increase military power as a means to protect itself from an emerging threat. Despite its pacifist constitution that has stated, Japan would not maintain any standing army, still in anyway under constant pressure to be able to maintain a strong capabilities to overcome any threat that may harm the existence of Japan. In the 21st century, China's assertive behavior in East Asia is a source of grave security concern for Japan (Singh, 2015).

The water in the East China Sea region has been heated up by the tension from the extremely strained Japan-China relationship because of the Senkaku Islands dispute. The declaration of an Air Defense Zone (ADIZ) in the East China Sea, repeated intrusions by Chinese civilian planes and ships into Japanese territorial waters and airspace around the Senkaku Islands, and the locking of fire

control radar on SDF surface combatants by PLAN warships were examples of China's aggressive behavior in East China Sea. (Przystup, 2013)

In the face of heightened tension in the Senkakus, several significant steps has been taken by PM. Abe to expand Japanese security policy. Japan stated China to refrain from any dangerous acts with regard to the Senkaku and underscored that Japan's interests are unchallengeable forever and that aggression must be prevented at all costs and the fundamental rule for the entire world, must prevail against the use of force (Przystup, 2013).

During the 2014 Shang-rila Dialogue in Singapore, PM Abe implied that "China is attempting to change the status quo by force, rather than by the rule of law." He also mentioned China's aggressive behaviors in the South China Sea including the unilateral announcement of the regulations, that require all fishing vessels in the disputed waters to seek permission from Chinese authorities, the tense 2012 stand-off between Philippine and Chinese civilian vessels at the Scarborough Shoal, and China's deployment of an oil rig deep inside the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) of Vietnam (Singh, 2015).

Japan decided to strengthen its defense posture to face of China's intrusions in Japanese waters and airspace, growing naval might, and assertiveness in the East and South China Sea. It also conducted a coordinated diplomatic strategy to resolve the potentially fluid and dangerous regional balance of power in cooperation with the U.S. and the neighboring countries in East Asia.

Specifically, the Abe Administration undertook three major security measures that could be regarded as defensive (Przystup, 2013).

First, during his first few months in office, PM Abe announced an increase in defense spending in 11 years and a review of the 2010 National Defense Program Guidelines (NDPG) (Przystup, 2013). Second, in October 2013, Japan and the U.S. convened a meeting of the Security Consultative Committee (SCC) or 2+2 in Tokyo. Both sides reaffirming the importance of the alliance and announcing a review of the U.S.-Japan Defense Cooperation Guidelines which hasn't been updated since 1997, as a reflection the changes in regional and global security environment (Szechenyi, 2014). The meeting mentioned several priorities for cooperation that included ballistic missile defense, space and cyber defense, joint Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) activities, dialogue on extended deterrence, joint training and exercises, realignment of U.S. forces in Okinawa, and convening of trilateral and multilateral security cooperation among U.S. allies in East Asia (Szechenyi, 2014).

Finally, Japan launched the "multilayered security cooperation" on a regional and global scale with U.S. allies in the region with same views towards the regional situations, such as South Korea, Australia, as well as with U.S. alliance/partner countries whose coastal territorial's are critical to Japanese sea-lanes of communications (Matsuda, 2012). Japan will strengthen its diplomacy and security cooperation with ASEAN countries concerned to settle disputes in the South China Sea, not by force, but in accordance with the rule of law as mentioned in the *2013 National Security Strategy of Japan* (Government of Japan,

2013). Although the document did not name specific countries, two states are located along Japan's Sea Line of Communication (SLOC) and have ongoing disputes with China in the South China Sea were Vietnam and the Philippines.

Japan finds it necessary to assist Southeast Asian countries in active dispute with China in the South China Sea because "if China's strategic position improves in relative terms in the South China Sea, then it is likely it would adopt a similar assertive attitude and actions against Japan in the East China Sea" (National Institute for Defense Studies, 2011).

2. Economic Well-being

A sovereign country needs to preserve its economic condition, since economy are the basis of a country activity. Through trade and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), Japan has established in Southeast Asia a so-called network economy (Drifte, 2016). 85%– 90% of Japan's oil imports and 33% of Japan's Light Natural Gas (LNG) imports pass through the sea lanes of communication (SLOC) of the South China Sea, according to the report of U.S. Department of Energy. Natural resources such as fishery and energy in South China Sea also become the interest of Japan. Other Important economic interests related to Japan's involvement in the off-shore and onshore prospection and extraction of oil and gas resources in the region, pursuing the goal to diversify the supply of hydrocarbon as well as an effort of marketing of Japan's high technology services in the energy sector (Drifte, 2016). However, some of the off-shore oil and gas blocks currently tendered by Vietnam, Malaysia, the Philippines, Brunei and

Indonesia were inside the China's 9-dash line claim which overlaps with the EEZs and continental shelves of these countries.

Japan mostly contributed to stability of the region through economic policies, such as; trade, investment and Official Development Assistance (ODA), and through supporting ASEAN's economic and political resilience and cohesion (Drifte, 2016). Until recently, With China's more assertive policies, the parallel perception of the tensions in the South China Sea and East China Sea, doubts of some Asian leaders about the US commitment to balance the Chinese policies, and ASEAN's fragmented position relating to the disputes in South China Sea. Japan's economy-centered policies seem no longer sufficient and Japan need to switch it policies to focus more on certain countries and on policies which are more security-related (Drifte, 2016).

During the President GloriaMacapagal-Arroyo's visit to Japan in December 2002.Japan-Philippines Economic Partnership Agreementor JPEPA was initiated.President Arroyo andthen-Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumiagreed on major elements of JPEPAthat would lead to the immediate removal of tariffs oncertain fruits, vehicles, steel products, electronic appliances, and garments. The agreement was signed inHelsinki, Finland on 9 September 2006 (Senate Economic Planning Office, 2007).

Japan is the second largest trading partner of thePhilippines next to the US. The leading Philippine exports to Japanconsist of electronic products, woodcraft furniture,ignition wiring sets, fresh bananas, and iron ores.In 2006,

Japan amounted to US\$7.9 billion or 17% of the country's total exports. Japan is our biggest export market for asparagus, bananas, papayas, nata de coco, mangoes, chicken, shrimps and prawns, and yellowfin tuna (Senate Economic Planning Office, 2007).

With all the data provided, clearly Japan foreign policy towards the Philippines and its strategic cooperation was closely related to the national interest of Japan, to fulfill some of its vital needs as a nation. Two vital needs of Japan discussed in this paper have proven to be relevant with the foreign policy of Japan to strengthen its strategic cooperation with the Philippines.

In the vital need of "Military Security", Japan needs to contain the assertive actions made by China in both East and South China Sea region. While in East China Sea Japan could directly encounter China, in South China Sea, Japan needs to gain support and maintain strategic cooperation with claimants' country in the South China Sea disputes. Considering the long story of relations and cooperation between Japan and The Philippines, and since The Philippines were also a claimants country which also has strong stance against China in the disputes, Japan needs to maintain and increase its supports toward Philippines through several cooperation policy, which increase the capabilities of Philippines to be able to match China's assertive actions in the South China Sea. Through multilateral and bilateral agreement, Japan tries to ensure its military security, from the merging threat from China in the near Sea of East China Sea, and also South China Sea.

In the vital needs of Japan to maintain its “Economic Well-being”, South China Sea serve as the main route of Japan’s energy imports from the Middle East and other country, which needs to pass South China Sea in order to reach Japan in the Eastern part of Asia. The abundant natural resource and potential hydrocarbon deposits in the area of South China Sea also become one of the consideration why Japan needs to involve in securing the South China Sea Region. Many of Japan’s off-shore and on-shore oil production assets were located in the claimed area of China’s 9-dashed line, thus China’s assertiveness in South China Sea poses a significant threat towards Japan’s economy. By supporting the countries that have been currently participating in the disputes with China, especially Philippines, Japan is actually securing its economy in indirect way and also maintaining the already established economic cooperation between Japan and the Southeast Asia Countries.

The first hypothesis proposed in this paper was: “Japan strengthen its strategic cooperation with the Philippines because of the needs of Japan to fulfill its vital needs by ensuring its Economic well-being and military security from China’s influence in South China Sea“. The hypothesis is proven to be correct based on the data gathered in this paper, and also based on the analysis using the proposed theoretical framework.

B. The strengthening of its strategic cooperation between Japan and The Philippines as a form of balancing the influence of china in South China Sea.

According to the balance of power theory in international relations, national security is enhanced when military capability is distributed so that no one state is strong enough to dominate all others (Wittkopf, 2005). According to this theory if one state becomes much stronger than others, it will take advantage of its strength and dominate weaker neighbors, thereby providing a necessity for those countries that feel threatened to unite in a form of defensive coalition to counter the possible threat from the dominant power.

Stephen M. Walt suggests that there will be different ways a state will act towards the dominant threat, According to (Walt, 1987): “When confronted by a significant external threat, states that look to form alliances may *balance* or *bandwagon*. *Balancing* is defined as allying with others against the prevailing threat, while states that have *bandwagoned* have aligned with the threat.” By using his concept, we try to analyze and prove the action of Japan by strengthening its strategic cooperation with The Philippines was an act of *Balancing* towards the imminent threat from China. Japan relies on two instruments to try balancing China’s influence in South China Sea which is; ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and the provision of maritime security assistance.

China claims almost 80% of the South China Sea by its U-shape nine-dash line map that extend along with the Paracels and Spratly Islands, which are also claimed in parts by the Philippines, Brunei, Malaysia, and Vietnam (Castro, 2013). The map indicates that not only China’s sovereignty over the island and waters of South China Sea, but also its transportation, fishing, and mineral extraction rights over “all the waters within the nine-dash line” (International

Herald Tribune, 13 August 2012). By this maritime claim, China ensures its national security and enhances its territorial integrity. The other states view this development as an sign of Chinese maritime expansionism in an area of key strategic location and potential resources (Scott, 2007).

Japan decided to strengthen its defense posture to face of China's intrusions in Japanese waters and airspace, growing naval might, and assertiveness in the East and South China Sea. It also conducted a coordinated diplomatic strategy to resolve the potentially fluid and dangerous regional balance of power in cooperation with the U.S. and the neighboring countries in East Asia

When we take into account on the historical memory between Japan and China, Japan certainly cannotbandwagon to China since there will be to many things to be risked. China's assertive behavior in the second decade of the 21st century pushed bothJapan and Philippinesto explore a strategic partnership. At the start of the two-month Scarborough Shoalstand-off in April 2012, Japanese Ambassador to the Philippines Toshio Urabe stressed the "close-knittriangular relationship among Japan, the Philippines, and their closest (mutual) ally—the U.S."(Asia News Monitor, 2012)

A few weeks after his return to power, PM Abe sent Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida on a four-country Asia/Pacific diplomatic tour to convey Japan's growing concern over Beijing'sexpansive territorial claims in the South China Sea(Castro, 2016). Minister Kishida then met President Aquino and reaffirmed the commitment of Japan to foster itsrelations with the Philippines based on mutual

respect and understanding(Asia News Monitor, 2013). Japanese Defense Minister Itsunori Onodera and Philippine Defense SecretaryGazminin 27 June 2013 confirmed the continuous “exchanges of information aimed atstrengtheningPhilippine-Japan defense relations and on working together to make U.S. strategic rebalancing areality in Asia”(BBC Monitoring Asia-Pacific, 2013).

After analyzing the data in the previous chapter, we could see that Japan choose to balance China’s assertive actions by assisting U.S. with their Freedom of Navigation Operations and also took part in the multilateral dialogues with Southeast Asian countries via ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) to maintain influence in the South China Sea region. Especially with The Philippines by strengthening the strategic cooperation as a form to leverageits alliances and defense engagements with foreign militaries to support itsmilitary capability and effectively in responding to security threats in the region(Rodulfo-Veril, 2012).

The second hypothesis that says: “Japan chooses to strengthen its strategic cooperation with the Philippines as a form of balancing the influence of china in South China Sea disputes.” is proven to be correct since Japan chose to strengthen its cooperation with Philippines as it allies, and also to engage in a multilateral forum of countries in Southeast Asia, as an effort to balance and control the assertive actions of China in the South China Sea region, to prevent the same assertiveness to be exercised in the East China Sea where China could encounter Japan directly.