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Regional insecurity, bilateral dialogue, and historical controversy in post-Cold War Sino-Japanese relations during the twentieth century

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Introduction

While both China and Japan have basically maintained a good relationship since diplomatic normalization in 1972, it has become increasingly difficult to predict with any certainty the future road the two countries will take following the end of the Cold War. Although Sino-Japanese relations at the end of the twentieth century were to all intents and purposes stable, it can be reasonably argued that this stability had been based more on economic than on political or strategic factors. Since 1972, increasing elements of uncertainty, such as the China Threat theory, have had a direct bearing on Sino-Japanese relations. Yet, the options open to Japan in addressing regional insecurity are fairly limited since political stability in East Asia greatly depends on a delicate balance of power. Therefore, it can be inferred that the limitation of choice associated with this bilateral uncertainty and need to maintain an effective regional security systems are likely to constrain Japan’s China policy.

Taking into account these situations, this paper seeks to examine the main sources of stability and instability in post-Cold War Sino-Japanese political relations during the twentieth century. While there have been a number of movements to explain Sino-Japanese relations in the twenty-first century, the examination intentionally focuses on the situation during the twentieth century partly due to a space constraint. The analysis concentrates on the Japanese side of the bilateral relationship and focuses on three main issues,

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1 It should be noted that this paper has a feature of historical analysis which does not cover relevant movements taken place during the twenty-first century, as the research to write this paper was largely implemented during the twentieth century. Thus, this paper was written as if the author puts himself mainly in the era of the 1970s without fully taking what happened after then from 1972 up to now into account.
namely: military security tensions; emerging bilateral dialogue and cooperation; and political frictions associated with the historical debate over Japanese actions in China during the Pacific War. These views help in addressing the following questions: What have been the major political and strategic destabilizing factors for Sino-Japanese relations following the end of the Cold War? Is there any evidence of bilateral cooperation helping, by contrast, to stabilize post-Cold War Sino-Japanese relations? In light of the above factors, what would be the prospects for stability in relations between Tokyo and Beijing?

Here, a methodological question arises before examination of the above themes. What kind of issues had the most significant role in explaining Sino-Japanese relations after the end of the Cold War during the twentieth century? This paper assumes that security is the pivotal factor and focuses on broadly defined security dimensions, together with historical controversies that are particularly important in Sino-Japanese relations. However, arguments commonly used to explain bilateral relations often focus on economic issues, based on the following two considerations. First, as will be set forth below, Japan’s foreign policy had long been dominated by economic considerations. Second, politics and economics in Sino-Japanese relations became inextricably intertwined after 🇨🇳日本 Japanese administrations have viewed economics as a means of reducing friction or improving relations between the two countries. For example, Japan was the first country to restore frozen aid projects to the People’s Republic of China 🇨🇳中国 ending China’s isolation from international society following the Tiananmen Square incident of 🇨🇳天安门 a process that enhanced and stabilized bilateral political ties.

While this paper has omitted detailed description of citation or reference use in footnotes due to a space constraint, all materials referred or used in the text are listed in the section of bibliography.
However, arguably there was a slight change in Japan’s foreign policy focus during the 1990s; a trend which became particularly pronounced following the end of the Cold War. In short, the relative emphasis of Japan’s foreign policy had increasingly tilted from economic to security policy. In light of this shift in emphasis, attention needs to be given to this important dimension to the relationship. To put these issues into context, the following analysis examines the general evolution of Japan’s post-World War II foreign policy before considering how this process had influenced Sino-Japanese relations during the twentieth century.

(1) Japan’s foreign policy after the Second World War

The main foreign policy adopted by successive Japanese governments in the postwar period could be characterized by two motifs. First, the relationship with the United States has been of paramount importance as a result of the US/GHQ General Headquarters of the Allied Forces occupation following Japan’s defeat in the Second World War. Second, an economic-centric foreign policy has been predominant in the course of the economic recovery and development after the war. It would be fair to claim that both these lineaments established under the Yoshida doctrine were combined as a policy of economic development within the framework of cooperation with the US. Indeed, Premier Shigeru Yoshida himself reminisced about his views at that time noting in his memoirs that while economic independence was the next requirement after political independence, it was necessary to ensure security both inside and outside of Japan in order to allow a commitment to economic independence. In this context, as Green argues, the Yoshida doctrine was in fact not a doctrine but merely the means to achieve the political stability necessary for economic reconstruction under the aegis of the US.

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3 In this paper, job titles such as premier principally refer to those at the time.
During the 1950s and 1960s, Japan had little need to be conscious of military threats, given the international political order established by the United States. Japan’s Constitution, imposed by the US/GHQ, prohibiting the use of force for non-defensive purposes in Article 9 was one of the significant causes of this trend. Premier Yoshida accepted US leadership given the dependent nature of Japan’s economy and mainly aimed at economic revival, while maintaining a lightly armed force, in the form of the National Police Force and later the Self-Defense Force (SDF) Jieitai, which was established as late as 1954. In this regard, from the Japanese perspective, the US-Japan Security Treaty agreed to in 1951 and ratified in the following year provided Japan with cost-effective security protection. It necessitated a factual rearmament of Japan and unequivocal siding by Tokyo with Washington during the Cold War period. Thus, Japan’s military security policy has been almost exclusively focused on the alliance with the US and the gradual increase of the SDF within this framework. It could be inferred that this policy relatively enhanced the economic dimension of Japan’s foreign policy, which in turn prompted Japan’s rapid economic development in the 1960s.

Japan’s leaders after Yoshida, his proteges such as Hayato Ikeda and Eisaku Satou, also realized that there could be no political power in Japan without a strong economic base. Thus, the economic element in Japan’s foreign policy took precedence over military efforts, although there was a short period of struggle in 1969 over the revision of the Security Treaty. While Premier Nobusuke Kishi was said to lean on security policy exceptionally at this time, as he mentioned in his reminiscences, he actually intended to enhance Japan’s international position in terms not only of the security dimension but also via diplomacy with Southeast Asia, largely for economic or trade concerns. It is also worth noting that the political conflicts within the Liberal Democratic Party of Japan (LDP) and rising anti-US nationalism by the
general public over the revision of the treaty encouraged subsequent prime ministers to cultivate a consensus politics that could more easily be achieved through economic policy. Moreover, because of Japan’s high economic growth and a stable US-dominated regional environment, Japanese politicians did not find much attraction in security policy, especially after the conclusion of the revised security treaty in 。

Thus, Premier Ikeda emphasized economic foreign policy in the early 1960s. Unlike Kishi, he tried to pursue an equal partnership with the US in economic rather than security matters. The rapid economic development during the 1950s in Japan led by Ikeda’s ten-year income-doubling plan implicitly showed that Japan’s pro-US foreign policy was effective. Japan was admitted into the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in 1964 as a result of its growing economic power. Thus, Japan’s foreign policy had almost been equated with foreign economic policy and is often referred to as economic diplomacy in Japan. Premier Satou, successor to Ikeda, also pointed out the importance of economic foreign policy and economic assistance in particular. He stated in a Diet policy speech in January 1966 that it was becoming an increasingly significant task to intensify the international competitiveness of industry and to increase Japanese exports. It can be inferred that even Japan’s defense effort, namely the increase of general defense spending, was mainly to manage US-Japan economic frictions until the 1970s. In addition, Japan’s search for autonomous defense production as a part of its industrial policy embedded Japanese security within the goal of economic growth.

However, some modest but significant changes emerged during the 1970s as a result of changes in the international environment. Sino-US rapprochement in 1972 let Premier Kakuei Tanaka to state in his Diet policy
speech of January 1972 that Japan had to assume the responsibilities of a creator as well as a beneficiary of peace both in international politics and economics. In this context, Tanaka promoted an autonomous diplomacy in the wake of the end of Sino-US political isolation. However, Japan’s role as a peace creator was not clarified so readily at this stage. The oil crisis in 1973 had a profound effect given Japan’s high dependence on oil as the key raw material for the economy. In addition, the relative decline of US economic power, followed by the abandonment of the Bretton Woods fixed exchange rate system, undermined Japanese confidence in the reliability of the US as a partner.

Following the decline of the Pax Americana together with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics USSR build-up of its military forces in East Asia, the Japanese government’s security concerns gradually increased during the late 1970s and 1980s. In response to the criticism from the US that Japan lacked a strategy for national security, Japan formulated its National Defense Program Outline Bouei Keikaku Taikou in 1974. Japan clarified that it was not a military power but aimed at arranging its defense forces within the framework of cooperation with the US. A new era in US-Japan defense cooperation started in November 1974 when Japan and the US agreed on guidelines requiring joint operational plans.

Japan’s response to the changing international environment also emerged with a report on comprehensive security compiled by a study group instituted by Premier Masayoshi Oohira in 1980. It stated that the US military power was no longer able to provide its allies and friends with nearly full security and that national defense should be an integral part of Japan’s security in the broadest sense. It might be safe to say that this notion allowed new security issues to be raised which had been formally precluded
due to the following constraints. First, Japan perpetually renounced the right to wage war and to maintain any sort of military force under Article 9 of its Constitution. Second, Japan cannot exercise the right to collective self-defense given the existing interpretations of its Constitution. The Japanese government’s official stance, clarified in May 1978, is that the right of self-defense permitted under Article 9 of the Constitution should be used within the minimum range of the need to defend Japan’ and that the exercise of this right exceeds the range and thus is not allowed constitutionally. Third, Japan cannot have nuclear weapons given its three non-nuclear principles declared by Premier Satou in the Diet in December 1979. Hence it can be inferred that the concept of comprehensive security required Japan to secure its external environment by other means. Thus, Japan’s foreign policy during the 1970s was to support a relatively less powerful US rather than to lean on it in order to prevent a situation in which the US could no longer maintain the stability of the international system.

There were a number of indications of Japan’s increasing security concerns during the 1970s. For example, Premier Yasuhiro Nakasone recognized the strategic importance of Japan when he described the country as a large aircraft carrier in January 1979. During his tenure, there had been a growing recognition by Nakasone himself and his party that Japan could not confine itself to a mere economic role but had to make a greater commitment to its own defense. In 1980 the Japanese government decided to scrap the spending ceiling of less than one percent of GNP for the defense budget, which had been a policy since 1955. This had a symbolic importance in the sense that it would affect Japan’s foreign policy-making by demonstrating Japan’s security interests. It has even been suggested that the Japanese government has developed into an ally that is increasingly supplementing US military roles.
It would be fair to claim that the end of the Cold War pushed Japan’s foreign policy in a more security-oriented direction. While the military threat of the Soviet Union disappeared, the instances of security threats were not extinguished from Japan’s surroundings. For example, the threat posed by North Korea, whose foreign policy is dominated by an occasionally erratic, violent and irrational leadership, increasingly became apparent following the launch of Nodong and Taepodong missiles in May and in August respectively. The military and political tensions between Beijing and Taiwan which culminated in March added enormous instability to the region. Territorial issues such as the Senkaku Islands, Takeshima, and the Northern Territory problems, are additional potential sources of regional instability. Globally speaking, the end of the Cold War did not necessarily ensure a solid peace, either. As demonstrated by the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in military security threats were still grave in some areas. Revival of ethnic tension such as in Kosovo or Somalia, border conflicts such as between India and Pakistan, and secessionist moves such as in Chechnya were also potential great threats in the international society. Meanwhile, the end of the Cold War prompted a cooperative atmosphere among the five permanent members of the UN Security Council and the collective security through the framework of the United Nations assumed more significance than before. As a result, there had been an increased perception that international cooperation for peace keeping is significant in terms of the prevention or reduction of conflicts involving use of force.

These changes in the security environment spurred the Japanese government to alter its traditional policy of devoting itself to its own defense under the Japan-US security treaty. During the Cold War, Japan could maintain that it contributed to the security of the West and world peace through the development of its SDF and by letting the US use military bases in Japan.
However, this idea became increasingly difficult to accept unreservedly. Japan’s unwillingness to support the Western forces other than through financial assistance during the Gulf War of August was a pivotal cause of American criticism. Poor crisis management based on a Japanese political culture that requires cabinet consensus in decision-making was also an object of criticism, supported by other later crises such as the Kobe earthquake of North Korea’s Taepodong missile launch and the detection of North Korean spy vessels in the Japan Sea in March. Given these situations, in the, Japan began to formulate a new security policy that would be on a par with other developed countries within the framework of its Constitution, as will be set forth in more detail in chapters one and two.

Thus, broadly speaking, the changing international environment brought about a gradual shift in Japan’s foreign policy from economic diplomacy to a security-oriented policy. The post-Cold War international system increasingly unstable and ambiguous made Japan rethink the importance of security, which had often been rather underrated by the Japanese public theretofore. How did this Japanese policy shift affect relations with China? When we examine post-Cold War Sino-Japanese relations during the twentieth century, what kind of perspective would it be useful to adopt in light of this move? The following section analyzes this issue via a brief description of the history of Sino-Japanese relations after the Second World War.

(2) Sino-Japanese relations after the Second World War

Japan’s China policy after the Second World War, and until diplomatic normalization in had been heavily influenced and shaped by US China policy. Following the outbreak of the Korean War in when China’s belligerency became salient, US military deployment in Asia had a primary goal,
namely, the containment of China. As a consequence, the US pressed Japan to avoid diplomatic relations and to cease most trade with China. While Japan recognized Taiwan instead of Beijing in April, Japan’s desire to expand trade with the PRC became a source of tension with the US during the 1950s and 1960s. Japanese conservatives and leftists favored greater contact with China despite US trade controls through the Coordinating Committee of the Paris-based Consultative Group (COCOM) established in 1952 and its China Committee (CHINCOM) because Japan had deep economic roots in China and Japanese politicians tried to maintain Japan’s interest in the Chinese economy. Both China and Japan recognized that it would be to their disadvantage to cut off economic ties completely simply because of Cold War tension. Under the framework of the separation of politics and economics (beikei bunri), the Japanese government managed to maintain unofficial contact with China through the private sector without disregard for US regulation. Cultural ties were also maintained thanks to the economic relationship. For example, delegations of the China Red Cross and the China Science Academy visited Japan in 1954 and 1958 respectively. It would be safe to claim that these relations worked as a means to circumvent the fact that the two countries lacked diplomatic relations at that time. Japan concluded four private-sector commercial agreements with China during the 1950s, and deepened private economic relations through the so-called friendship trade and LT trade during the 1960s. As the Sino-Soviet split proceeded following Khrushchev’s speech challenging Marxist-Leninist doctrine and Soviet disagreement with Mao Zedong’s Great Leap Forward program during the late 1950s, China also began to react favorably by exploring the possibility of calling on Japanese business interests to replace the USSR as trading partners.

Thus, it can be inferred that Sino-Japanese relations after the Second
World War had largely been dominated by economic matters. In addition to the US influence, Japan’s general stress on economic diplomacy promoted this tendency. On the other hand, China used trade as a primary instrument of its political operations in Japan until The Beijing government refused to acknowledge the separation of politics and economics However, it is important to note that both countries shared a common foreign policy in that they sought peace and stability in the region for their own economic benefit.

Following one of the Nixon Shocks, the US President’s visit to Beijing in February Japan normalized diplomatic relations with China and broke off official ties with Taiwan in September of the same year. Despite the change of the international economic environment associated with the collapse of the Bretton Woods system or the post-oil crises, bilateral economic relations after the diplomatic normalization continued within the trends set earlier. By the Long Term Trade Agreement confirmed the underlying importance of trade in Sino-Japanese relations, leading to another wave of mutual trade expansion. In one year after the conclusion of the Peace and Friendship Treaty, Japan became the first non-Communist country to extend aid to China, consisting of a package of yen loans that amounted to more than fifty billion yen for fiscal year The were a stable period for Sino-Japanese relations. During that time, the relationship had been driven more by decentralized and market-based economic decisions than by government-to-government interaction. Thus, it can be argued that Japan, with its increasing economic power, had helped China’s economic development, in turn stabilizing the bilateral relationship.

After the end of the Cold War, however, economic-centric Japanese foreign policy toward China began relatively to erode. There was still a strong
argument that a primarily economic strategy towards China has potential in maintaining friendly ties with China. Nevertheless, Japanese policy-makers increasingly claimed the relative importance of security policy toward China. For example, Japan’s Diplomatic Bluebook of 2000 issued by Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) regarded the future roles of Japan and China as common security concerns in the region. This idea was also evidenced by the fact that the Japanese government decided for the first time in its history to suspend grant assistance to China in August 2000 in protest against China’s nuclear tests.

This primacy of the security factor in Sino-Japanese relations should be understood in the context of the overall changes of the international system after the end of the Cold War. First, with the collapse of the Soviet Union, Sino-Japanese relations became one of the crucial factors defining the global and Asian balances of power in the post-Cold War era. One of the primary security concerns of the Japanese government was to balance China’s military power in the Asia-Pacific region. In this context, Premier Toshiki Kaifu mentioned in August 2000 that the solid, friendly, and cooperative relationship between Japan and China provides one of the extremely important preconditions for peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region. Second, there was increasing concern in Japan about China’s military modernization program and ambitions in Asia. Increasing worries that China might act as a player provoking regional insecurity encouraged Japan to rethink its national security needs. Third, while Japan certainly appreciated China’s market potential, not so many Japanese analysts tended to think of China as a long-term economic rival on the basis of the technological lead of Japan. This somewhat underrated view of China’s economic capabilities perhaps explains the relative decrease in Japanese government’s economic concerns regarding Sino-Japanese relations in the post-Cold War era during the twentieth century.
Given these shifts, in examining post-Cold War Sino-Japanese relations, this paper first tries to focus on the security dimensions of Sino-Japanese relations to the exclusion of a detailed analysis of economic matters. While security relations are typically addressed within the framework of military security in International Relations, the Japanese government had, by its actions, broadened the context to include the notion of non-military security affairs such as environmental threats or energy crises. Actually, it was argued that Japan fears China not purely in terms of military security threats but in terms of non-military security threats such as environmental degradation. For example, some argued that Japan might suffer serious damage from acid rain due to its location downwind from China, particularly as the Chinese economy expands. Moreover, various bilateral dialogues between China and Japan were initiated to advance exchanges and cooperation in this broadened security area in the late 20th century. Therefore, this paper first seeks to redefine the concept of security, especially in the eyes of the Japanese government in the context of Sino-Japanese relations. Then it examines both military security tensions and non-traditional security dialogue and cooperation as well as the extent to which they may be contributing to or undermining the stability of bilateral relations.

However, the post-Cold War Sino-Japanese relationship has evinced special features that cannot be explained only by international political factors. As is often stressed by the two governments, both countries have forged a profound relationship for more than two thousand years. As a result, history has greatly influenced Sino-Japanese relations. Emotional components derived from history often defy the strategies of political as well as economic interests in both countries. Therefore, perception and the manipulation of history over time by both Chinese and Japanese leaders and governments are of
extreme significance for the bilateral connection.

In particular, sporadic historical controversies and disagreements in interpreting the Pacific War have often been central to Sino-Japanese political relations. In the long-term sense, the rhetorical use of history is a central diplomatic attempt to build common ground as a basis for agreement and cooperation. While this issue of historical controversy is not a new argument in Sino-Japanese relations, it would be noticeable if Japan’s official attitude on this issue, after the end of the Cold War, showed a different mindset from the traditional position. Some events were somewhat confusing in this regard. For example, it was an epoch-making incident when Premier Tomiichi Murayama made an apology for Japan’s wartime actions to China, expressing profound remorse during his visit to Beijing in May. At the same time, it is arguable that during the talks between Premier Keizou Obuchi and President Jiang Zemin in November, both governments appeared to be at loggerheads over the vexed question of historical responsibility. Were there, therefore, any significant shifts in the interpretation of history on the Japanese government after the end of the Cold War during the twentieth century? In short, this paper also tries to analyze the role and impact of historical controversies between China and Japan given that they are liable to have an influence on the future character of bilateral relations.
Chapter 1. Defining security

As argued in the introduction, security has been a key factor shaping post-Cold War Sino-Japanese relations. Yet, security is a sharply contested notion. For academians as well as policy makers, the emphasis has traditionally been on military power. Yet, increasing arguments show that this articulation seems inadequate and that security must be conceptualized in a broader fashion. For example, Ullman broadly defined the concept of security as the absence of threats that degrade the quality of life for the inhabitants of a state or narrow the range of policy choices available to the government of a state or to private, non-governmental entities within the state. These arguments lead to non-traditional or non-military security concepts, such as environmental or economic security. However, the differences between traditional and non-traditional security should not be overdrawn. It would seem better to argue that they are not necessarily incompatible with each other, but are supplementary concepts. On this basis, this chapter tries to analyze how the Japanese government has defined security in the postwar era as a basis from which to examine contemporary Sino-Japanese political relations.

(1) Japan’s changing notion of security

During the Cold War, the Soviet military threat and instability in the Korean peninsula were Japan’s primary security concerns, and provided a fundamental rationale for the US-Japan security arrangement. Both the Japanese and the US governments agreed that the arrangement contributed to regional stability in a context where the US acted as the primary contributor to the balance of power in the Asia-Pacific region. In this regard, it was
suggested that this posture constituted the substance of Japan’s realism.

At the same time, a striking feature of Japan’s post-war foreign policy has been the existence of a strong pacifist mentality, a natural consequence of experience of the Pacific War, alongside its traditional security realism. Defeat in 1945 together with America’s unsuccessful campaign in the Vietnam War in the late 1960s, encouraged groups associated with the political left and intellectuals in Japan to be skeptical about the merit of military power. Japan’s Heiwa Kempō Peace Constitution also fostered Japan’s pacifism providing a widespread, albeit arguably unrealistic, assumption among the Japanese public that Japan would never be threatened so long as it avoided a military mode. This pacifism also at times prompted a strong anti-American nationalism among leftist political forces, since the US was seen as fostering the revival of Japan’s militarism via the US-Japan security alliance.

This peaceful inclination has encouraged some analysts to argue that postwar Japanese society has been characterized by a strong antimilitarist norm reflected in its legal institutions, political culture, public opinion, and policy-making process. It is arguable that the historical legacy of the Pacific War prevented Japan from becoming an independent military power in the region. Under the LDP regime defined by the virtual political monopoly enjoyed by Japan’s governing Liberal Democratic Party, opposition parties often emphasized the importance of antimilitarism and the need to adhere strictly to article 9 of the Constitution. In reality, the scope of military security in Japan has been restricted as set forth in the introduction.

However, as Soeya argues, Japan’s traditional security realism has remained an important element of the country’s foreign policy, given Japan’s
geographical location surrounded by the oceans, its limited security endowments due to its Constitution, and also in light of the regional security environment. Thus, both realism and pacifist norms are relevant in explaining Japan’s security outlook. In this context, the US-Japan security alliance allowed Japan to reconcile its traditional military security concerns with the dominant norms of pacifism and a political culture of antimilitarism. It has also influenced the way in which the Japanese government has approached non-military security concerns.

Japan’s concerns for non-military security have gradually grown since the 1970s. The decline of the Pax Americana in the early 1970s called Japan’s realism into question. It increased the importance of economic security in the eyes of Japanese policy makers. Meanwhile, the oil crisis of 1973 exposed Japan to the urgent need of maintaining access to scarce energy resources and motivated the government to think about energy security. It is important to note that the concept of energy security, like economic security, emerged not only from lack of policies to cope with such a fragile situation but also from the concerns that energy insecurity would undermine the basis of Japan’s realism.

It was in this context that Japanese policy makers, led by Premier Masayoshi Oohira, proposed the concept of comprehensive security in 1977. They argued that the new US security policy based on the Nixon Doctrine of 1970, which called for increased participation by America’s allies in their own defense, increased the significance of Japan’s military policy. The new environment encouraged the Japanese government to think seriously about its existing security policy, and justified reaffirming and enhancing Japan’s realist approach within its constitutional constraints, while also remaining sensitive to other non-military threats such as energy insecurity,
food paucity, or the risk of severe earthquakes. Through comprehensive security, the Japanese government expanded the scope of security beyond the traditional military sphere, and in fact, the Comprehensive Security Cabinet Member’s Conference established under the initiative of Premier Zenkou Suzuki, Oohira’s successor, intentionally excluded military issues from its discussion agenda.

Despite this shift, during the Cold War traditional military security concerns seemed to take precedent over non-traditional non-military issues. Japanese policy makers during the san and sa energetically tried to ensure consistency between Japan’s defense efforts and its obligations under the US-Japan Security Treaty. The establishment of the National Defense Program Outline in October, adoption of the Guidelines for US-Japan Defense Cooperation in November, and the decision to supply military technology to the US in January were arguably all in the same policy vein.

Japan’s post-Cold War policy revealed several new features. First, the importance of military security policy has been widely recognized within Japan despite the historical importance of pacifist concerns. As the Social Democratic Party of Japan (SDPJ) which was at that stage the main opposition party, began to lose political appeal, ideological criticism opposing LDP realistic policy gradually declined. When the SDPJ’s head, Tomiichi Murayama, was inaugurated as Prime Minister in he moved his party’s policy in a more realistic direction on account of his political calculation that it was necessary to form a coalition cabinet with the LDP. He admitted both that the SDF was constitutional and that its participation in UN peacekeeping operations, a policy which the SDPJ had vehemently opposed in, was supportable. In addition, following the recession of Russian threats in Japan’s
right-wing nationalists, who had once advocated military independence from the US, became increasingly overshadowed by the more moderate mainstream of the LDP. Thus, security policy by the government was unlikely to develop into a politically contentious issue as long as it remains within the restrictions of the Constitution.

Second, new traditional security needs had remarkably increased. The Japanese government started to consolidate its military security policy. The revision of the National Defense Program Outline ブセイケイカクダイコ in and the reaffirmation of the US-Japan alliance were evidence of attempts to broaden the scope of military security in Japan without violating the constitutional or other previous security constraints.

Third, the Japanese government began to articulate a policy of regional security in the early 1990s, stressing dialogue with regional countries. It claimed that regional security depends largely on trust and policy transparency among regional countries and that monitoring and confirming each other’s intentions and capabilities was of significance via the track-two approach articulated by Premier Kiichi Miyazawa in July 1990. This initiative in addressing regional security concerns can be viewed as evidence of Japan’s concern to develop a leading regional role. It was suggested that Japan also had misgivings about the future roles of the US and China in the region. Indeed, the 情報 Diplomatic Bluebook stated that being motivated by such common security concerns as the continuation of the U.S. presence and engagement, and the future roles of Japan and China, there has emerged in the region, a growing interest in a region-wide political and security dialogue. Moreover, the Japanese government demonstrated its desire to play a role in non-traditional security areas. Such a role would help to avoid the anticipated criticism that Japan is a free rider on the back of US military power and also make
any increase in Japanese involvement in traditional security initiatives more palatable to Japan’s neighbors. It is also important to note that it was politically easier for the Japanese government to devote resources to these non-military security goals than military security ones.

Without a doubt, successive post-Cold War incidents heightened insecurity in Japan and encouraged in turn greater focus by the government on promoting security in terms of its non-military aspects. The Kobe earthquake of January which gave rise to more than five thousand fatalities, marked a turning point in making the Japanese people acutely aware of the country’s vulnerability to natural disasters. The Aum Cult incident in March in which a domestic cult committed an indiscriminate homicide throughout the Tokyo subway, and the hostage crisis at the Japan’s embassy in Peru in December similarly challenged Japan’s apparent insulation from major security threats. All of these non-military insecurity incidents, inside and outside Japan, prompted Japan to rethink the idea of security in a broader sense.

The most significant evidence of this shift had been the concept of human security raised publicly by Premier Obuchi in Obuchi’s arguments, in favor of human beings instead of states as a referent of security, rest on a combination of the following factors. With the end of the Cold War, regional and ethnic conflicts occurred in places such as Chechnya or Kosovo, exposing the problem of repeated human rights’ violations. Meanwhile, the process of globalization also had both negative and positive consequences. For example, the global flood of money and people overflowing territorial boundaries sparked off increasing international crimes such as drug smuggling and money laundering. The new phenomenon of contagious diseases such as AIDS also posed a serious problem to international society. In addi-
tion, with the expansion of the global economy, the world also began to suffer from environmental security problems such as global warming, destruction of the ozone layer and environmental hormone problems, in conjunction with energy, food and population issues. Facing all of these threats to the security of individuals, Obuchi laid importance on individual human beings as a security referent and sought to establish cooperation for maintaining security with various communities in international society.

(2) Conclusion

The concept of security had been significantly reviewed in the International Relations literature in the late twentieth century. While the long-predominant realist paradigm, i.e. that states are the only security referent and that military security is critical, was still influential, the increasing perception that these are values to be protected from threats other than military power led to increasing stress on non-traditional or non-military security. In reality, the conception of security held by the Japanese government had largely in a similar vein. While the Japanese government was predicated on a realist position laid down by Premier Yoshida, it had also, as early as in the 1970s, taken notice of the importance of non-military security and thereafter tried to broaden the referent of security to encompass human security.

To what extent, then, does security matter in explaining post-Cold War Sino-Japanese relations? It would be fair to claim that Japan’s security conception greatly influenced the relationship in the following respects. First, Japan’s growing awareness of military security encouraged China’s skepticism about Japan’s containment of China, especially through the reaffirmation of the US-Japan security alliance, as well as Japan’s perception of the China Threat. Second, Japan’s wider concept of security that stresses
non-military dimensions encouraged the Japanese government to pave the way for promoting bilateral security dialogue and cooperation with China. Third, Japan’s traditional pacifism, linked with its postwar realism, seems to have had a degree of influence on historical controversies with China over Japan’s wartime responsibilities; a fact that has been increasingly salient since the ending of the Cold War. The following three chapters will seek to further analyze each of these points in detail.
Chapter 2. Regional insecurity

Military security issues arguably represents the most crucial destabilizing factor for post-Cold War Sino-Japanese relations. Since both China and Japan have assumed that they are unable to rely on one another for the foreseeable future, they have sought to protect themselves against a wide range of threats. In turn the traditional security dilemma, namely, the tendency of one state’s action in increasing its security to cause others to build up their military capabilities further reducing the security of all, has added to uncertainty and instability in Sino-Japanese interactions.

At the same time, political stability between Beijing and Tokyo is dominated by regional security in the Asia-Pacific, in turn based on the triangular relations between China, Japan, and the United States. Deterioration in relations between any of these three powers affects the other two bilateral relationships. While the quadrilateral relationship among these three countries plus Russia was significant during the Cold War, the role of Russia in regional security comparatively declined with the demise of the Soviet Union. Although Russia has still been engaged in the regional security system via the supply of military arms, particularly to China, this is largely for economic reasons and Russia arguably has no longer posed a major security threat to China and Japan. Therefore, this chapter concentrates on the military security tension in post-Cold War Sino-Japanese relations during the twentieth century from a triangular perspective.

The analysis focuses, in particular, on the following four points: US-Japan defense alliance, the China Threat theory, Taiwan issues, and regional security systems in the context of Sino-Japanese relations. Four
questions shape the investigation: First, how had the revitalization of the US-Japan security alliance, or the new US-Japan security guidelines of 相互防衛条約 complicated Sino-Japanese relationship? Second, to what extent had the Japanese government perceived China as a security threat since the end of the Cold War? Third, how had Taiwan issues affected Sino-Japanese relations, and to what extent had Sino-Japanese relations been static or changed by Japan’s Taiwan policy? Fourth, to what extent had multilateral regional security systems helped to stabilize Sino-Japanese relations? To what extent had the Japanese government used multilateralism as a mechanism for encouraging China to be a more constructive player within the region?

(1) The reaffirmation of the US-Japan military security alliance

While the US-Japan security alliance has been the core of Japan’s military security policy since the Second World War, China has not entered into such an alliance with the US, and therefore, this asymmetrical US relationship with Japan and China complicates the triangular pattern between Washington, Beijing and Tokyo. As a consequence, the impact of the US-Japan security alliance on China had been twofold. Namely, the Chinese government had reasons to fear both a breakdown of the alliance and an upgrading of Japan’s military role within the alliance. On the one hand, the Chinese government considered that Japan is unwilling to become a great military power so long as the alliance is stable. According to this view, a healthy US-Japan relationship is the key to containing Japanese remilitarization. On the other hand, the Chinese government also feared that Japan’s growing military role within the alliance may overturn the important pacifist norms of self-restraint that had precluded Japan from realizing its military potential and may, in turn, lead to a more comprehensive military buildup in due course.
Meanwhile, as argued in chapter one, Japan’s pacifism since the Second World War and domestic political constraints have steered Japan away from an attempt to become a military superpower. As Berger argues, even if Japanese policy makers were to conclude that dramatic change was necessary, given the existing culture of anti-militarism they would encounter strong opposition from the general populace as well as from large sections of the elite. However, this idea was not fully accepted by a more pessimistic Chinese government. For example, most PLA analysts viewed Japan’s post-Cold War military security initiatives as part and parcel of Japan’s junior but critical role in the larger US’ attempt to restrain the growth of China. It would be fair to claim that China’s biggest concern about Japan is the part it plays in containing the PRC via the alliance with the US.

Consequently, the revitalization of the US-Japan alliance during the late 1990s, following US-Japan unequal contributions to the conduct of the Gulf War and the intensification of the North Korean threat, exacerbated the pessimism of the Chinese government regarding Japanese intentions. The US-Japan alliance was reinforced following the Joint Declaration on Security: Alliance for the 21st Century issued by US President Bill Clinton and Premier Ryutaro Hashimoto in April 1997. The declaration called for the revitalization of the alliance for the Asia-Pacific region. Japan guaranteed base access for US forces and committed itself to augment its logistic and rear-area support role for US forces. In the face of these changes, Chinese leaders worried that the term Asia-Pacific implied the expansion of the geographic scope of the alliance from the area immediately surrounding Japan to a much more extensive regional focus.

In September 1997 the governments of Japan and the US revised their Defense Guidelines in order to embody the Joint Declaration.
The revised guidelines clarified Japan’s role in the alliance including the aforementioned logistics and rear-area support as well as adding the operational cooperation missions for Japan’s SDF in the event of a regional conflict, such as intelligence gathering, surveillance, and minesweeping missions. While these provisions did not include the provocative term Asia-Pacific suggested in the Joint Declaration, the scope of the alliance covers situations in areas surrounding Japan  a term which remains equivocal and, therefore, arguably of concern to China. Chinese government fears increased in August when Japan’s Chief Cabinet Secretary, Seiroku Kajiyama, bluntly mentioned that the Taiwan Straits would be an area for US-Japan cooperation under the revised guidelines. In response to this uproar, the Japanese government decided to add an explanation that the areas would be determined by situational rather than geographic imperatives, while China had been anxious about the inclusion of Taiwan and the South China Sea in the scope of the alliance due to its ambiguity. In other words, this changing interpretation of the term reflected instability between Beijing and Tokyo and Japan’s effort to alleviate this tension. In this context, Premier Hashimoto had to explain to his Chinese hosts during his visit to China in September that the revision of the guidelines was carried out with no specific country or area including China in mind.

When the Japanese government finally passed legislation for the new US-Japan security guidelines in the House of Representatives in China’s fear again increased. The Chinese government saw US-Japanese close cooperation as intentionally placing China in a weak position in the triangular relationship as well as attempting to deter any aggressive actions by China. It has been suggested that Beijing was also increasingly concerned that the alliance could become an umbrella for Japan to develop nuclear
Chapter 2. Regional insecurity

weapons in the future.

Whether or not the areas surrounding Japan actually includes Taiwan was still ambiguous since the Japanese government consistently avoided a clear explanation of the term even in the related government legislation. Indeed, a high level official of MOFA mentioned that it was a matter which ultimately rested on political judgment. The reason for this ambiguity was the Japanese government’s concern not to destabilize Sino-Japanese relations. The Japanese government defined situations in areas surrounding Japan as situations that might gravely affect Japan’s peace and security and the concrete situation was supposed to be clarified by the Japanese government only when a case occurs. However, it could be reasonably presumed that Japan would be likely to be obliged to intervene in any future regional crisis including a later clash between Beijing and Taiwan. This assumption was evidenced by the remarks of various Japanese politicians or governmental officials. For example, Taku Yamazaki, Chairman of the LDP Policy Research Council, implied the possibility of inclusion of Taiwan in the area in May. He further mentioned that the term situations inevitably included geographical concepts. Norimoto Takano, Director-General of the North American Bureau of MOFA, also noted in the Diet in May that Taiwan is included in the coverage of the situations in areas stipulated in the guidelines. Ichirou Ozawa, Head of the Liberal Party even claimed in an interview in May that the new guidelines are, roughly speaking, nothing other than equivalent to participation in a future war. In addition, Premier Obuchi did not clearly deny the possibility in the Diet speech in February stating that it was extremely difficult to respond beforehand to the question whether Taiwan is included in the areas. Therefore, for the Japanese government, the basis for formulating the guidelines was presumably not only the North Korean threat but also a possible fu-
ture Beijing-Taiwan military clash, which had thus complicated Sino-Japanese relations.

For Japan, these moves toward reaffirmation of the security alliance with the US were in practice fairly consistent with Japan’s postwar security policy described in chapter one, irrespective of China’s fears. While some Japanese politicians claimed that Japan should become a normal country with an independent military capability, the main-stream of Japan’s policy makers have argued that a robust US security commitment in Asia-Pacific is the most crucial factor for regional stability as well as Japan’s own security. For example, the official LDP policy argued for clarification of those security situations that might emerge in areas surrounding Japan given the importance of confidence-building with the US. The Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) Minshutou, Japan’s major opposition party at that time, also maintained in June in its security policy that the US-Japan system of close cooperation, in the arena of both diplomacy and security, has been a source of stability in the region. In addition, a poll of Japanese public opinion conducted in May also demonstrated that more than seventy percent support the US-Japan alliance. Therefore, given China’s accusations regarding the buildup of the US-Japan alliance, the Japanese government have endeavored to maintain a stable relationship with China in pursuing its security policy. In other words, Japan have tried to adapt its stance towards China within the reaffirmed framework of the US-Japan alliance. Indeed, Foreign Minister Yukihiro Ikeda stated in a November interview that Japan’s most important bilateral relationships are with both the US and China. It was thus likely that the Japanese government would make every effort to strengthen cooperative relations with China while maintaining the reaffirmed US-Japan alliance as core of Japan’s security policy.
(2) The China Threat theory and its impact in Japan

Following the end of the Cold War, and with a power vacuum emerging in East Asia following the collapse of the Soviet Union, US policy analysts began to advance a China Threat theory identifying China as a destabilizing factor for East Asian security. Major shifts in the regional balance of power sparked off a spiral of military security tension centered on China, associated, for example, with the Taiwan Strait Crises of 1954 and 1995. Ultimately, some even contended that a powerful China was destined to come to blows with the US.

China’s military modernization policy has been a key factor shaping the concerns of the Japanese security community. Until the late 1980s, modernization of China’s national defense was a low priority given pressure to promote economic development during Deng Xiaoping’s regime. By contrast, the role of military forces in protecting Chinese sovereignty was underscored in October 1989 at the first Communist Party Conference following the end of the Cold War.

There had been a number of developments which illustrate the increasing Chinese emphasis on military expansion and preparedness since the early 1980s. First, China’s military spending increased during the early 1980s, at a time when those of all the other permanent members of the United Nations Security Council decreased. Even if China did not increase its defense budget as a percentage of its GNP, its military capabilities was likely to rise in line with rapid economic growth. It is also worth noting that China began to acquire military technology such as in-flight refueling and modern weapons from Russia after the Gulf War. Other factors such as China’s arms
capabilities in terms of personnel, which exceed 60 million, also posed long-term threat.

Second, China’s strong preoccupation with national sovereignty consciousness encouraged China to champion its maritime interests in the South China Sea, particularly over the Spratly Islands, as well as the Senkaku Diaoyu Islands. For China, strategic waterways are sufficiently important politically as well as economically as to justify expanding its power projection capability. China’s pursuit of such territorial claims suggested that there was an urgent need to establish a multilateral security dialogue to resolve conflicting claims in the region.

Third, China had persistently, despite opposition from abroad, carried out nuclear tests, most notably in May and August of 1998. These tests prompted moral indignation by the Japanese public, especially since the test in May was conducted immediately following Premier Murayama’s request for a cessation of China’s test as well as after the reaffirmation of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty by the international community.

Fourth, China demonstrated its willingness to use force when it fired ballistic missiles in the vicinity of Taiwan’s two most important ports prior to Taiwan’s presidential election in March 2000. To some observers, this firing was designed to emphasize Beijing’s long-standing commitment to use force should Taipei declare independence.

It can be reasonably argued that the Japanese government and many Japanese policy makers had genuinely regarded China as a military security threat. There were a number of factors which illustrate Japan’s increasing concern about China’s military capabilities. First, in response to China’s in-
creasing military spending, Foreign Minister Tsutomu Hata asked China’s Vice-Premier Qian Qichen in January to try to enhance China’s military transparency.

Second, the process of revising Japan’s National Defense Program Outline in arguably reflected an assumption that the Japanese government perceived China as a military security threat. The JDA’s original text of the Outline noted that the present international situation includes elements of uncertainty and Japan’s neighbors include strong military powers possessing nuclear weapons; an attempt implicitly to highlight the Chinese military threat. Ultimately, however, this reference was moderated because of then governing SDPJ’s concern to avoid exhibiting blatant hostility toward China.

Third, the Japanese government suspended grant aid to China in August in response to China’s nuclear tests. Given Japan’s historic reluctance to politicize economic assistance, or rather to link aid to recipients’ security policy, this measure was viewed by Japanese policy makers as a major development in the bilateral relationship. Hence, it can be inferred that the strategic impact of the China Threat theory reached an important climax at this point within the Japanese government.

Fourth, Foreign Minister Youhei Kouno emphasized in October in statements to the Diet, that it was extremely important to consider China’s power in reaffirming the US-Japan security alliance. Thus, it can be inferred that underpinning the pressure within Japan from certain political figures to strengthen the US-Japan alliance had been anxiety about China. Indeed, LDP’s Secretary-General, Kouichi Katou, claimed, in relation to the US-Japan new guidelines of that how to cope with China would be the biggest problem for Japan in ten to fifteen years term hereafter.
Fifth, Japanese Defense White Papers, since 1995 have warned that Japan needed to pay close attention to China’s military situation. In addition, the annual report of the National Institute for Defense Studies (NIDS) of the JDA warned that it is undeniable that the basis supporting Jiang’s regime is military force and that the tendency toward reinforcing PLA forces should be noted. It also claimed that China’s recent efforts to strengthen security dialogues with foreign countries were an attempt to deny the China Threat theory. These factors indicate eagerness of the JDA, together with MOFA, to stress the China Threat theory.

Sixth, it would be fair to claim that Japan’s initiative to strengthen Sino-Japanese defense exchanges since the middle of the 1990s, as set forth in chapter three, also reflects Japan’s concern over China’s security threat. In practice, an LDP delegation to China led by Masajyuurou Shiokawa in April mentioned: Because of increasing concerns within Japan regarding China’s military forces, we would like to suggest the promotion of defense exchanges at a uniformed personnel level.

Some Japanese private organizations, academic societies and the general public also perceived China as a threat. For example, a private sector group, the Kansai Keizai Douyuukai, indicated in a report of January that China was the most likely source of instability in the region. A non-profit organization, the Japan Center for International Exchange, also warned in a paper issued in April that China is a source of instability in the region. Professor Masashi Nishihara at the Defense University of the JDA, claimed that the US-Japan security alliance was important precisely because China’s increased military power indicated that the PRC might pose a threat to other countries. According to an opinion poll of the Yomiuri Newspaper Company in January, percent of Japanese people had the perception that Chi-
na represents a threat to Japan’s security. In a September opinion poll, thirty-one percent of respondents highlighted arms reinforcement and twenty-seven percent as a source of their anxiety about China; each figure represented approximately a ten percent rise compared with the result of an August opinion poll.

By contrast, it was suggested in some quarters that China’s potential threat is not as significant as had been claimed. From this perspective, it would be less likely that China will emerge as an expansionist or hegemonic power willing to deploy force against Japan. Firstly, the PLA’s weapons inventory and combat capability lagged behind the latest state-of-the-art technology. For example, the Chinese air force was dominated by Chinese versions of the MiG and effectively old generation aircraft. While technological transfers from Russia were meeting certain of the needs of the PLA, they were insufficient to provide the PLA with a credible power-projection capability. Similarly, a US think tank, the Center for Defense Information, observed in May that the PLA did not have sufficient aircraft to attack Taiwan due to its limited power and that the did not in fact exist. Thus, it appears that China’s military buildup at that time, although substantial, was neither massive nor rapid, nor technologically impressive, despite its steadiness.

Secondly, there was no clear evidence that China aspires to conquer or subjugate other countries. China’s military buildup could be regarded as a natural corollary to its economic development as well as a reflection of its realist outlook on international affairs. Moreover, China had traditionally, at least in its public pronouncements, been opposed to hegemony and favored an independent peaceful diplomacy.
Thirdly, it was important to note that China began to participate more actively in multilateral security initiatives during the Cold War. For example, China joined the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) in 1997 as well as in the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) process in 1993. In addition, the Chinese government as well as some Chinese academians depicted the cooperative security within a multilateral security framework as a new concept for maintaining peace through non-threatening means, in contrast with exclusive and threatening arrangements such as the attempt to revitalize the US-Japan alliance. It could be inferred that by stressing cooperative security the intention of the Chinese government was to eliminate the China Threat theory and to check the tendency toward a revitalization of military blocs.

Fourthly, Chinese military power should also be examined in the regional security framework. While the China Threat theory argued that China was pursuing the goal of hegemony in Asia, the growth of Chinese power was only one element in a complex regional security environment. It was very likely that the United States would remain a crucial player in the regional security equation by virtue of its outstanding technical and economic powers as well as its military presence and alliances. Indeed, the US government decided via its Bottom-Up Review to maintain its one hundred thousand military man presence in Asia-Pacific in September 1997 and confirmed this policy in the United States Security Strategy for the East Asia Pacific Region published by the Department of Defense in February 2000. Japan’s Defense White Paper of 2001 also stated that US-Japanese security arrangements were expected to continue to play a major role in maintaining peace and stability in Japan as well as in the Far East.

To put these arguments into context, it is possible that the China Threat had, to a certain extent, been psychologically exaggerated. Some
would contend that such exaggerated fears of China were, in part, the consequence of a variety of factors, not necessarily related specifically to China’s military power: namely, a post-Cold War military security environment free from the traditional common threat of the former Soviet Union; the simple size of China; historical tensions that have divided China and the US; and the Chinese deep-rooted sense of nationalism. Nevertheless, it would be fair to argue that China’s military capabilities had been a source of instability in Sino-Japanese relations on the grounds that the Japanese government viewed China as a genuine threat. Moreover, China also posed a non-military threat to Japan in the context of environmental and energy security issues addressed more fully in chapter three. The motivation of the Japanese government to defuse possible tension increased all the more because of these alleged China Threats.

(3) Taiwan

Taiwan has the potential to pose the greatest source of instability to China and Japan. The Chinese government has long claimed that Taiwan is an integral part of China’s territory. The internal political dynamics on Taiwan, based on the principle of national self-determination, might lead over time to a formal declaration of independence, although Taiwanese President Chen Shuibian denied the possibility in his inaugural address in May. Any such move would officially be seen as provocative by Beijing and a violation of Chinese state sovereignty. Indeed, the official newspaper of the PLA indicated in March that independence would immediately lead to war.

Japan’s position on this problem has long been unchanged: to support Japan’s one China policy based on the Sino-Japanese Joint Communique, which states that The Government of Japan recognized the Govern-
ment of the People’s Republic of China as the sole legal government of China. Actually, the Diplomatic Bluebook clearly stated that Japan has maintained its relations with Taiwan via exchanges of a private and regional nature; in other words, non-governmental, unofficial ties in line with the Sino-Japanese Joint Communique. In this sense, Taiwan’s issues are China’s internal affairs and can hardly be a source of instability in Sino-Japanese relations.

It could be argued that Japan’s policy towards Taiwan was unstable. Some Chinese have even argued that the Japan-Taiwan relationship had moved during the late 1990s from an economic level to one with greater emphasis on the political dimension and from low-level contact to higher level engagement. In the summer of 1997 for example, the Olympic Committee of Asia invited Taiwan’s President Lee Tenghui to the Asian Games to be held in Hiroshima in October. Tokyo indicated its unwillingness to issue a visa to Lee, given Japan’s one China policy. However, the Taiwan Olympic Committee attempted to send Vice-Premier Xu Lide to Japan in order to lobby for a Taiwanese role in hosting the Asian Games. This time the Japanese government was willing to accept him. Yet, as Takagi argues, this did not mean that the Japanese government was willing to move any closer to the Taiwanese position. The Japanese government coherently maintained the one China policy in its official statements. In fact, in response to strong Chinese protests about Japan’s acceptance, Premier Murayama repeated during his talks with President Jiang at the APEC Summit that Japan would never support a two China policy.

It is also worth noting that some right-wing Japanese politicians, conscious of Japan’s past experience of dominating Taiwan, preferred to establish a special relationship with Taiwan at the expense of closer ties with the
PRC. For example, a major bilateral flare-up occurred in November when the Tokyo Metropolitan Governor, Shintarou Ishihara, visited Taiwan in response to an invitation by President Lee to thank Ishihara for providing assistance in response to the earthquake that struck Taiwan in September. China’s Foreign Ministry spokesman Sun Yuxi claimed that Ishihara’s visit reflected his anti-Chinese policy and was intended to prevent Taiwan’s integration with China. From the Japanese official point of view, however, Ishihara’s visit had no relation to the position of the national Japanese government, since Ishihara was acting purely as a local government official. In fact, Premier Obuchi was careful to comment in November that Ishihara’s opinion was entirely a personal one and not the official position of the Japanese government. Moreover, even a leading member of a Japanese pro-Taiwan politicians’ group, Keizou Takemi, mentioned in an interview in March that it was necessary for Japan to understand the one China concept and try to avoid military tensions between Beijing and Taiwan. Thus, despite some flare-ups of disputes, the Japanese governmental policy toward Taiwan has been fairly consistent and, in itself, does not represent a major source of instability.

Nevertheless, in a wider context, Taiwan does of course threaten to jeopardize Sino-Japanese relations. Taiwan is a focal point for a possible direct Sino-US military confrontation in the event of Beijing-Taipei military clash, which would inevitably draw Japan into the conflict via the revised Guidelines. China’s concern over the new US-Japan security guidelines had in large part been measurable because of the linkage with the Taiwan issues.

In addition, some incidents related to Taiwan negatively impinged upon Sino-Japanese relations. Taiwanese President Lee Tenghui, in an interview with a German public broadcasting commentator in July abruptly
abandoned the one China formula and defined the Taiwan-mainland relationship as a special state-to-state relationship. Predictably, a Chinese Foreign Ministry’s spokesman strongly objected to this definition and stated that China would not renounce the possibility of using force to prevent Taiwan’s independence. It has been suggested that China is more likely to use force if Taiwan legalizes the two China concept, which would have the same impact as an independence declaration. Even if Taiwan does not realize it, Sino-Japanese relations might deteriorate seriously if China regards Japan as colluding with Taiwan to support such a two China concept. Such a misperception would conceivably have malignant spin-off effects on Sino-Japanese relations, particularly over economic matters and over the Senkaku Islands.

Given that Taiwan’s problems are theoretically connected with China’s domestic affairs, most Sino-Japanese disputes over Taiwan are the product of mutual misunderstanding. During the post-Cold War era, the Japanese government, consistently maintaining the one China policy, have endeavored to minimize this misunderstanding through its engagement policy and bilateral dialogues.

(4) Regional security systems

It might be beneficial to consider the regional security framework in order to understand Sino-Japanese military security relations. During the Cold War era, regional security was considered within the context of the US-Soviet or capitalism-communism conflict. With the end of the Cold War, however, recognition of the need to establish a stable distribution of power among Asia-Pacific states, especially China, Japan and the US, increased. It should be noted that the Japanese government has emphasized the develop-
ment of bilateral relations in the global as well as an Asia-Pacific context. Indeed, Japan’s Premier Kaifu reportedly mentioned many times the need to promote Sino-Japanese relations in the Asia-Pacific region. Consequently, bilateral military tensions have been moderated by Japan’s attempt to encourage a multilateral security system, which has arguably worked as a source of stability in Sino-Japanese relations.

It was in part in this context that Japan’s Foreign Minister Tarou Nakayama proposed a framework for multilateral security in July which later developed into the ARF in July. The Japanese government stressed the significance of regional security dialogue as a supplement, not a replacement, for the US-Japan security alliance. For member countries including Japan, the ARF has been seen as a useful means to cope with China’s rising military power. Its main goal has been to socialize China to a degree that it acts as a responsible regional power. For this purpose, step-by-step confidence building was stressed by member countries, and therefore, this multilateral initiative provided an opportunity for resolving difficult issues that were hard to settle bilaterally.

Indeed, a number of instances showed that the Japanese government had tried to use the multilateralism represented by the framework of the ARF to encourage China to be a constructive regional partner. For example, Premier Hashimoto stated in his Diet policy speech of February that the peace and stability of the Asia-Pacific region hinges on Japan, the United States, China, and Russia building mutual ties based on confidence and cooperation. Premier Obuchi also claimed in his Diet policy speech of November that both Japan and China, as responsible countries interested in promoting peace and development of Asia-Pacific region, should attempt to strengthen dialogue and exchanges not only within bilateral relations but also in the wider
context of international society. Similarly, a MOFA high-level official, Hitoshi Tanaka, claimed in December that China’s constructive engagement in international society was one of the most important factors for the peace of the Asia-Pacific region and that Japan had to attempt to build confidence in multilateral security forums such as ARF. Moreover, JDA’s Vice Minister Masahiro Akiyama proposed to China in an expansion of Japan, US, Russia trilateral dialogue via the establishment of four-way talks an initiative in line with official Japanese policy.

Despite Japan’s interests in multilateralism, the traditional realist outlook of the Chinese government, particularly Beijing’s desire to preserve its independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, at first made the PRC reluctant to get involved in multilateral security organizations. For example, the Chinese government conceived that the dispute over ownership of the Spratly Islands in the South China Sea could only be negotiable on a bilateral basis. By however, China had become an active participant in the ARF. For example, China co-chaired with the Philippines an Intersessional Support Group meeting of the ARF on Confidence Building Measures in Beijing in March. The Chinese government, it seems, was drawn gradually into a multilateral security framework, which in turn had encouraged the development of its own view of cooperative security.

It should be noted that the ARF has in itself some limitations. First, it is a consensus-based consultation forum and is not a decision-making organization based on majority rule. Second, it is not a collective security organization like the United Nations and therefore the scope of its agenda is fairly limited. If the ARF tries to handle contentious matters that are directly related to China’s national interests, it may be especially difficult to secure China’s active involvement. For example, China has persisted in the ARF in discussing
the Spratly Islands’ problems not in a multilateral but in a bilateral fashion.

Nevertheless, it seems that the ARF has been a vehicle for encouraging a sense of confidence based on information sharing without undermining existing security arrangements including the US-Japan alliance. In addition, Sino-Japanese ties have been further augmented by the increased frequency of bilateral meetings during these multilateral gatherings. Given the likelihood that real confidence building between Japan and China would take place in the ARF, it has been crucial for the stability of Sino-Japanese relations to further security cooperation within this multilateral framework.

Furthermore, it should be noted that during the late Premier Obuchi asked China to discourage North Korea from test launching a second missile, following the Taepodong missile launch. Thus, it seems clear that regional multilateral security systems, such as the ARF, have helped to alleviate instability in Sino-Japanese relations via cooperative and confidence-building measures.

(5) Conclusion

With the end of the Cold War and the disappearance of the Soviet threat, Sino-Japanese security tensions within the Sino-US-Japanese triangular relationship increased significantly, undermining bilateral stability. The US-
Japan alliance was supposed to serve Chinese interests since it helped to check, in China’s eyes, Japan’s ambitions for regional hegemony while restraining the buildup of Japan’s military strength. However, given the Chinese government’s perception that Japan and the US were reorienting their alliance to contain China, the US-Japan security alliance had rather complicated Sino-Japanese relations. It has been likely that Japan would support US conduct if emergencies occur in the Taiwan Strait and therefore Taiwan has become one of the most serious flash points in the region.

Conceivably, Japan’s perception of China as a security threat was one of the factors encouraging Japan to reinforce its security alliance with the US. However, it was also important for Japan to balance its foreign policy between China and the US, since Tokyo recognized that it is crucial in securing regional stability and prosperity of the Asia-Pacific region to prevail upon China to become a more constructive partner. Therefore, the Japanese government attempted to use multilateral regional forums such as the ARF to minimize any developing misunderstanding of China via confidence-building measures and by developing an engagement policy towards China. In this connection, the Japanese government had also increasingly been active in initiating military as well as non-military bilateral security dialogue with China. The following chapter examines this issue.
Chapter 3. Bilateral dialogue

The strengthening of bilateral dialogue and cooperation had been one of the key features pushing post-Cold War Sino-Japanese relations in the direction of friendly cooperation, especially during the late 1970s. Premier Hashimoto began to take this initiative and, in his policy speech of November 1986, defined Sino-Japanese relations as an important relationship that is on a par with Japan-US relations. In August he articulated four principles for the promotion of bilateral relations based on mutual understanding, increased dialogue, the expansion of a cooperative relationship, and the establishment of common order. During his visit to China in the following month, Hashimoto described China as a constructive partner in the Asia-Pacific region. In this context, in order to encourage mutual confidence, he requested that China augment opportunities for bilateral dialogue in a more frequent and relaxed fashion, going beyond traditional summit diplomacy. Thus, it would be safe to say that the Japanese government had been actively attempting to encourage China to increase bilateral cooperation and exchange through dialogue.

Given this context, this chapter focuses on bilateral dialogue in the post-Cold War Sino-Japanese relations during the twentieth century. It analyzes how these dialogues had affected the mutual relationship, trying also to identify the precise type of dialogue that actually had gone on during this period. In other words, this chapter seeks to determine the extent to which Sino-Japanese bilateral dialogue, especially in the field of non-military security, had helped to stabilize bilateral relations during the twentieth century.
(1) Initiating dialogue

Japan’s engagement policy towards China had played a key role in promoting bilateral dialogue. Unlike the Cold-War era when Japan sought to establish friendly relations largely through economic ties, in the 1980s the Japanese government began to adopt a proactive engagement policy to China in the political and security arenas. For example, in his policy speech of January 1991 Premier Kaifu emphasized the importance of stabilizing and developing Sino-Japanese relations for regional and global security and welfare. He used the phrase Sino-Japanese relations in the world sekai no naka no nicchuukankei for the first time during his visit to China in August 1990.

In April 1992 Premier Miyazawa also underscored the importance of cooperation with China for Asia-Pacific regional peace. Miyazawa further stressed that Japan should deepen its political dialogue with China regarding the common tasks of international society such as arms control or protecting the global environment in order to realize Sino-Japanese relations that would contribute to the world. Premier Morihiro Hosokawa’s administration policy of actively supporting China’s market economy and its participation in the GATT scheme was part of the same pattern. Moreover, this approach had been continued by successive cabinets. Premiers Murayama, Hashimoto and Obuchi all actively practiced diplomacy focused on the promotion of Sino-Japanese relations. For example, Premier Hashimoto announced in August 1993 speech that as the Chinese economy develops, there will be greater stability in China resulting in further stability in Asia and the world. The Japanese governments in the 1980s had begun to recognize realistically that balancing the power of China was in Japan’s national in-
terests. Japan, therefore, sought to limit China’s global isolation and commit it to the path of international harmony.

What are the underlying factors of Japan’s policy shift? First, as highlighted in chapter two, the post-Cold War security environment altered the structure of Sino-US-Japanese relations fundamentally. Given the need to readjust this triangular relationship, the US, as reflected by President Clinton’s adoption of a new strategic dialogue, began to adopt an engagement policy towards China instead of containment strategy. Japan had to adopt an analogous, albeit not identical, line for the sake of the stability of the triangle. Second, in the context of Sino-Japanese relations, Japan’s leadership was increasingly less willingly to adopt policies shaped principally by economic rather than political factors. To act as a global political power, Japan had to first play its part in Asia, especially vis-a-vis rising China.

Another key factor encouraging bilateral dialogue and cooperation had been Japan’s changing notion of security. As argued in chapter one, while the Japanese government, as early as in the 1980s, began to view security broadly beyond its purely military aspects, this trend became more pronounced with the end of the Cold War. The concept of human security, in particular, raised by Premier Obuchi in 1995 was based on individual well-being and influenced by potential threats such as environmental degradation and massive refugee flows that pose serious problems to Japan. Recognizing the significance of these non-military considerations, Japan sought to cooperate with China not only military but also in a non-military security context via bilateral dialogue designed to alleviate the broad threats posed by China. The following section examines some achievements associated with major dialogue and cooperation between China and Japan mainly during the 1990s.
(2) The revitalization of dialogue and cooperation

(a) Environmental protection

Environmental pollution represents one of China’s largest non-military security threats to Japan. China’s increasing standard of living and greater urbanization as a result of the economic reforms of the 1980s have contributed to transnational environmental problems in a broader sense. China’s dynamic economic growth has been rapidly worsening air pollution by causing, in particular, an enormous increase in SOx, NOx and CO2 emissions. For example, the amount of SOx emission in China amounted to about twenty-three million tons per annum, approximately thirty times as much as in Japan, at the end of the twentieth century. Consequently, the Japanese academic community urged the government to provide funds and technology to help China fight air pollution, since pollutants carried in the atmosphere from Chinese factories were believed to cause acid rain in Japan, capable of devastating the country’s forests. For instance, one of Japan’s academic societies, the Japan International Forum, suggested in 1993 that Japan should first and foremost stress environmental protection with regard to cooperation with China.

In September 1993 Premier Hashimoto proposed several environmental projects. For example, a Sino-Japanese environmental development model city project aimed at establishing model cities in China, in which Japan’s governmental development assistance would be collectively and efficiently injected. Initially, Chongqing, Guiyang and Dalian were selected as model cities. Based on this project, Japan decided in February 1994 to provide a sixteen billion yen loan to China; the first time that Japan made these three cities themselves the target of a lump-sum loan. Similarly, Japan launched an en-
environmental information network providing computers to environmental information centers in China and establishing a network for the future monitoring of acid rain. Premier Hashimoto also promoted, as part of its ODA, interest-free yen loans to be used by Chinese firms for environmental protection; an initiative strongly welcomed by the Chinese government.

Meaningful environmental dialogue and cooperation had been further extended since In November a Joint Announcement on twenty-first century Sino-Japanese environmental cooperation was signed outlining specific areas for bilateral cooperation. Both governments backed the position of the Sino-Japanese Joint Committee for Environmental Protection, established under the umbrella of the Sino-Japanese Agreement of Environmental Protection. In his visit to China in July Premier Obuchi stressed the importance of Sino-Japanese environmental cooperation and proposed to establish a ten billion yen fund for promotion of greenbelt areas in China. Obuchi explained that this fund reflects the intention of Japan and China to play a part as major regional countries, through bilateral cooperation on global environmental issues.

Environmental dialogue also developed in an important trilateral context. For example, a Sino-Japanese-Korean Environment Ministerial Meeting was held in Seoul in January to promote environmental cooperation for sustainable development between China, Japan and Korea. As part of this process, ministers for Japan, the PRC, and the ROK frankly exchanged views on environmental issues in a regional as well as a global context. Possible priority areas for cooperation were discussed and it was agreed to set up liaison points in the environmental ministers of the three countries to facilitate personnel exchanges and dialogue. In February a second meeting was held in Beijing, and China and Japan, together with Korea, signed a joint com-
unique aimed at enhancing environmental community awareness, avoidance of maritime pollution and the development of environmental industries. Concrete cooperative programs in this field were expected to bear fruit at that time.

(b) Energy

In an increasingly energy-scarce world, energy insecurity also represents a potential source of instability in Sino-Japanese relations. China’s energy crisis was increasing because of its outdated and insufficient equipment, overuse of capacity, and uneven resource development. This energy problem could not only influence the Sino-Japanese environmental future but also influence disputes over territories such as the Senkaku Islands where abundant petroleum is reportedly located. At the same time, the common challenge of securing stable energy supplies acted as an incentive for bilateral cooperation. Hence, it is fair to argue that Japan’s energy policy has been a major stimulus for active engagement of China for the following reasons. First, while Japan imported more than eighty percent of its natural resources in the form of oil, coal and natural gas, it depended on foreign countries for more than ninety-nine percent of its oil and nearly eighty percent of this was imported from the Middle East according to statistics at that time. This excessive unbalanced dependence encouraged Japan to expand and diversify its oil supplies in regions outside the Middle East. Thus, China presented Japan with both a challenge as an oil importer and an opportunity as an oil producer.

Second, Japan has been very sensitive to anything that might threaten its domestic energy circumstances. In this regard, Japan has consistently been focused on China’s future energy demands. For example, if China imported millions of barrels of oil in a time, Japan might be seriously damaged in terms
of maintaining its own oil supply. Indeed, while China was a significant petroleum exporter up until the mid-1990s, it was estimated that Chinese oil consumption could exceed Japanese import levels by 2001, by which time China was supposed to be required to import as much as forty percent of its petroleum. Consequently, Premier Hashimoto noted in September 1999 that China will, without a doubt, increasingly become a major energy consumer and how to cope with this change in terms of both the supply and demand represents an issue of global significance. In short, China’s energy demand and supply conditions could be a great security threat for Japan.

Thus, Japan provided China with extensive governmental support for oil and gas exploration to secure new energy supplies, while promoting more efficient use of resources in China by financing power plants and introducing some energy-saving technologies to reduce China’s energy demand. The underlying mechanism for promoting such collaboration has been bilateral dialogue not only at a governmental official level but also in a non-governmental or private-sector context. Indeed, Japan’s Ministry of Trade and Industry (MITI) encouraged private companies in the energy sector, to render assistance to China’s energy security, primarily through the Export-Import Bank of Japan (JEXIM) and the Japan National Oil Corp (JNOC).

Within Japan, MITI worked with other government players and related semi-government organizations to promote dialogue and cooperation. The New Energy and Industrial Technology Development Organization (NEDO)

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4 MITI was reorganized as the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) in 2001.
5 JEXIM is currently organized as Japan Bank for International Cooperation, a section of Japan Finance Corporation (JFC).
6 JNOC was reorganized as Japan Oil, Gas and Metals National Corporation (JOGMEC) in 2001.
which reported to MITI, was a critical organization in this context. Its cooperative activities with the developing nations of the Asia Pacific region date from the Green Aid Plan, launched by MITI in 1992 to support the efforts of developing countries to cope with energy and environmental issues. NEDO concentrated a major part of its assistance in China, by, for example, providing coal preparation technologies in Huainan and Yanzhou.

Energy dialogue and cooperation had, in general, been enhanced since 1991. In November 1992, China and Japan agreed on the Sino-Japanese sustainable energy community project to support the development of energy adaptable to environment. This project was proposed by MITI at the Sino-Japanese Energy Consultations held in Beijing in the same month. The Japanese government sought to cooperate with China in providing for regional energy supply in China, particularly where environmental pollution was becoming serious. Through plans for the efficient provision of infrastructure, it was expected that China would be able to achieve both stable energy supplies and environmental protection. In China, rapid economic development, mainly in the coastal areas, spurred the demand for electric power. As a result, many inefficient power plants were a source of air pollution, and the imbalance of energy supplies between coastal zones and inner areas was becoming a problem. Bilateral Sino-Japanese cooperation identified and involved the drafting of plans tailored to each regional situation. Such dialogue and cooperation over energy security were expected to go from strength to strength at that time.

(c) Police exchanges

As globalization had rapidly advanced since the end of the Cold War, there had been a sharp increase in interconnectedness of all aspects of con-
temporary social life including criminal areas. As a result, the activities of Chinese criminals in Japan had become a grave security threat for Japanese people. According to the National Police Agency of Japan (NPA), approximately forty percent of arrested foreign criminals in Japan were Chinese at the end of the twentieth century. As far as foreign stowaways in Japan are concerned, for instance, more than ninety percent were said to be Chinese. In addition, in case of the seizure of stimulant drugs, forty percent of them originated in China.

In an effort to combat this criminal behavior, China and Japan entered into dialogues, largely at the initiative of Japan. Since May, two periodical dialogues had been held between the Vice-Director of NPA and Deputy-Director of China’s Police Ministry. In May, the Ministerial conference between Mitsuhiro Uesugi, Head of Japan’s National Public Safety Commission (NPSC) and Jia Chunwang, Head of China’s Police Ministry was held for the first time in Beijing. Uesugi requested Jia to establish a cooperative system for the control of Chinese connected cross-border international crimes such as illegal traffic in drugs and fire arms, Chinese organized crime and violence, money laundering, and illegal Chinese migration to Japan, mostly from Fujian province in the south of China. In response to Japan’s proposal, Jia agreed to promote working-level dialogue. Uesugi also suggested holding periodic ministerial conferences given the internationalization of crimes and the consequent necessity of international cooperation. While Jia did not make any firm promises, his reply was generally positive. He also showed interest in Uesugi’s proposal to set up a police attache in Tokyo to strengthen links between the Chinese and Japanese police authorities.

In November, during the Obuchi-Jiang summit talks, both countries agreed to strengthen cooperation in addressing international crimes such as
weapons’ smuggling, money laundering, financial and high-technology crimes and to continue collaboration to control the illegal drugs trade. In August Jia visited Japan for the first time as head of China’s Police Ministry, promoting in turn an official accord documenting agreement between the two sides. During Jia’s visit, Premier Obuchi stressed the importance of intensifying police dialogue and cooperation, noting that the measure to cope with increasing international crimes followed by the rise of bilateral exchanges have a favorable impact on the national Japanese attitude towards China. The following month, the head of Japan’s National Public Safety Commission, Tsuyoshi Noda, visited China and agreed on measures to promote cooperation. For example, both governments agreed to exchange police officials at both a ministerial level and also junior working levels. Thus, it was expected at that time that the Sino-Japanese police exchanges would develop gradually in accordance with the Joint Declaration and play an important role in minimizing the regional criminal threat.

(d) Defense exchanges

Although the aforementioned non-military security dialogues had played an important role in stabilizing Sino-Japanese relations, bilateral dialogues associated with military security, i.e. defense exchanges, were also an increasingly significant source of bilateral stability. While the military forces of China and Japan had long maintained working-level contacts, these were suspended after the Tiananmen Square incident. However, with the increased need to establish a good relationship with China regarding regional security following the end of the Cold War, Japan initiated working-level defense dialogue with China in 1992. At the same time, it is noticeable that Premier Hosokawa called for increased transparency in China’s military spending in discussion with Premier Li Peng and President Jiang Zemin in
March when Prime Minister Hashimoto suggested the reaffirmation of bilateral dialogue, he underscored the significance of military security exchanges for future Sino-Japanese relations.

Thus, defense dialogue and exchanges at a ministerial or working level, involving both civilian and uniformed personnel, resumed in the late months. For example, in February Japan’s head of SDF visited China to meet Chi Haotian, the Chinese Minister of Defense and discussed the transparency of China’s national defense. In August the Vice-Minister of Japan’s Defense Agency visited China. In February it was announced that Japan’s National Defense Medical University would begin personnel exchanges with China’s PLA. The following month, the fourth Sino-Japanese security dialogue was held in Beijing, attended by Japanese officials of the MOFA and JDA, the Director-General of China’s Foreign Ministry, Wang Qi, and a senior member of the PLA. This move was reinforced when Premier Hashimoto stated, two days before his official visit to China in September, it was necessary to promote Sino-Japanese defense exchanges on security matters and to eliminate mutual doubt. The key context for this observation was China’s misgivings regarding the new US-Japan defense guidelines set forth in the previous chapter. The JDA also presumably recognized that Sino-Japanese defense dialogue relatively undeveloped compared with Sino-US ones. Based on this view, Hashimoto proposed to Chinese Premier Li during his visit to China the deepening of bilateral defense dialogue.

In response to the Japanese initiative, bilateral defense dialogues increased substantially via several ministerial and official meetings in months. While China’s reaction to the Japanese proposition was rather negative at first, the Chinese government gradually came to accept the Japanese position.

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7 JDA was reorganized as the Ministry of Defense in 2001.
following the adoption of a policy to stress diplomacy with both Japan and the
US in order to promote trade and investment. In February, China’s Defense
Minister Chi visited Japan to meet Fumio Kyuuma, Japan’s Minister of the
JDA; the first visit to Japan by a Chinese defense minister since Japan sought to establish contact with China that differed from the existing pattern
of Sino-US defense exchanges. Explaining the purpose of the meeting, Kyuuma noted that it would be imperative to attempt to communicate our mutual
defense intentions rather than to draft a specific design from the beginning.
Both defense Ministers confirmed their basic common position that defense
exchanges were important elements in Sino-Japanese relations. They also
agreed to the exchange of researchers between the National Institute for
Defense Studies of Japan and China’s Defense University. In May, Kyuuma in turn visited China; the first visit to China by the head of the JDA in eleven years. Both sides agreed on mutual visits by Japan’s Maritime
Defense Force and PLA naval vessels, as well as increased defense minister
exchanges by the two countries. At the same time, China continued to ex-
press its concerns at Japan’s defense guidelines, argued that Taiwan should not be included within the scope of the guidelines. In response, Kyuuma
stressed that the guidelines and the Sino-Japanese Joint Communique were compatible, suggesting, in effect, that China had misunderstood the na-
ture of US-Japan security cooperation. Yet, according to a high level official
at the JDA, however, neither side had fully considered what both countries should discuss, even though the opportunity for dialogue had been arranged.
In this regard, it was likely to take time to establish fruitful defense dialogues comparable to other non-military security exchanges at that time.

After the Kyuuma-Chi talk, although defense exchanges did not improve immediately given the difficulty of identifying particular areas of cooperation, they were regaining momentum thanks to Chinese initiatives. In August a
Chinese military delegation headed by Wang Tailan, a PLA executive, visited Japan for talk with Seiji Ema, Vice-Minister of the JDA. This visit was, in part, the consequence of China’s strong desire to concentrate on the relationship between Japan’s defense policy and the Taiwan issue, in the context of the US-Japan security guidelines, and prompted also by Beijing-Taiwan security tension following the announcement of President Lee Tenghui’s state-to-state relation theory. In addition, the sixth Sino-Japanese security dialogue, suspended since December 1999 was resumed in Tokyo in October and a seventh dialogue was subsequently held in Beijing in June. In April, during discussion between Japan’s Defense Minister Tsutomu Kawara and PLA head, Chuan Quanyou, it was again agreed to expand exchanges. The task for the future at that time remained how to promote cooperative programs extending beyond mere dialogue and bilateral exchanges.

(c) Interaction between politicians

It would be a mistake to overlook the role of political leaders who have actively attempted to engage in political and security dialogue with China. A number of factors accounts for the significance of interaction between Chinese and Japanese political representatives. First, the Chinese Communist Party dominates China’s polity and the intentions of political leaders are, therefore, easily reflected in actual policy. Second, both the Chinese and Japanese have a tendency to make much of guanxi or jinmyaku, personal connections, in foreign diplomacy. Indeed, a majority of Japanese politicians arguably recognize the importance of such personal ties. For example, Foreign Minister Youhei Kouno observed that understanding between politicians has been crucial for Japan’s diplomacy towards China. In addition, diversity in the LDP, a party which had historically included pro-Beijing
groups and pro-Taiwan groups, complicated interaction and increased the importance of dialogues between politicians.

Indeed, the number of Japanese politicians visiting China was not inconsequential. According to the statistics reported by the Yomiuri newspaper, there were visits in and in the first half alone of Moreover, a marked increase in exchanges by politicians can be seen at the end of the twentieth century. For example, Naoto Kan, head of the Democratic Party of Japan DPJ visited China in May and proposed exchanges between young politicians of the CCP and his own party, as well as the conduct of joint research to establish an agreed view of history. As a consequence of President Jiang’s acceptance of this proposal, detailed consultations on this matter were initiated.

However, bilateral visits had not necessarily always been successful. First, Japan’s politicians tend to fail to say what they want in order to sidestep friction with China. In the worst instances, they visited Chinese political leaders unprepared and without any special agenda. As a result, some newspapers reported that China’s Premier, Zhu Rongji, who reportedly disliked political rituals, sought to limit meetings with Japanese politicians. Second, many Japanese politicians not only lack a long-term foreign policy strategy towards China but also have a very limited understanding of China’s political situation. For example, when Kouichi Katou, former LDP Secretary-General, met Wen Jiabao, China’s Vice-Premier in October Katou badgered Wen with numerous questions about the reform of China’s government-owned companies, an area where Wen had no responsibility. Wen was said to cut short the discussion intentionally in the face of Katou’s questions.

In this context, Premier Obuchi’s proposal, during his visit to China in
July for further exchanges of politicians, was welcomed by Chinese leaders. In response, Japan’s Clean Government Party, or Koumeitou, a small but influential member of the government coalition responded positively to a proposal from the CCP to exchange young politicians annually in November. Given that mutual understanding is extremely important in avoiding security tensions, these moves were increasingly expected to pave the way for alleviation of one source of instability in Sino-Japanese relations at that time.

(3) Summit diplomacy

Traditionally, Sino-Japanese political dialogue has been conducted via summits of the two countries. China, it should be noted, had, since the end of the Cold War, focused on creating partnerships with major countries such as the US, France, Russia and Japan, largely through summit diplomacy. The Obuchi-Jiang summit dialogue, which produced a Joint Declaration of partnership of friendship and cooperation for peace and development toward the twenty-first century was an example of such initiatives.

Japanese Prime Ministers have, for their part, also keenly been involved in summit diplomacy in relation to China. They have commonly stressed the importance of Sino-Japanese relations and attached high importance to political dialogues between senior leaders. Some forms of bilateral cooperation have been initiated at summit meetings; one reflection of the important role played by this formal fashion of bilateral dialogue.

Summit diplomacy has both a positive and a negative side. Summits can, it is true, help to avoid misunderstanding since mutual confidence can easily be established within a few days. In the aforementioned summit talks,
for example, both sides agreed to exchange visits of top leaders annually and to create a hot line between their capitals to expand cooperation in the areas of high technology, information, environmental protection, agriculture and infrastructure, as well as to promote security dialogues. However, summits can sometimes exacerbate a relationship due to the limited time for full discussion or lack of precision in drafting agreement. As will be set forth in the next chapter, for instance, past talks between China and Japan have highlighted the gap between the two countries’ views of the Pacific War, and the success of summit diplomacy often depends critically on the personal disposition of the leaders of the respective countries.

In this context, it is worth noting that some Japanese Prime Ministers failed to lead summit diplomacy with China. One typical example was Premier Obuchi’s gaffe regarding plans for the July Okinawa summit. Obuchi, on the basis of past summit talks with President Jiang, hoped to invite China to the summit meeting of the leaders of Group of Seven plus Russia. In particular, Obuchi hoped that Japan could act as the Voice of Asia at the coming summit as a means of demonstration of Japanese statesmanship in a diplomatic arena in a way that would go down well with the voters in the June Japanese general election. However, Beijing did not accept Obuchi’s proposal because China’s diplomacy had been concentrated more on the United Nations and less on the G plus Russia. Even within Japan, quite a few LDP members and MOFA officials had disagreed with Obuchi’s proposal on the grounds that China’s democratization and market economy were still insufficiently developed at that time. Moreover, Germany and the US took a negative line to this proposal as well. A British magazine, The Economist, sharply criticized Obuchi for having played the wrong China card. Sino-Japanese summit diplomacy, it seems, has its limitations and its success rests largely on the political ability of individual leaders. In this context, the importance of bilateral
Chapter 3. Bilateral dialogue

dialogues below the summit level, in establishing a foundation for long-term cooperation, is more and more salient.

(4) Conclusion

It was not until Premier Hashimoto articulated increased dialogue in that Sino-Japanese bilateral discussions on security, broadly defined, fully got under way. It is worth noting that the initiative to develop bilateral relations through dialogue came largely from Japan, although it is undeniable that Chinese leaders, particularly Premier Zhu, were interested in using such dialogues to learn from the Japanese experience of economic development to strengthen China’s own economic reforms.

Some might argue that the Japanese government have also sought dialogue largely as a way of increasing economic opportunities in China. Yet, the fundamental driving force behind this step had been regional insecurity caused by Sino-Japanese increasing military tensions, since most major Sino-Japanese dialogues initiated by the Japanese government since the end of the Cold War had dealt with security related issues. After all, it was defense exchanges resumed in that acted as the harbinger of post-Cold War Sino-Japanese bilateral dialogue. The Japanese government argued that gradual confidence-building measures were needed to relieve bilateral tension via substantial achievements attracting the attention and support of both governments. Increased dialogue can, in effect, work as a buffer against military tension between China and Japan. Thus, for the Hashimoto administration as well as the succeeding Japanese cabinets, establishment of opportunities for dialogue was a key component of the new engagement policy with China in the post-Cold War era. While this included revitalization of discourse at the highest level through various meetings, Hashimoto laid greater
stress on dialogue from below, namely at the senior or working official level. Importantly, Japan expanded the scope of dialogue beyond the military sphere to include other non-military security dimensions such as environmental security; a decision that was largely compatible with Japan’s liberal attitude towards security concerns, which defined security broadly, including a range of threats to human life, such as environmental pollution or international crimes.

Among key issues for Sino-Japanese bilateral dialogues, environmental security has been the most advanced in terms of concrete collaboration. This is largely due to two main reasons. First, Japan conceives of China’s environmental insecurity as a significant threat; as consequential as the military threat. For example, Premier Hashimoto noted in his speech in September that China’s environmental problems, such as air pollution, were not only China’s concerns but also had a great international impact. It is also noteworthy that some Japanese academic specialists argue that China’s real threat is not so much military, but environmental, since environmental damage is a pressing issue in Sino-Japanese relations and hard to recover from.

Second, China’s realism also encouraged Beijing to place much importance on coping with domestic environmental issues. China established a target for environmental protection as part of its ninth five-year plan, and in January, China’s Minister for Science and Technology, Zhu Lilan, noted that China attached high importance to environmental issues and regarded them as one of the country’s national interests. In this context, mutual Japanese and Chinese interests had a great potential to stabilize bilateral relations.
On the other hand, bilateral military security cooperation remained limited to defense exchanges, and despite Japan’s enthusiasm, neither side had a concrete notion of how to promote actual cooperation in this field at that time. Yet, a trend at the end of the twentieth century showed that military security dialogue took place among experts at a track-two level, particularly in conjunction with representatives from the US. In light of the importance of the triangular relationship, Japan and the US both proposed that China should participate in inter-governmental security dialogues. However, China rebuffed such proposals, arguing that it was premature to hold a triangular security dialogue at a governmental level and instead suggesting setting up an informal dialogue among specialists involving both governmental and private experts. As a result, an unofficial track-two military security dialogue involving China, Japan and the US was held in Tokyo in July mainly to discuss US-Japan security arrangements and the new guidelines. Such initiatives were expected to contribute to fruitful military security cooperation between China and Japan.

In sum, in addition to traditional summit diplomacy with all its attendant limitations, a variety of Sino-Japanese bilateral dialogues were initiated, involving ministers, vice-ministers, bureau chiefs, as well as countless track-two gatherings bringing together government officials and private sector representatives. It can be concluded that such dialogues and the cooperation arising from them could all help to build common security and reflect current amicable character of the Sino-Japanese relationship.
Chapter 4. Historical controversy

Sino-Japanese relations cannot be correctly understood without due consideration of bilateral historical controversies. The spirit of the Sino-Japanese Joint Communique, where China renounced its claim for restitution for the damage caused by Japan’s acts during the Pacific War, has provided a basis of common understanding of the past history between the governments of the two countries. In addition, Japan’s postwar pacifism should have alleviated China’s misgivings about Japan’s revival of militarism or its evasive attitude regarding its past wartime actions. Yet, both countries, since diplomatic normalization, have often revisited historical controversies because of their sensitive nature, which in turn has added to instability in the bilateral relations. It might be argued that Japan learned from a number of controversies that memories of the Pacific War and Japan’s occupation of China did not die easily in China. At the same time, such controversies provided the Japanese government with chances to review its perception of history and to face up to its wartime responsibilities.

This chapter attempts to determine the underlying causes of the historical controversies as a potential source of instability in bilateral relations. More specifically, it seeks to answer the following questions: to what extent do and will historical issues in the Pacific War affect Sino-Japanese relations? How do China and Japan view their respective history differently? How have Japan and China, at least officially, tried to put an end to these controversies?

(1) Previous controversies during the Cold War period

There were some previous controversies on historical issues during the
Chapter 4. Historical controversy

The textbook case and the Yasukuni shrine issue were arguably the most serious examples during the Cold War. In the former case, Japan’s Education Ministry approved history textbooks in which the term advance, not aggression, was used for Japan’s invasion of China. Accordingly, the Chinese government officially condemned Japan’s policy of censorship. In the latter case, the Chinese government criticized Premier Nakasone’s visit, for the first time as a post-World War II Japanese Prime Minister, to the Yasukuni Shrine which enshrines Japan’s wartime dead, since it had symbolic implications that Japan was not necessarily willing to accept its wartime responsibilities.

China’s motivation in raising these issues was presumably based on three factors. First, it was an attempt to resolve the outstanding remaining obstacles based on the assumption that the progress achieved through the Sino-Japanese Joint Communique and Peace and Friendship Treaty had created a context in which friendly relations had genuinely developed between the two countries. Second, it was a strategic effort to offset the growing political power of Japan, reflected in its increased military spending and its comprehensive security, by using historical issues against Japan. In the Yasukuni shrine case, China’s increasing trade imbalance with Japan at that time, which provided Chinese with an impression of Japan’s economic invasion, also prompted China to raise historical concerns. Third, these historical issues were a good chance for the Chinese leadership to demonstrate its independent foreign policy as well as to take control of the Chinese Communist Party. While these historical issues had a limited importance for the overall relationship, it is advisable to note a similar pattern surrounding historical controversies continued during the: strong protests from China followed by an apologetic reaction from Japan. It is also important to note that, as a result of these controversies, the Japanese government
learned how to defuse the tensions surrounding historical issues.

(2) Post-Cold War controversies

Historical controversies in the 1990s and 2000s reflected a type of patterned behavior in which remarks made by leading cabinet members provoked a critical response from the Chinese government and in turn an attempt by the Japanese government to officially defuse tensions between the two countries. In the post-Cold War period, it would be fair to note that there had been a willingness by the Japanese government to address historical issues more directly, i.e., in a way suggesting that it was less resistant in accepting Chinese criticism. However, on close examination, the way in which these historical issues were addressed by successive Japanese governments during the 1990s had not necessarily been consistent and apparently there were some contradiction. Therefore, this section examines this shift not only seeing what factors contributed to it but also seeking to document and perhaps explain those contradiction.

(a) Japan’s shifting view of the Pacific War

Throughout the Cold War period, many Japanese leaders seem to have refused to acknowledge their country’s wartime responsibilities; a point demonstrated by the fact that some cabinet ministers were obliged to resign due to their careless remarks on the wartime responsibility. For example, Masayuki Fujino, Minister of Education, was forced to resign in 1995 after claiming that Japan’s wartime massacre of Chinese civilians in Nanjing did not violate international law. Seisuke Okuno, Minister of Land, also resigned in 1997 after a series of statements suggesting that Japan’s alleged invasion of China was not a war of aggression. In addition, even the Japanese Prime
Minister tried to justify the past acts of Japan. In February Premier Noboru Takeshita stated that it was up to future generations of historians to determine whether Japan had been an aggressor in the Second World War, although in the face of numerous criticisms at home and from abroad he finally had to acknowledge that Japan was guilty of aggression.

With the end of the Cold War, however, the Japanese government began increasingly to admit explicitly its responsibility for wartime actions and some of the excesses associated with its period of alleged colonial rule. A number of factors lay behind this change. For example, the termination of East-West conflict, together with the death of the Showa Emperor in January, presented a direct challenge to Japan’s interpretation of the history of the Pacific War. Also, the end of LDP hegemony in January which had lasted since December encouraged a further rethink of Japan’s history in the political arena. Moreover, this change was apparently spurred on by the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War in December.

Nevertheless, it seems too premature to conclude that Japan had entered a new era in terms of its relationship with Asian countries, including China, where historical interpretations are concerned. In fact, it is debatable how much an awareness of Japan’s responsibilities had taken root among those Japanese political leaders who had appeared to modify their opinion on this issue. Since politicians are frequently unwilling to express their views publicly, it is difficult to assess their real motivation. Yet, it remains important to chart the change of the official line of the Japanese government.

The initial indication of this change came early in the 1990s. In May Premier Kaifu stated in Singapore that he would deeply reflect upon Japan’s actions which had imposed unbearable suffering and sadness on
many people in the Asia-Pacific region. The Japanese emperor’s visit to China in October also symbolically suggested that Sino-Japanese relations had entered a new stage. The emperor deplored the unfortunate period when Japan inflicted great sufferings upon the Chinese people.

Two pronounced breaks with the past were made by Premier Hosokawa in and Murayama in. In August, Premier Hosokawa stated at a press conference that he recognized that the previous war was both erroneous and a war of aggression. It was at that time the strongest expression by a Japanese Prime Minister, because Hosokawa had used the term war of aggression for the first time as a Prime Minister and had intentionally avoided the more equivocal word regret favored by earlier Prime Ministers. However, it can be assumed that this remark was not so much a significant change of Japan’s overall historical perception as it was an example of Hosokawa’s personal approach. Given the nature of the political environment at the time, it is plausible to assume that powerful domestic considerations had encouraged the Prime Minister to attempt to use historical issues to define his leadership and his political party differently from the LDP. Whether or not he genuinely believed Japan needed to apologize is not within the scope of this analysis to determine. The fact that his remark met with opposition from other cabinet members demonstrates that there was certainly not consensus within the government on this issue. For example, Eijirou Hata, Minister of Agriculture, mentioned in August that there might have been other elements besides a war of aggression. As a result, Hosokawa, while demonstrating his awareness of acts of aggression did not use the term war of aggression and avoided use of the phrase apology in his Diet policy speech thirteen days later. However, Hosokawa’s remarks still created a sensation in Japanese society. For example, Ryuutarou Hashimoto, head of the Japan Bereaved Families
Association Nihon Izoku Kai addressed a public protest against Hosokawa’s remarks in October claiming that he Hashimoto did not believe that the war with the United States, England, France, and Holland was one of aggression.

The spirit of Hosokawa’s amendment of his initial remarks was preserved by the next Premier, Tsutomu Hata. Hata stated in the House of Councils in May that there were acts of aggression during the war, carefully avoiding the phrase war of aggression. He tried to maintain Hosokawa’s basic policy on the question of Japan’s wartime responsibilities, while minimizing the domestic political ramifications associated with Hosokawa’s controversial statement. Thus, it can be inferred that the Japanese government preferred to modify its policy out of practical necessity rather than to reinterpret the official view of history. Indeed, without further documenting evidence, it is too difficult to clearly identify whether the Japanese authorities were motivated by pragmatism or genuine shift in attitudes. Yet, it would be fair to claim that, among other politically influential leaders such as Ichirou Ozawa, Secretary-General of the New Renewal Party Shinseitou a political bloc supportive of Hosokawa and Hata, there was evidence of a similar willingness to shift Japan’s public position on historical questions. Ozawa also appeared to have been motivated by the practical necessity claiming that Japan, in order to play a political role in the creation of a stable order in East Asia cannot deny the part aggression has played in our history in Asia.

It was Premier Murayama who finally, via his public statements, provided a comprehensive and largely unambiguous expression of the official Japanese position on these difficult historical issues. In August he made a speech in memory of the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the Second World
He said, in the recent past, Japan made a mistake and plunged its people into a crisis of existence by embarking on the war, and through its aggression and colonial rule it has imposed great suffering and hardships particularly on the people of countries in Asia. On the basis of this recognition, he expressed a sense of profound remorse and apology from the bottom of his heart for Japan’s wartime actions. While some Japanese right-wing politicians, such as Seisuke Okuno, still strongly argued that the Pacific War was not necessarily proof of Japan’s aggression, Murayama established, as Japan’s official standpoint, the admission that Japan’s colonial rule and acts of aggression were without doubt historical facts. In fact, Japan’s Prime Ministers after Murayama have maintained their spirit in their public statements. For example, Premier Hashimoto, in his visit to China in September, referred to Murayama’s speech as the official view of the Japanese government as well as his own point of view. The content of Murayama’s speech was also included in the Sino-Japanese Joint Declaration. Murayama also made a symbolic visit to the Marco Polo Bridge, where a clash between Chinese and Japanese troops triggered the Sino-Japanese War from the outskirts of Beijing in May.

However, Japan’s view of the war was still not uniform across the political spectrum, as reflected by the debate over a Diet resolution in the SDPJ had been pressing the Diet to conclude a resolution declaring that Japan would never wage war again and including a general apology for the war prior to Murayama’s visit to China in May. In response to this move, a conservative politicians group in the LDP, the Parliamentarians’ League on the Fiftieth Anniversary of the End of the Second World War, claimed that Japan fought the Greater East Asian War to defend itself and denied the need to agree on the
proposed resolution. The LDP Secretary-General Yoshiro Mori also stated in April that his party could not accept a resolution which involved apology and renunciation of war. As Mukae argues, a combination of ideological considerations and electoral concerns lay behind this political outlook. The resolution finally adopted by the Diet on June failed to use such terms as apology and renunciation of war. This resolution undoubtedly reflected a perception of history within the Japanese government that has been anything but monolithic. Indeed, the resolution passed the Diet with the absence of as many as seventy politicians and even within the same party, both within the LDP and SDPJ, there were clear differences of views. These facts show that there were strong volume of opinion in Japan where there was still reluctance to accept wartime responsibilities in terms of foreign relations.

In September, Premier Hashimoto visited Liutiao Lake, the origin site of the Manchuria Incident of a move welcomed by China. Compared with Murayama’s epoch-making visit to the Marco Polo Bridge, Hashimoto’s visit had more symbolic significance for Sino-Japanese political relations. First, Hashimoto’s visit was the first post-World War II visit to a historical site in former Manchuria by the head of the LDP. In contrast with Murayama’s SDPJ, which was viewed as relatively moderate on historical issues by the Chinese leaders, the effort to face up to the past by a leader of the LDP was fundamentally more important in symbolizing Japan’s positive shift in attitudes toward historical issues. Second, Hashimoto himself had been regarded as a hawk by Chinese leaders, since he had generated controversy by his visit to the Yasukuni Shrine in and after assuming leadership of the Japan Bereaved Families Association of the Pacific War, a right of center grouping. Actually, he mentioned in October before becoming Prime Minister, that it was difficult to say absolutely that Japan had fought a war of
In sum, Japan’s view on wartime responsibilities in relation to China had been somewhat unsteady because of the existence of some hard-line politicians. Yet, on the whole the government gradually came to accept the idea, at least officially, that Japan had to show remorse and apologize for its colonial rule and acts of aggression to China. This move indicated Japan’s realistic desire to put an end to historical controversies with China. This pragmatic approach to historical issues provided Japan with greater diplomatic flexibility, which in turn greatly contributed to the stabilization of the bilateral relationship. It should also be noted that it is closely associated with Japanese peculiar way of thinking known as tatemae and honne. As former Construction Minister, Shizuka Kamei, explained, Japanese have a term, tatemae, which means official reality, the way you say things are, whereas they also have honne, our real feelings, the way things really are. At least where honne is concerned, a large number of Japanese politicians or bureaucrats presumably still have a sense of why Japan has to apologize to China. However, Japanese foreign policy makers have on the whole placed greater stress on tatemae. As a consequence, Premier Murayama’s August speech reflected Japan’s official stance. Only when tatemae and honne strongly clash is Japan compelled to adopt a compromising attitude as represented by the Diet resolution. Because of such occasional compromises, the Japanese government needed to revive international confidence in its sincerity through substantial acts. In this context, bilateral dialogue and cooperation could act as a buffer not only against security tension but also over historical controversies.
(b) The climatic controversy of 1998 and its aftermath

It would be safe to say that historical controversies reached one of their climaxes during President Jiang’s visit to Japan in November despite Japan’s positive attitude towards historical issues over the preceding few years. It was an unexpected deluge of the Yangtze River which postponed Jiang’s September visit and opened up a revival of the controversies. During the summit talks between Japan and Korea in October, Japan agreed to include the phrase Japan’s apology and remorse for its colonial rule in a joint public statement. After that event, China strongly demanded that Japan include a similar statement in its joint declaration.

However, Japan persistently rejected including the phrase apology in the declaration. There were several factors that caused Japan’s strong refusal. First, Japan believed that the past had already been summarized by the Sino-Japanese Joint Communique. It was therefore natural, from Japan’s point of view, to use different phrases from those used in the Japanese-Korean document, which lacked no prior corresponding communique. Second, the historical fact that Japan had carried out colonial rule in Korea but not in China provided Japan with reasonable grounds to differentiate in its joint declarations between China and Korea. Third, it was strongly suggested, within the LDP, that Japan should not issue an apology too many times. There was a strong feeling among the members of the LDP that China would repeatedly require that Japan apologize.

Taking into account these factors, Premier Obuchi did not try to compromise on this issue despite MOFA’s suggestion that a word of apology be included in the final bilateral statement. According to a Japanese newspaper,
an old influential LDP politician, stressing the difference from the Korean case, strongly advised Obuchi not to include apology in the documentation. Thus, Foreign Minister Masahiko Koumura proposed as the last card to Chinese Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxian Japan’s willingness to include the word aggression but not apology in any final statement. Koumura indicated that Prime Minister himself would simply make a verbal apology but no formal apology in the final version of the declaration. Thus, Japan expressed remorse and apology in Obuchi’s statement at the meeting with Jiang without reference in the Joint Declaration. However, the Chinese side was not fully satisfied by this measure, which spurred Jiang to spend most of the summit meeting discussing the history issues. He brought up this problem even during his speech at Japan’s imperial banquet, stating that Japan’s militarism adopted a mistaken role by expanding foreign aggression. China’s insistence on the history issue was not received well by ordinary Japanese, encouraging some Japanese newspapers evaluate the achievements of his visit in a negative way. Foreign Minister Koumura also showed his irritation, claiming that the gap between Japan and China lay not so much in their perception of history but in the way of thinking in treating problems. On the other hand, despite his misgivings about the problematic remarks of some right-wing LDP leaders, Jiang at last emphasized the successful results of his visit on the whole.

While it might be too premature to assess the significance of this controversy, it can reasonably be argued that China tried to put a tentative end to this historical issue through the documentation of the Joint Declaration. While some might argue that China wanted to pressurize Japan in the hope of gaining political or economic concessions by using the convenient tool of the history card, this idea was not supportable as far as this case is concerned. Indeed, Chinese government officials clearly denied this idea. In spite of
Japan’s persistent rejection of apology wording, China highly evaluated the result of the Joint Declaration given that Japan for the first time officially admitted its aggression in China in a documented form. Therefore, while it is true that controversies over history have reemerged at some points during the twenty-first century, China was unlikely to show such a strong persistence over this issue officially unless the Japanese government drastically changes its attitude or shows some signs of militarism.

Taking into account that Japan’s foreign policy embodies realistic considerations, it was highly unlikely that the Japanese government, at least as its official statement, would revive these controversies to the detriment of its national interests. While some Japanese politicians still sometimes made provocative remarks, the official stance of the Japanese government has been consistent in denying or criticizing them. For example, Shintarou Ishihara, Governor of Tokyo, used the historically sensitive phrase three-nation people in April in referring to Chinese and Korean residents in Japan; a term that has definitely negative connotations among Chinese and Koreans. In response, Premier Yoshirou Mori criticized Ishihara’s words suggesting that this may have been inappropriate for a governor. Hence, it can be argued that the post-Cold War Sino-Japanese relationship during the twentieth century successfully managed to avoid a traditional source of instability over historical controversies, largely owing to Japan’s China policy.

(3) Conclusion

It is essential to consider Sino-Japanese relations within the context of historical controversies in order to get a better understanding of the complexity of the bilateral relationship. The positions that both sides had taken were fundamentally different. For China, regardless of the Joint Commu-
nique, history should be always kept in mind in order to enhance the future relationship. Therefore, China frequently referred to hurt feelings suffered during the Pacific War in bilateral talks. In turn Japan tended to make minimal concessions to China necessary to avoid the political embarrassment associated with China’s accusations.

On the other hand, Japan did not always place historical issues at the center of bilateral relations on the assumption that they had already been settled thanks to the adoption of the Sino-Japanese Joint Communique as well as the Emperor’s visit in Japanese leaders, especially most LDP members, tended to believe that the more forthright attitude of regret and apology represented by Premier Murayama’s speech, should be accepted by the Chinese, thus putting an end to this controversy. As Shambaugh argues, Japan’s China policy on historical controversies was guided by its pragmatic national interests rather than a purely ideological orientation. Under the surface, some right-wing politicians strongly believed that Japan has no need to make an apology to China as reflected by the May remarks of Shigeto Nagato, Justice Minister, that accounts of the Nanjing massacre were fiction. In this context, it would be natural that some resurgent Japanese nationalism and attempts to justify Japan’s wartime actions became salient in opposition to China’s view of history. For example, Nobukatsu Fujioka, professor of education at the University of Tokyo, proposed a liberal view of history which downplayed the aggressiveness of Japan’s wartime actions.

It is also worth noting that a number of Japan’s politicians were of the opinion that Japan contributed to China via economic cooperation; in effect offsetting Japan’s wartime responsibilities. For example, Premier Obuchi mentioned in November that while Japan harmed China in the past, it
has so far tried to promote cooperation aimed at the development of China. However, Chinese leaders argued that the losses in the war were without parallel, even by comparison with the cooperation Japan had extended to China so far. In fact, in September, the Chinese Premier, Li Peng, noted in regard to Japan’s freeze on financial cooperation, that the loss caused by Japan’s past war of aggression is incomparable with the amount of assistance provided by the Japanese government so far.

The salient features of the historical controversies which emerged following the end of the Cold War during the twentieth century can be recapitulated by the following two points: In the first place, China persistently referred to historical issues in an official context as seen by Jiang’s visit to Tokyo. There were a number of reasons for this tendency. First, Japan’s growing military security, despite the country’s pacifism, prompted China to fear excessively the revival of Japanese militarism. Second, as Green and Self argue, President Jiang’s generation lacked the ties with some of Japan’s elite that former leaders such as Zhou Enlai enjoyed. As a result, Jiang felt little sense of connection with the Japanese leadership of that time. On the other hand, the Chinese leadership after Jiang’s generation does not necessarily share his views on historical matters. For example, Li Duanhuan, executive member of China’s Communist Party, mentioned in November that while history includes some unpleasant parts, the friendly period has been much longer in Sino-Japanese relations and most Chinese hope for friendship with Japan. Thus, it can be inferred that many younger Chinese politicians at that time increasingly felt that it was more important to attempt to establish a friendly relationship than to emphasize the past sad history.

In the second place, Japan’s policy on historical controversies shifted to accept its wartime responsibilities in response to China’s raising of historical
issues. It was based on a pragmatic engagement policy, as well as Japanese efforts to assume political leadership in the region. The Japanese government learned how it can safely react to China, or how to defuse tensions, without triggering hostile emotion over a number of controversies. For example, when a group of conservative Japanese historians held a conference in Osaka in January questioning or denying Japan’s historical responsibility for the Nanjing massacre, Foreign Minister Youhei Kouno immediately maintained that the massacre was an undeniable fact and that Japan’s official position, raised in Murayama’s speech, had not changed at all. Therefore, despite the different stance on historical issues between China and Japan, it would be fair to claim that it was high time for both countries, as of the end of the twentieth century, to settle past controversies in order to take the next step of enhancing their bilateral relationship as constructive partners.
Conclusion

This paper has sought to analyze the major political and strategic sources of stability and instability in post-Cold War Sino-Japanese political relations focusing on the period of the twentieth century. It is arguable that Sino-Japanese relations were greatly affected by the end of the Cold War, as was clearly the case with other bilateral relations, most notably the US-Soviet relationship. One of the most significant changes had been in Japan’s China policy, where the Japanese government attempted to play a more active role, in light not only of traditional economic interests but also of political or security related issues. In his April policy speech, Japanese Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori stressed the importance of creative diplomacy based on an active Japanese role in promoting its national interest. In this regard, Mori, first and foremost, declared Japan’s intentions to develop a good relationship with China in accordance with the Sino-Japanese Joint Communique. This claim symbolized Japan’s existing post-Cold War China policy, often characterized as a policy of engagement. As an Asia-Pacific regional partner Japan tried to encourage China to be engaged in international society in order to avoid China’s isolation.

The most fundamental driving force behind this change was post-Cold War military security tension within the region, which acted as the most important source of instability in Sino-Japanese relations. Unlike the Cold War period, when Japan did not conceive of China as a security threat and placed a priority on supporting China’s modernization via economic development, the post-Cold War security environment encouraged the Japanese government to sharpen its security policy and to regard China as a genuine security threat. Some of the new challenges confronting China exacerbated this instability.
For example, China’s military modernization as well as its territorial claim over the Senkaku Islands prompted Japan to realize the importance of security policy in relation to China. Arguably, the 台湾 and 台湾台湾 Straits crises were crucial in encouraging the Japanese government to reaffirm its security alliance with the US. Indeed, Foreign Minister Youhei Kouno illustrated the Japanese government’s recognition of the China Threat in his October remark that China’s presence is a matter of great importance for Japan’s security as well as future stability in Asia. Thus, it can be concluded that these growing military security tensions accelerated Japan’s engagement policy toward Beijing, particularly the focus on security issues in dealing with China. As Green and Self argue, this trend might be characterized as a shift of Japan’s China policy from commercial liberalism to reluctant realism.

In addition, Japan was increasingly forced to contribute to regional security directly despite its pacifist preference for an exclusively defensive defense policy. With the US calling on Japan to make a greater contribution to regional security within the framework of the US-Japan alliance, Japan had to pay close attention to China in particular and demonstrate its willingness to act more constructively if and when it might be needed. In this regard, the possibility of a military clash between Beijing and Taiwan represented the gravest source of instability for Sino-Japanese relations, since some Japanese policy-makers indicated that Taiwan falls within the scope of the areas covered by the reinforced US-Japan security alliance.

China, for its part, tended to believe that Japan is promoting a policy of containment of China for the sake of regional security within the framework of the US-Japan security alliance. Essentially, the Chinese government was sensitive to anything relating to Japan and views Japan both as a historic rival and as an extension of America’s military power. Not surprisingly, the
Japanese government, in an effort to counter this perception, regarded bilateral dialogue as a source of stability and endeavored to promote it not only between governments but also in a non-governmental or private-sector context. In addition, the Japanese government also tried to use multilateral forums, such as the ARF, to promote an engagement policy towards China focused on confidence-building measures.

The broadly defined notion of security held by the Japanese government helped to promote such dialogue and cooperation and to stabilize Sino-Japanese relations. Increasing awareness of such issues as environmental pollution, energy scarcity, and international crime encouraged the Japanese government, as well as academic experts, to regard China as a new threat to Japan’s security broadly defined. For example, Yukio Satou, a MOFA official who was the intellectual force behind Japan’s ARF policy, stressed in that broader issues like the environment should be addressed in security dialogues. It is clear that the purview of Japan’s engagement policy towards China had expanded into these new security fields, and in this context, the Japanese government had attempted to enhance mutual trust while also easing regional insecurity.

It is important to note that beneath the surface of overt policy changes lie historical controversies over the Pacific War. The legacy of the Pacific War, psychologically and symbolically, had made a great impact on Sino-Japanese relations. The failure of Japan to fully account for its wartime responsibilities in the eyes of the Chinese government until the early fueled anti-Japanese sentiment in China, as demonstrated by the textbook issue or the Chinese student uproar in response to the Yasukuni Shrine controversy. Somewhat paradoxically, the Chinese government became increasingly insistent in highlighting historical issues following the end of the Cold War. It
would be fair to presume that one of the causes of this persistence was military security tension and Chinese persistent fears that Japan’s increasing awareness of its military security needs might lead to the revival of militarism. In other words, China’s anxiety over Japan’s alleged containment policy towards the PRC, via the exercise of its revitalized military power, added weight and importance to these historical controversies. However, as the preceding analysis demonstrates, the story is more complicated than this. Japan’s China policy have been shaped by an engagement strategy rather than by a policy of containment. Hence, it would be safe to argue that some mutual misunderstanding and mistrust have aggravated bilateral controversies. In fact, the Japanese government attempted to adopt a realistic policy in admitting its wartime responsibilities, at least officially, as a means of defusing historical tension. Nevertheless, it is still difficult to conclude that the Japanese government genuinely began to consider its wartime actions as a mistake. For, Japan’s perception of its wartime responsibilities often reflects a complicated domestic political situation, and especially the bargaining among political parties. Therefore, complete ideological unity among the Japanese policy-makers on the history question is almost impossible to realize and, therefore, successive Japanese cabinets have given priority to a pragmatic rather than a comprehensive approach in order to avoid destabilizing relations with China.

In contrast with China’s persistence in revisiting historical controversies, the Japanese government attempted to resolve historical tensions in the late 1990s. Recognizing that these controversies generate mutual distrust, the Japanese government appeared to have reaffirmed the importance of initiating bilateral dialogue and creating concrete cooperation as a means of enhancing mutual understanding. Increases in exchanges between politicians were part of Japan’s attempts to encourage the Chinese government to
put an end to the controversies over historical issues. In this context, it might be fair to conclude that China and Japan had, for the time being, settled their historical differences via the adoption of the Sino-Japanese Joint Declaration. Some Chinese newspapers argued that China, in agreeing to the declaration, intended to put an end to controversies for the moment in order to enhance the future bilateral relationship. This interpretation was also reinforced by President Jiang’s decision not to stress the importance of history during Premier Obuchi’s visit to China in July. Hence, it would be reasonable to claim that Sino-Japanese relations entered a new era focusing on the future rather than the past as a consequence of Japan’s pragmatic foreign policy.

Yet, despite this tentative progress, historical controversies might again become a source of instability. In March for example, Chinese Premier Zhu observed that Japan’s ultra-right-wing authorities were trying to destroy Sino-Japanese relations in the wake of a right-wing historians conference in January that had denied the Nanjing massacre. Where Sino-Japanese relations are concerned, this remark was one of the strongest at that time and seemed to have reflected a desire by the Chinese leadership to check Japan’s growing military power.

In sum, while economic concerns had been the most certain way to stabilize Sino-Japanese relations during the Cold War, the post-Cold War environment, at least up to the twentieth century, forced Japan to modify its China policy, devoting greater importance than before to security issues. The real substantial source of instability in bilateral relations remains military security tension, and can be alleviated through increased bilateral dialogue in military as well as non-military security areas and through mutual understanding on historical issues. Future relations were expected to be stable unless both
countries fail to engage in open and regular discussion; discussion that would be in keeping other than a brief unfortunate interlude with many centuries of past dialogue. The implementation of the sort of cooperative programs highlighted in the Joint Press Announcement represented the first step on the way to maintaining and extending such a mutually beneficial dialogue.

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