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For enquiries and submissions, please contact Mr. Mason Cheng.

Address: Taiwan Institute of Economic Research, 5F, No.16-8, Dehuei Street,
Zhongshan District, Taipei 10461, Taiwan.

Email: d33640@tier.org.tw

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Editorial Statement

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The Strategic Alliance and Balance of Power in the Indo-Pacific Region

Tsai, Jung-hsiang

Professor, National Chung Cheng University

Introduction

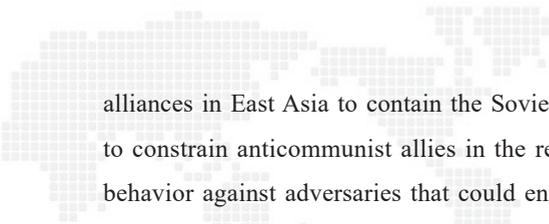
Since the end of Cold War, the unipolar moment has come into center stage. With Moscow's headlong fall from superpower status, the bipolar structure that had shaped the security policies of the major powers for nearly half a century vanished, and the United States emerged as the sole surviving superpower(Wohlforth, 1999:5). The United States is the sole state with preeminence in every domain of power—economic, military, diplomatic, ideological, technological, and cultural—with the reach and capabilities to promote its interests in virtually every part of the world (Huntington, 1999: 36). That the United States is a superpower does not indicate it can fully dominate the world or it is a global hegemon (Mearsheimer, 2014: 236). There are major powers that are preeminent in areas of the world such as the German-French condominium in Europe, Russia in Eurasia, China and potentially Japan in East Asia, India in South Asia, Iran in Southwest Asia, Brazil in Latin America, and South Africa and Nigeria in Africa (Huntington, 1999: 36). The heyday of the unipolar moment has not lasted very long. In East Asia, the rise of China has posed the greatest challenge to the United States, especially for the East Asian order that U.S. seeks to maintain. According to the statistics of the World Bank in 2018, China has become the second largest economy in terms of Gross Domestic Product(GDP) and the first largest economy on the measurement of Purchasing Power Parity (World Bank, 2020). Globally, China's military strength has placed third, following on the heels of the United States (first) and Russia (second)(Global Fire Power, 2020). The school of offensive realism argues that if China continues to grow economically, it will attempt to dominate Asia

the way the United States dominates the Western Hemisphere and the United States will go to enormous lengths to prevent China from achieving regional hegemony(Mearsheimer, 2014: 361). The growth of the rising power is destined for the status quo power to be alarmed and conflicts between them are inevitable (Thucydides, 2009). For the status quo power, external balancing such as alliances is the best strategy to pursue. Alliances are the key tool for states to guarantee their survival, thereby preventing the emergence of a global hegemon that would replace the anarchic international system(Brawley, 2004:77). Alliances obviously are cooperative endeavors, in that their members concert their resources in the pursuit of some common goal; however, the goal is the prosecution of conflict with an outside party (Snyder, 1997: 1). A superior alliance can restore the balance of power effectively against the rising power.

In December 2017, American President Donald Trump released the report of the US National Security Strategy (NSS) to outline the Indo-Pacific strategy. It emphatically addresses that although the United States seeks to continue to cooperate with China, China is using economic inducements and penalties, influence operations, and implied military threats to persuade other states to heed its political and security agenda (NSS Report, 2017: 45). China's efforts to build and militarize outposts in the South China Sea endanger the free flow of trade, threaten the sovereignty of other nations, and undermine regional stability and China has mounted a rapid military modernization campaign designed to limit U.S. access to the region and provide China a freer hand there (NSS Report, 2017: 45). The United States will seek to increase quadrilateral cooperation with Japan, Australia, and India in the Indo-Pacific region (NSS Report, 2017: 45). First, this paper aims to explore the bilateral relationship between U.S. and Japan, U.S. and Australia, and U.S. and India respectively. Second, this paper also parses out how China responds to the strategic posture of America's Indo-Pacific strategy.

U.S. and Japan

After the end of World War II, the United States created a series of bilateral



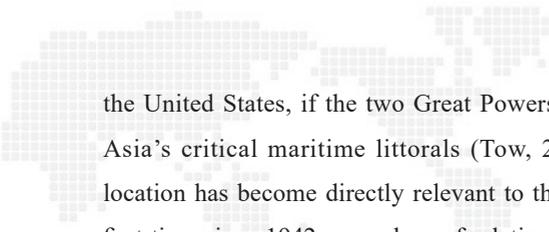
alliances in East Asia to contain the Soviet threat, but a congruent rationale was to constrain anticommunist allies in the region that might engage in aggressive behavior against adversaries that could entrap the United States in an unwanted larger war (Cha, 2010: 158). U.S. and Japan have been a military alliance since the Security Treaty between U.S. and Japan signed in 1951. By the time the Soviet Union collapsed, China has filled in the power vacuum it left in East Asia. Japan is very cautious about China's military buildup since China has been harassing the Senkaku Island(Diaoyu Dao), even when economic cooperation between China and Japan looms large (Solís, 2019: 14). Faced by unbalanced power, states try to increase their own strength or they ally with others to bring the international distribution of power into balance (Waltz, 1997: 951). Japan and U.S. have stepped up their security ties in order to accommodate to the threat of China's rise. Since 2016, US has fortified the deployment in East Asia, the Third Fleet originally operating in the eastern and northern Pacific Ocean areas was sent to East Asia to join the task of the Seven Fleet in order to meet the challenges from China (Ali and Brunnstorm, 2016).

Not only did U.S. pivot to Asia, but also it entrenched the off-shore balancing capability of the allies by arm sales. On 17th August in 2019, the Defense Ministry of Japan has formally announced to purchase 42 of the U.S.-made F-35B cutting-edge stealth fighter jets as part of its plan to acquire short take-off and vertical landing (STOVL) aircraft(Japan Times, 2019). On 27th August in 2019, the Trump Administration ratified to sale 73 Stand-Missile-3(SM-3) Block IIA missiles (intercept short and intermediate-rang ballistic missiles) to boost Japan's self-defense security (Defense Security Cooperation Agency, 2020). China and Japan are locked in the trap of security dilemma. The increase of armaments, that is intended in each nation to produce consciousness of strength, and a sense of security, does not produce these effects; on the contrary, it produces a consciousness of the strength of other nations and a sense of fear (Jervis, 1976: 65, the quote of the British Foreign Secretary before WWI, Edward Grey). A state pursuing its own security can be seen as a hostile intent by its rival state.

In 2016, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe launched the free and open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) strategy, which is regarded as an enhanced effort by Japan to expand its strategic horizon to encompass regional order-building in the Indo-Pacific in the context of China's growing influence (Koga, 2020: 49). There are two strands of Japan's FOIP strategy. First, Japan has been determined to steadily enhance national defense by increasing its own capabilities and strengthening the US–Japan alliance, while also transforming its partnerships with like-minded states, such as Australia and India, into a diplomatic, and potentially military, alignment; second, Japan's attempts to build a new regional order in the Indo-Pacific region are aimed at defending the existing rules-based order established by the United States from challengers, particularly China (Koga, 2020: 50). Neorealism argues that great powers rarely engage in external balancing and seldom view their own allies as reliable (Parent and Rosato, 2015: 79-85). If this thesis holds water, we can conclude that the quadrilateral cooperation of the FOIP strategy is a collective action against the rising power but not a coordinating military pact to fight a war.

U.S. and Australia

In 1951, U.S. and Australia signed a collective non-binding agreement to cooperate on security affairs in the Pacific Ocean. Since then, U.S. and Australia have been a strategic partnership to co-manage the region and to maintain the status quo. However, the rise of China and its territorial revisionism in South China Sea have disrupted the established order for U.S. and Australia in the region. The shifting balance of power has two major strategic implications for U.S.-Australia alliance: first, it raises the specter of destabilizing crises or conflicts in the region and China's territorial revisionism creates flashpoints for regional conflict; second, it greatly erodes U.S. military advantages in the region, reducing the United States' freedom of action and increasing much greater risk to any military planning or operations (Tarapore, 2019). President Trump's posture of challenging Chinese sovereign control over its man-made islands in the South China Sea has increased Australian concerns that it could soon face the nightmare of being compelled to choose between its largest trading partner—China and its long-term security ally—



the United States, if the two Great Powers were to clash militarily in Southeast Asia's critical maritime littorals (Tow, 2017: 50-51). Australia's geographic location has become directly relevant to the U.S. defense posture in Asia for the first time since 1942, as a place of relative safety from Chinese missiles and as a base for long-range air and naval operations (Frühling, 2018: 208).

Facing the challenge from China's rise, Australia fortified its military strength by arms sales. Australia has ordered 72 Lockheed Martin F-35A Lightning II fighters from U.S. to strengthen its defensive capability in 2018 (Pittaway, 2018). On February 7, 2020, the Trump administration approved to a military sale to Australia of up to two hundred (200) AGM-158C, Long Range Anti-Ship Missiles (LRASMs) and related equipment for an estimated cost of \$990 million (Defense Security Cooperation Agency, 2020). Coupled with military enhancement, countermeasures to foreign intervention are also legalized. In 2018, the Australian Parliament passed a bill, the Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme to require registration by certain persons undertaking certain activities on behalf of a foreign principal and to require registrants to disclose information about the nature of their relationship with the foreign principal and activities undertaken pursuant to that relationship. Concerns over Chinese political donations and relationships between lawmakers and Chinese businesses have intensified in Australia and this legislation is likely to further stoke tensions with major trading partner, China (South China Morning Post, 2018). Arm sales and anti-infiltration legislations are the double efforts for internal balancing against the worst scenario.

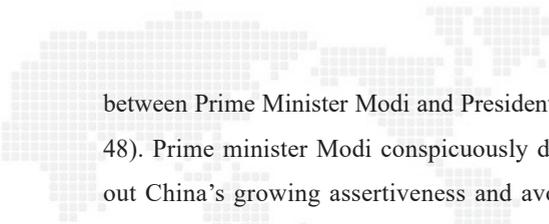
The importance of the South China Sea territorial disputes for Australia is the freedom of navigation for Australian warships and the rule-based order of the Indo-pacific has been underpinned by a strong United States and the enduring alliance between the United States and Australia (Wirth, 2019). Australia aims to develop deeper bilateral relationships with U.S. allies such as Japan, Singapore, South Korea, and India, join multilateral security dialogues with ASEAN countries and recommit efforts and resources for a strong Australia-U.S. alliance and U.S. commitment to the Asia-Pacific in Washington (Clarke, 2017: 68). Australia has

been an energetic supporter to Washington's FOIP strategy (free and open Indo-Pacific strategy), alongside Japan (and within the Trilateral Strategic Dialogue), and a key proponent of the 'Quad' process (Quadrilateral Strategic Dialogue) with India (Wilkins, 2019: 24). Australia's Indo-Pacific naval force enhances relationships, builds partner capacity, improves military interoperability and helps to realize U.S. goals in the region (Wilkins, 2019: 25). U.S. and Australia share the value of strategic cooperation and the necessity of maintaining the freedom of navigation in the Indo-Pacific area.

U.S. and India

Over the past two decades, India and the U.S. have drawn increasingly closer due largely to common concerns about the rise of China and its growing assertiveness in Asia (Burgess, 2019: 80). India's grand strategy has evolved from a non-aligned stance and dependence on Russia for its weapons purchases towards one of an emerging great power which seeks to counter encirclement and territorial infringement by China and Pakistan and has consolidated a partnership with the U.S. (Burgess, 2019: 80). The Trump administration has authorized the release of several advanced U.S. weapons systems, including Predator drones and the Aegis integrated air and missile defense system—both of which India would have struggled to procure from a U.S. administration more fearful of provoking Pakistan or irritating China (Tellis, 2020). The Trump administration has also granted India the same special trade status that NATO allies enjoy when it comes to licensing requirements for high-end defense-technology sales (Tellis, 2020). Although U.S. and India are not a formal alliance, the rise of China has brought them to closer relationships.

However, India and U.S. relationships are not as firm as the alliance between U.S. and Japan or the alliance between U.S. and Australia since India has been pursuing a hedging foreign policy. On one hand, India has moved slowly on certain aspects of military and naval cooperation with the United States and on the other hand India sought to placate China after the spring 2018 Wuhan Summit



between Prime Minister Modi and President Xi Jinping (Lalwani and Byrne, 2019: 48). Prime minister Modi conspicuously ducked diplomatic opportunities to call out China's growing assertiveness and avoided joining a regional infrastructure initiative to counterbalance China's ascending leverage in the region and India generally opposes a military role for the Quad for fear of Chinese retaliation (Lalwani and Byrne, 2019: 48).

India and Russia have been maintaining a strong tie on arms sales. Russia still commands 58 percent of total arms imports by India, followed by Israel and the US at 15 and 12 percent, respectively and the military-technical cooperation with Russia that includes transfer of technology and joint production is a unique relationship that is extremely valuable to India (Kapoor, 2019). The 2018 summit between Russian President Vladimir Putin and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Vladivostok underlined the countries' harmonious strategic orientation and India extended a US\$1 billion credit line to Russia to develop its Far East, as part of India's new "Act Far East" policy, a complement to the "Act East" policy which seeks to deepen ties with Southeast Asia (Bhaskar, 2019). After 2000, Russia-India ties settled down to an upward trajectory, since Vladimir Putin's visit to India and the establishment of the strategic partnership and Indo-Russian defense ties have gone up tremendously with multiple military contracts and agreements for technology transfer and joint manufacturing projects concluded (Zakharov, 2019:359). As the US-Russia rivalry intensifies, India is forced to strike a careful balance between U.S. and Russia (Zakharov, 2019:359).

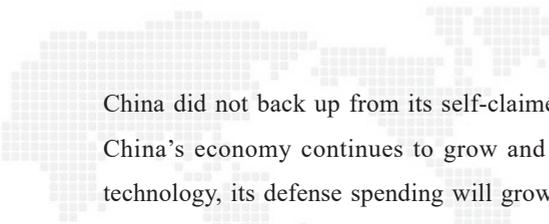
The rise of China has made India to tilt toward U.S. to meet the strategic challenges. In 2017, India and China had a military standoff over the border area, Doklam. The face-off situation reveals that sovereignty issues and strategic conflicts have seriously set India and China apart. India is also concerned about China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and has refused China's repeated invitations to join the initiative primarily because BRI's flagship project (the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor) passes through the Pakistan-Administered Kashmir, a disputed territory that New Delhi claims as its own (Joshi, 2019). For India, the U.S.-

China competition presents a mixed bag: on one hand, it undeniably gives India some leverage over its more powerful Chinese neighbor and on the other hand, it complicated India's fine balancing act between U.S., a key but overbearing partner needed to hedge against China but carefully kept at arm's length, and China, a rival which India can ill afford to turn into adversary (Lidarev, 2020). The shifting relationships between India and U.S. have to put in the context of geopolitics to analyze. Compared to U.S. other allies in the Indo-Pacific, India is the weakest link. However, India joining the Quadrilateral Strategic Dialogue with U.S., Japan and Australia can serve its own strategic interests to balance the rise of China.

China's Response

Interestingly, China's economic and strategic ambitions have moved across both the Pacific and the Indian oceans, but China intentionally rejected to use the term, the Indo-Pacific because Chinese leaders believe that the U.S.-led Indo-Pacific strategy aims to contain China's rise (He and Li, 2020: 1-2). China has been using means to disrupt relations between these nations is regarded by China as an efficient way of undermining the Indo-Pacific strategy (Liu, 2020:23). China adopted the rapprochement to develop a deeper diplomatic relationship with India, mending its relations with Japan after years of strained relations over the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands, and moderating its behavior with ASEAN member states by hammering out a new Code of Conduct (COC) in the South China Sea (Liu, 2020: 23-25). On the same token, China has been using three modes of influence such as coercion, inducement, and persuasion to alter the costs and benefits of Australia remaining aligned to U.S. (Sheng, 2020). Simply put, China attempts to drive a wedge between U.S. and its Asian allies.

However, China still did not give up its assertive strategy in the South China Sea. In 2018, the Chinese warship, Lan Zhou destroyer warned that the American destroyer, the Decatur was on a dangerous course in the South China Sea and it sailed very close to the Decatur about 45 yards, pushed the Decatur out of the way, and finally the Decatur diverted to avoid a collision (Perlez and Myers, 2018).



China did not back up from its self-claimed territory in the South China Sea. If China's economy continues to grow and if it develops increasingly advanced technology, its defense spending will grow and its military will be better able to compete with the US in maritime East Asia and these trends will determine China's ability to reshape the regional security order, rather than China's market power (Ross, 2019: 18).

Conclusion

Australia, Japan and India have tried hard to align with U.S. in order to counteract China's increasing leverage in the Indo-Pacific region. The FOIP strategy is like a security chain or net of four big powers. Thucydides thoughtfully points out that the growth of the rising power is destined for the status quo power to be alarmed and conflicts between them are inevitable (Thucydides, 2009). As Napoleon Bonaparte said, China is a sleeping lion; let her sleep, for when she wakes she will shake the world. Napoleon's prophecy has come true that China is shaking the world now.

The balance of power in Asian order has tilted to China after its rise. The quadruple alliance of U.S., Japan, Australia, and India has been a countermeasure to prevent China's dominance in Asia. The status quo powers establish an external balancing alliance in order to meet the challenges of the rising power. Whether the FOIP strategy works effectively depends on the alliance management and China's self-restraining responses. Nevertheless, collective deterrence by four countries works much better than the efforts of one single country.

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China and Taiwan-Japan Relations: challenges and opportunities *

Tony Tai-Ting Liu

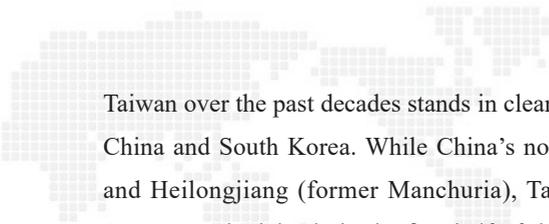
Assistant Professor, Center for General Education
National Chung Hsing University

In 2017, with the introduction of Japan's diplomatic representative office in Taipei as the Japan-Taiwan Exchange Association, Taiwan-Japan relations entered a new phase. With Japan recognizing and conforming to the One China Policy almost five decades ago, interexchange between Taiwan and Japan slowed, to the point that political relations became almost non-existent while business and trade relations remained. The 2011 Tohoku earthquake was important in re-energizing bilateral relations, as Taiwan surprisingly topped the world in terms of disaster relief assistance provided to Japan. Since 2011, Taiwan-Japan relations began to warm, in the context of China's rise in the world and later, the succession of China's fifth generation leaders in 2013. Reviewing developments since the Tohoku earthquake and the impact of China's fifth generation leadership on Taiwan-Japan relations, this author ponders over the challenges and opportunities for expanding and deepening the relationship between Taiwan and Japan.

Warming of Taiwan-Japan Relations Since 2011

Despite the termination of official relations between Japan and Taiwan in 1971, for various reasons, bilateral relations did not end, but took on a different form for Tokyo and Taipei. Rather than taking a sharp downturn, counterintuitively, Japan-Taiwan relations has grown in the past decades and deepened greatly since the Tohoku earthquake in 2011. The close relationship Japan has developed with

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Taiwan over the past decades stands in clear contrast with Japan's relationship with China and South Korea. While China's northeastern provinces of Jilin, Liaoning and Heilongjiang (former Manchuria), Taiwan and South Korea all underwent Japanese colonial rule in the first half of the twentieth century, mysteriously, only Taiwan maintains cordial relations with Japan regardless of historical misdeeds. Even in the case of the comfort women issue that affected all three countries, in Taiwan, public outcry over the issue is significantly lower.

Nonetheless, while people to people relations between Japan and Taiwan have always been well, it is not until recent years that interactions on the individual level gradually expanded to the state or governmental level. 2011 can be considered a watershed for the elevation of Japan-Taiwan relations, as Japan was utterly baffled by the amount of disaster relief assistance Taiwan and its people donated, which totaled more than countries such as the United States (US), Canada and Germany. While the international community slowly picked up on the fact – perhaps as the result of Taiwan's "abnormal" status – many Japanese observers noticed the development and revived the question of Taiwan's role in Japanese foreign policy. In the aftermath of the Tohoku earthquake, the "thank you Taiwan" (xiexie taiwan) campaign became almost a nationwide movement in Japan, which played no small role in redirecting the attention of Tokyo on Taiwan again.

At the same time, international order was changing as well. 2011 was also a turning point in Japan-China relations as China surpassed Japan to become the second largest economy in the world. Such development gave way to a new row of concerns centered on the China threat theory with Japan as a strong supporter. For example, in the 2011 annual Defense Whitepaper of Japan, China was noted as "a major political and economic power with important clout... [whose] lack of transparency of its national defense policies and the military activities are a matter of concern for the region and the international community."¹ The Japanese Ministry of Defense reiterated the same statement in the following year, noting that the China's military modernization and lack of transparency "could lead to a

1 Ministry of Defense Japan, Defense of Japan 2011 (Annual White Paper) (Tokyo: Ministry of Defense, 2011), p.26.

sense of distrust and misunderstanding by other countries.”² On the other hand, Stefan Halper among other observers noted the China threat in a widely circulated commentary that pondered over the question of whether the US can make a peaceful hand-off of power to authoritarian China.

In other words, for Japan, while concerns for the China threat grew, a favorable image of Taiwan grew simultaneously. In turn, Taiwan’s new image in Japan translated into the establishment of bilateral agreements and exchanged visits by incumbent and retired officials from both countries. In 2011, Japan and Taiwan subsequently concluded a bilateral investment arrangement and an open skies agreement; in a sense similar to agreements concluded between China and Taiwan at this time, the agreements deepened functional cooperation between Tokyo and Taipei. It is important to note that in contrast with other cases of negotiations that usually begin with trade talks before turning to investment, Japan and Taiwan achieved the bilateral investment arrangement in different sequence, most likely as the result of Beijing’s One China Policy and concern over the sovereign status that entry into a trade agreement can afford Taiwan. Since then, however, noting the establishment of the China-ASEAN free trade area, Taiwan has expressed a strong interest to enter into an economic partnership agreement (EPA) with Japan or the Japan led Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP).

Aside from economic cooperation, political relations warmed between Japan and Taiwan, evidenced by the conclusion of the Fishery Arrangement and frequent visits by Japanese officials to Taiwan. In April 2013, the Japan-Taiwan Fishery Arrangement was concluded between the two governments after 16 rounds of formal and informal talks that spanned 17 years. Although Japan and Taiwan continue to hold different sovereign positions regarding the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands that sits at the heart of fishery disputes between the two countries, since 2013, maritime incidents involving Japan and Taiwan have greatly decreased. In addition to the Fishery Arrangement, a number of functional agreements have been signed between Japan and Taiwan in recent years (see table 1).

2 Ibid., p.3.

Table 1: Taiwan-Japan Cooperation Arrangements and Agreements

Year	Arrangements/Agreements
2011	Taiwan-Japan Mutual Cooperation on the Liberalization, Promotion and Protection of Investment
2011	Taiwan-Japan Open Skies Agreement
2013	Taiwan-Japan Fisheries Agreement
2013	Taiwan-Japan Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation on Financial Supervision
2017	Taiwan-Japan Customs Mutual Assistance Agreement
2017	Taiwan-Japan Memorandum of Understanding on Cultural Exchange and Cooperation
2017	Taiwan-Japan Memorandum of Understanding on Maritime Emergency and Rescue Cooperation

While high level exchange between Japan and Taiwan has yet to be realized, former state leaders from both countries exchanged visits, demonstrating the special relationship between the two countries despite the absence of formal diplomatic relations. Besides frequent visits by Japanese diet members to Taiwan, former Japanese Prime Minister Aso Taro and Noda Yoshihiko visited Taiwan respectively in 2011 and 2015. It is worthy to note that Aso, currently the incumbent Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, stated openly that “Taiwan is a country with law and order and in many senses share common values with Japan.” In March 2017, Deputy Minister of Japan’s Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communication Akama Jiro visited Taiwan to attend a public tourism promotion event and became the most senior level Japanese official to visit Taiwan since the termination of bilateral relations in 1972. Correspondingly, former Taiwanese President Lee Teng-hui visited Japan in 2014, 2015 and 2016 respectively while former Speaker of the Legislative Yuan, Wang Jin-pyng, and a number of former senior Taiwanese statesmen have all visited Japan to consolidate bilateral relations.

The China Factor

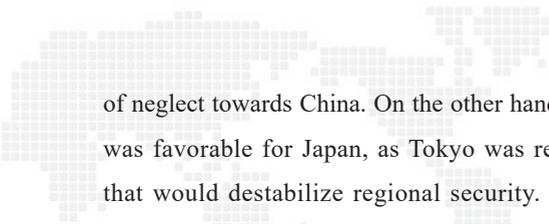
The succession of China’s fifth generation leaders in 2013 brought along uncertainties to Cross-strait relations that in turn implicate Taiwan-Japan relations. Despite the Singapore summit in 2015 (the so called “Ma-Xi Summit”), which perhaps symbolized the pinnacle of reconciliation between Beijing and Taipei in recent decades, China seemed adamant in his position towards Taiwan. China made its intention clear at the APEC meeting in 2013, when Beijing expressed its approval for “China and Taiwan being one family” and that “political differences

across the Strait cannot pass from generation to generation and must be resolved gradually.” In other words, China was keen on putting an end to the issue of Taiwan.

Cross-strait relations quickly deteriorated into stagnation following government turnover in Taiwan in 2016. Unsatisfied by President Tsai Ing-wen’s failure to address the 1992 Consensus and no doubt unimpressed with the Democratic Progressive Party’s (DPP) traditional image of pro-independence, China increased pressure on Taiwan in hopes of forcing the island to bend and commence political negotiations with Beijing. In addition to the suspension of all negotiations and official communication between the Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Strait (ARATS) and Strait Economic Foundation (SEF), China reinitiated diplomatic warfare against Taiwan and successfully induced Panama (2017), Dominican Republic (2017), Burkina Faso (2018), El Salvador (2018), Kiribati (2019) and Solomon Islands (2019) to switch their recognition to the People’s Republic of China (PRC).

Speculations abound on when the “final solution” would be carried out. Michael Pillsbury suggests 2049, or the centenary of the establishment of the CCP may be the time when things should be put to an end. While the CCP never announced a specific time when reunification would happen, the fact that 2049 has been floated is sufficient to generate instability in Cross-strait relations and for Taipei to consider its response strategy towards China. As such, noting the close relationship that Taiwan shares with Japan, it was easy for Taipei to look towards Tokyo as an important regional partner for balancing the challenge of Beijing.

From Japan’s perspective, however, the situation is not as simple. Despite strengthened relations between Japan and Taiwan and long standing historical and political contentions between Japan and China, China’s continued rise puts Japan in a difficult position. While Japan-Taiwan relations is strong, China serves as the biggest market for Japanese exports and its transformation into a global power means that Japan, regardless of bilateral tensions, cannot simply adopt a strategy



of neglect towards China. On the other hand, a peaceful Taiwan Strait before 2016 was favorable for Japan, as Tokyo was relieved of the threat of military crisis that would destabilize regional security. Since 2016, however, as Cross-strait relations deteriorated, progress in Japan-Taiwan relations inevitably pit Tokyo against Beijing while the maintenance of trade remains a priority for Japan. In other words, for Japan, political and economic interests turn against each other when the relationship between China and Taiwan sours, which in turn puts Tokyo in an awkward position. Such awkwardness can be observed from the Shinzo Abe administration's policy towards China.

Perhaps in light of China's leading economic status, in response to China's active pursuit of improved foreign relations and global image, Abe adopted a similar strategy as well. Adopting the "diplomacy that takes a panoramic perspective of the world's map," or the "diplomacy with a bird's eye view of the globe," since 2013, Abe has traveled to different regions of the world, making him the most energetic Japanese leader in recent memory. Abe visited Africa, Central Asia and Latin America, and sought cooperation while promising Japanese assistance and investment. Such competition extended to the BRI, which Japan, along with India, matched with their own proposal of the Asia-Africa Growth Corridor (AAGC). In terms of infrastructure construction, a prominent example was Japan and China's competition over Indonesia's need to build a high speed railway in the country. Despite losing a bid to China for railway construction in 2015, after Abe's state visit to Indonesia two years later, in 2019, Japan won a contract from the latter to modernize the railway line connecting Jakarta and Surabaya. Competition was clear.

Since 2016, the dynamics between Japan and China shifted due to new developments. Donald Trump's ascension as US President and adjustments in foreign policy towards the Asia Pacific generated strong uncertainties among Washington's allies in the region, particularly Japan and South Korea. The ensuing US-China trade war was not only a wrestling match between the giants, an additional effect was disruption to the regional supply chain that involves Japan.

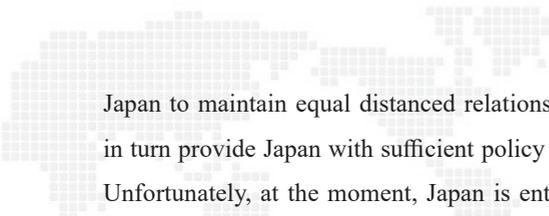
Noting Washington's boldness in re-negotiating international agreements such as the North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) with other states and security responsibilities with Japan and South Korea, Tokyo found itself in a position that suggests increasing mutual interests with China - its long term competitor – and increasing interest to put itself at some distance away from the US. Concurrently, in the face of strong pressure from the US, China also had increased motivation to improve relations with Japan.

However, the only question is Taiwan: how should or should not Japan deal with the island? The challenge runs deeper than the simple calculation of market size, as Taiwan, like Japan, is straddled between China and the US and serves as a useful partner for spiting and curbing the influence of China. As US-Taiwan relations made considerable progress since 2016 following the adoption of the Taiwan Travel Act (2018) and the unanimous passing of the Taipei Act by the US Congress (2020) among other actions, Japan finds itself trapped in the dilemma of whether to seek the favor of China and shun the US – turning a blind eye or simply pay lip service to the interests of Taiwan in the process – or to fight off the temptation to reconcile relations with China and return in full support of relations with the US and Taiwan.

Japan is hedging at the moment, trying to maintain good relations with the US and Taiwan while searching for better ground with China. Meanwhile, Japan is also deliberately neglecting the contradictions in the region that have persisted since the end of the Cold War. In such context lies challenges and opportunities for the development of Taiwan-Japan relations.

Towards the Future: Challenges and Opportunities

Looking into the near future, two challenges may hinder the progress of Taiwan-Japan relations. First, whether Japan can move towards a more independent foreign policy that balances its relations with the US and China will be critical for the development of Taiwan-Japan relations. In other words, the real challenge is for



Japan to maintain equal distanced relations with the US and China, which would in turn provide Japan with sufficient policy space to expand relations with Taiwan. Unfortunately, at the moment, Japan is entangled between its reliance on the US for security assurance in the region and on China for trade and economic growth. Such position offers little bearing for Japan to improve relations with Taiwan, as Taiwan complicates the balance in US-China-Japan relations and seems to be more of a liability than an asset. Hence it is vital for Japan to take the initiative if better prospects for Taiwan-Japan relations are to be expected.

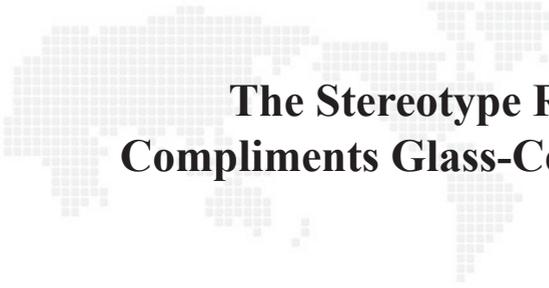
Another challenge for Taiwan-Japan relations is the development of Cross-strait relations. Compared with the US, several issues make Japan more vulnerable to changes in the Taiwan Strait. Geographic proximity suggests that military conflict in the Taiwan Strait can easily spillover to Japan, and forced to react, Japan will have to decide which side of the Strait to invest its support in. Meanwhile, the ghost of militarism continues to haunt Japan and challenges any resort to the use of military force by Japan. While a peaceful Taiwan Strait is in the interest of Japan, China's growing impatience and domestic political changes in Taiwan seem to be pushing the Strait towards conflict than otherwise. In any event, Japan would be implicated. While Taiwan-Japan relations can continue to develop regardless of developments between China and Taiwan, both Tokyo and Taipei's policy space for strengthening bilateral relations would be greatly expanded in time of peace. Conversely, Taiwan-Japan relations seem to be constantly shrouded by the looming shadow of China.

Politics aside, recent developments suggest opportunities for the expansion of Taiwan-Japan relations through functional cooperation. A timely example comes from the coronavirus pandemic outbreak in 2020, which witnessed Taiwan's exceptional performance in the distribution of face masks and border management. Taiwan's experience garnered global attention; headed by Digital Minister Audrey Tang, Taiwan's technical team of software programmers cooperated with the Japanese government to develop a digital management system to monitor mask supplies in Japan. In addition to the success in digital management, Taiwan has

also developed a vaccine for the coronavirus successfully. Such success led the US and the European Union to approach Taiwan for cooperation on joint research and development of pandemic vaccine. In short, public health and the prevention of disease is a politically non-sensitive area with much potential for cooperation where Taiwan and Japan can jointly explore.

The coronavirus outbreak exposed the risk of tight economic integration with China and the loss for the international community without the participation of Taiwan in regional integration projects. As such, noting the inclusiveness of the Japan-led CPTPP, it remains to be observed whether Taiwan has the opportunity to participate in the project. APEC is worth mentioning here. While APEC is aimed at economic integration on the outset, over the years, integration has widened into community building that includes functional fields for cooperation such as education, food security, gender issues and health. Therefore, in addition to regional integration projects being forums for multilateral discussions on economic and financial issues, they should also be viewed as interfaces for discussions on issues concerning human security.

In terms of functional cooperation, the “proper” title of Taiwan is a mere technicality that can be overcome, as the APEC model demonstrates. What matters more is Taiwan’s meaningful participation in international organizations. From an alternative perspective, as globalization connects many of the world’s problems today, more participation by Taiwan in the international community can potentially offer solutions to global issues, such as public health, that are often politicized to no real benefit for the situation. The effect raised by the coronavirus pandemic once again serves as a good example. During the early outbreak of the pandemic, many Asian countries placed travel bans against Taiwan, only to find out later that the situation in China was much more severe than in Taiwan and the World Health Organization (WHO) failed to release timely and accurate information on the situation. It is clear that the world can truly benefit from more cooperation and less politics.



The Stereotype Role of Women Compliments Glass-Ceiling in Asia-Pacific

Sadia Rahman

PhD Student National Chung Hsing University

Asia is a continent of a multiplicity of differences; it is a massive territory that stretches 17,212,000 square miles and is home to 4.5 billion people. Apparently, diversity exists concerning gender balancing, including the stereotypes women face and the challenges the women leadership face. Women, though can contribute equally at par with men but is always the victim of social norms, customs, lack of family support, lesser awareness about opportunities. Globally women are under-represented in leadership and decision making positions as well as in public sphere, in Pacific according to Pacific Women in Politics (April 2019) the percentage of women in Parliament is only 8.2% the lowest in the world and according to World Bank women's representation in South Asia is below the global average at 18%. Women who take up leadership role face discrimination or violence and it is The International Women's Development Agency (IWDA) and partner women's rights organizations in Asia-Pacific work towards advancing and protecting the rights of women and girls in all their diversities, promoting women's leadership is the primary aim of their work.

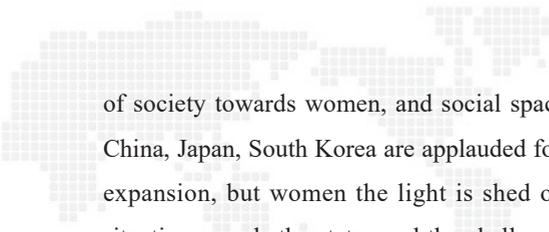
Women are a fallow and underdeveloped resource in the Asia-Pacific region; much hard work has to be done to bring the numbers of women in leadership positions in government, civil society, and business to match the gender level ratio. From the basic level pertaining to girls' education, security, to the level of entrepreneurship and at the top level of governmental or corporate leadership positions, women's potential is undervalued. IWDA's most enormous women's civil and political empowerment program WAVE is funded by the Netherlands government to support women towards gender equality. Scholars Pineda and

Purdue observes that the program intends to-

- Increase individual women's political, economic and social leadership
- Change inequitable legal, policy, and economic frameworks
- Strengthen a vital, visible and vocal women's movement
- Ensure the evidence of how change towards gender equality happens informs and influences individuals, institutions, and movements.

In my previous article, "Gender Inequity Issues in the Asia-Pacific," I comprehensively expressed about the glass-ceiling problems the female gender faces and illustrated progress in the Asia-Pacific region. This article digs deeper concerning women's role in leadership and that women can also usher a muscular approach (reminding that not in the context of physical strength). This article seeks to avoid double standards by assuming that women in the west get more support, and Asia subjugates them. However, the reality is much more complicated than that, Asia-Pacific case has layers of diversity and attitudes vary, the layers are like an onion that needs to be peeled to get to the nuances of the complexity. Of course, it exists, but it is always not the sad story of women being subjugated to their male counterparts some positive development happens as well. Taking the example of Malaysia in 2017, according to Zoe Kinias, Malaysian leaders set the goal of having 30% of female representation on the boards of publicly listed companies by 2020 and the top 100 firms have already reached 19.1%, and the government has reached 35.4%. Gender or to be specific women issues are prevalent of intersectionality, together with the region's history colonization temper progress for women.

The primary understanding should be about glass-ceiling, how does it work as a hindrance for women at workspace? According to the United Nations (UN) (2015), the participation of women has increased in labor and education; still, their career struggles to reach higher echelons. This phenomenon introduced a metaphor known as 'glass-ceiling.' It was Carol Hymowitz, and Timothy Schechellhardt introduced the metaphor worldwide in the Wall Street Journal in 1986, an invisible hurdle that impedes women from advancing on seminar management positions. The roots of a hindrance for women in Asia lie in history, i.e., the nature of society, the attitudes



of society towards women, and social space women hold. East Asian economies China, Japan, South Korea are applauded for their economic growth and economic expansion, but women the light is shed on women representation the inequity situation reveals the status and the challenges the women faces. According to Yun Yang, in China, women are underrepresented and have rare favorable promotion opportunities compared to their male counterparts. In Japan, lower literacy rates of women than men leading them to remain in low ranks or to drop out of the labor market. In South Korea, gender stereotypes have negatively shaped the labor market, the impacts women's status leading to less availing of opportunities.

Mckinsey Survey of 2015 revealed that it is the factor of 'performance model' that act as a hindrance in women's career. According to a South China Morning Post (2018) in Japan, three-quarters of women respondents said they are not interested in managerial positions because that would mean working longer hours (similar to men who work 46 percent hours that the men in the US). In China, 36 percent of women's opinion was that they accept a demotion because of the burden of holding a job and looking after the baby, and 63 percent see having a second baby is an obstacle in their career advancement. In India, 70 percent of the women agree that if a mother works, that child suffers. Thus, the point I want to make is that it is not only the metaphor glass ceiling that contributes to gender inequity but rather the prevailing roots of women's status in education, in society, the stereotype image women hold. What has happened is the glass ceiling is mutually complimenting the unequal status of women in strengthening the difficulties more, and the framework designed does no favor for women to triumph the challenges with the only option left is just to succumb to it.

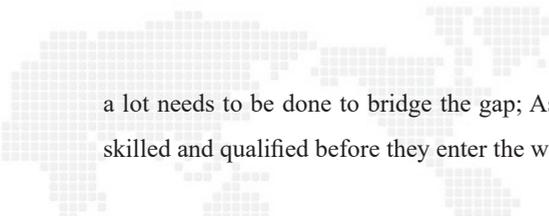
Scholars Yukongdi and Benson (2005) article titled "Women in Asia Management: Cracking the Glass Ceiling?" contended that the influence of culture does not change it piles up as a layer on the glass ceiling, for instance, the status of women in Thailand is one such reason for obstacles the women faces in their careers and difficulty to reach managerial positions. The other case described by Yuasa in her contribution titled "Japanese Women in Management: Getting

Closer to Realities in Japan" identified that it is the institutionalized practices that perpetuate gender inequality. At the same time, the case of Hongkong is also similar, i.e., entrenched gender roles, attitudes toward women as managers, and other organizational factors that leverage in inequity of women's advancement.

The higher the positions, the lower is the proportion of women, according to The Diplomat portal, a report published by Geneva-based Inter-Parliamentarian Union observed Ailsa's parliamentarians slacking in female representations. Japan positioned the most minimal among the G20 countries and 165th of 193 (10.2% of women in Lower House and 20.7% in Upper House) nations. India positioned 149th (12.6% of women in Lower House and 11.5% in Upper House), while South Korea set 121st (17.1% lawmakers' women). The Global Gender Gap Report 2018 by the World Economic Forum (WEF) gave Asia-Pacific locale blended outcomes, and the most critical vacuum filled is in political strengthening. IMF writes that-"We know that the unlevel playing field between men and women has substantial economic costs and can impede the economic health of nations. What we are now learning is that these costs are even larger than we thought. Now That we see the full picture, the case for greater gender equity has become even more compelling." (The Diplomat, 2019)

Steps to be taken to Break the Glass-Ceiling:

According to the UN Women Asia Pacific news portal on Women's Day, this year, an intergenerational dialogue on March 4 was organized. Part of UN women's campaign for Generation Equality six diplomats and UN officials inspired students of Asia University for Women at Chittagong, Bangladesh, to overcome the gender biases and strive to achieve their goals. A separate panel discussion was held on the glass ceiling, and the interesting discussion that came out was creating awareness about gender inequality in society and families to bring the transformation. Mckinsey's Women Matter report suggests that 70 percent of industry leaders believe that there will be gender parity on their respective boards. However, the sad reality still will be that only 13 percent will see a sizable increase in the number of women in leadership roles in the next five years. This sends us an alarm that still



a lot needs to be done to bridge the gap; Asia-Pacific female graduates need to be skilled and qualified before they enter the workforce.

Women Matter report observes that if opportunities are provided to women, they can create a balanced leadership environment. They can connect with other female clients sharing a positive environment at the workspace, and the push is also needed from the men counterparts to change their mindset for women just seen playing traditional roles.

- Remove gender inequity and conscious biases; workplace should be made gender-neutral, which can be done through career advancement or increase in salary or availing more opportunities.
- Young female employees should be encouraged by providing counseling and a clearer picture of a road map at the top. Having a female mentor to push and guide will create a more supportive environment and help in navigating paths.
- Just like male counterparts are encouraged and supported similar conducive environment and appreciation would boost the morale of women eliminating gender reservations. Thus, in simpler terms, what needs to be done is to break the shackles of the patriarchal mindset avoiding no further reinforcement.
- Political commitments, legal reforms, and gender-sensitive programs should be translated into real changes.
- Policymakers should reform taxes to incentivize female labor force participation and measure to expand childcare and eldercare to compliment in tackling gender inequity.

Asia-Pacific countries ought to be focused on transforming harmful gender norms, discriminatory attitudes, and statecraft is necessitated that helps in negating the systemic unequal power relations that exist between men and women. More dialogues among regional and sub-regional platforms on gender inequity dialogue will help in creating awareness and work for the solutions to minimize and then carve the path to support women in working at the same level as their male counterparts. Social institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) report suggest that discriminating social institutions cost more for Asia-Pacific economic development;

thus, gender equality be promoted in legislative frameworks fostering inclusive economies. This path to inclusiveness will require to uproot deep-rooted biases- 'recognizing, reducing, and redistributing unpaid care work; encourage women to opt for male-dominated fields Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics (STEM). Most importantly, inclusiveness will start from providing an incentive to families and changing their mindset, breaking the traditional image of women just as 'homemaker.'