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Noah Lawrence Nirenstein
Fordham University

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Japanese Foreign Policy in the Shadow of Hegemonic Shifts

By

Noah Nirenstein

(nnirenstein@fordham.edu)

For a Bachelor of Arts in International Studies, Asia Track

Fordham University

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Thesis Advisor

Dr. Sarah Lockhart

(slockhart3@fordham.edu)

Seminar Advisor

Dr. Stephanie Szitanyi

(sszitanyi@fordham.edu)

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Abstract

This thesis investigates whether Japanese foreign policy has changed in response to the shifting power dynamic between Japan's longtime ally, the United States of America, and China. In recent years, U.S. influence in the Asia-Pacific has waned while Chinese influence has inversely grown. It was hypothesized that Japanese foreign policy would become more agreeable with Chinese attitudes as a result. With that in mind, this study explores the term "hegemony", how it affects the formation of foreign policy, and how it is present in the relationship of these specific actors. A historical analysis is performed to demonstrate and understand Japan's current state of foreign relations. Ultimately, an examination of Japan's modern foreign policy finds that it does not begin to skew towards China but instead acts as a hedge against U.S. decline.

Introduction

Here in the early 21st century, the island nation of Japan stands at a key point amidst a changing global environment. After becoming the world's second largest economy in 1968, Japan had been firmly perched atop the Asian hierarchy for the better part of the past fifty years¹. Mired with economic stagnation, a revolving door of political leadership and the demographic challenges of a mature capitalist society, the country has been limited in its ability to effectively respond to this transition². Many of its regional neighbors, such as China and India, are beginning to move on from the developmental stage and grow in strength as economic and political rivals³. On the other side of the Pacific Ocean, Japan's strongest ally, the United States, is facing doubts regarding its status as leader of the international order. Despite this, Japan remains a significant actor on the world stage and the approach it takes to solve these challenges will be important in determining the shape of the global power structure.

This paper considers the Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) strategy, a concept introduced in 2016 during the height of the Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's administration to attempt to combat the various challenges to the Indo-Pacific region⁴. These challenges surface as piracy, terrorism, the proliferation of nuclear weapons, natural disasters, and otherwise attempts to change the status quo⁵. Abe's international policies as Prime Minister of Japan were

¹ Purnendra Jain, and Peng Er Lam. *Japan's Strategic Challenges In a Changing Regional Environment*. World Scientific, 2012. pp. xii.

² Ibid.

³ Investopedia. "Top 25 Developed and Developing Countries." *Investopedia*, 22 Nov. 2022, <https://www.investopedia.com/updates/top-developing-countries/>

⁴ The former prime minister, Shinzo Abe, was assassinated during a public appearance on July 8, 2022. His assassination shocked the world given that Japan has some of the strictest gun laws in the world. Abe leaves behind a legacy of being the longest-tenured prime minister of Japan in which he implemented economic and social reform, and made greater efforts for Japan to play a leadership role in international affairs.

⁵ Government of Japan. (2022). *Free and Open Indo-Pacific Basic Thinking Material*. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. pp.1.

characterized by those who favored him as strengthening Japan's security and international stature. To this end, Abe via the FOIP sought to expand the horizons of Japanese foreign policy by making more proactive contributions to diplomacy and international cooperation⁶. The goal of the FOIP is to develop the Indo-Pacific as an international public good and relies on the formation and promotion of institutions such as the rule of law, freedom of navigation and freedom of trade. It also requires a commitment to maintaining peace and stability which in turn calls for maritime law enforcement, humanitarian aid and disaster relief to be strengthened and provided by cooperating states. Lastly, it would necessitate improved connectivity and partnerships between economies by way of free trade agreements and investment treaties.

The plan for the FOIP encompasses all regions from the far end of the Indian Ocean bordering the eastern shores of Africa to the far end of the Pacific along the west coast of North America, with emphasis on the ASEAN region as a connection between the two and a model for successful intergovernmental collaboration. Japan's specific aims pertain to Africa and Asia⁷. In Africa, Japan has offered offered to provide "nation-building support"⁸ in the areas of development, governance, and politics. In Asia, Japan seeks to help increase the responsibility and leadership of ASEAN countries as democracy, the rule of law, and market economies continue to develop there. Examples of projects Japan is involved in related to these developments include building and improving infrastructure, or providing maritime security equipment.

Japan's efforts to create a regionally beneficial economic and political environment is both admirable and ambitious. To successfully carry these goals out, however, would require vast

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Government of Japan. (2022). *Achieving the "Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)" Vision: Japan Ministry of Defense's Approach*. Ministry of Defense of Japan.

⁸ Government of Japan. (2022). *Free and Open Indo-Pacific Basic Thinking Material*. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. pp.1.

amounts of capital dedicated to connectivity initiatives and other projects for peace and stability. Japan, being the world's third largest economy⁹, appears to be capable of this endeavor. At the same time, it is no secret that the island nation has faced its fair share of persisting challenges. Japan's annually shrinking birthrates have been well documented for years now with a looming need to prepare for a labor shortage and higher social spending to take care of an aging population¹⁰. Likewise, so have the attempts at restoring the Japanese economy to its former heights of the 1980s real estate bubble¹¹. Additionally, Japan's focus on security and desire to increase its defense spending has raised concerns that the country aims to reemerge as a military power further destabilizing the international climate¹².

I have chosen this topic primarily because it correlates well with my concentration within international studies, which has been in the region of East Asia. The 21st century was predicted to be the "Asian Century" or the "Pacific Age" by economists and political scientists, similar to how the 19th century was characterized by British dominance and the 20th by American¹³. This is largely due to the exponential growth of the Japanese, Chinese, and Indian economies since the 1960s but also due to population growth, cultural exportation, and increasing political significance. All things considered, I believe that political and economic issues regarding Asia are very important and will continue to be so for the foreseeable future. Arguably, the most crucial issues in these fields today regard geopolitical strategy.

⁹ (2022). "GDP, Current Prices." *International Monetary Fund*.

<https://www.imf.org/external/datamapper/NGDPD@WEO/OEMDC/ADVEC/WEOORLD>

¹⁰ Walia, Simran. "How Does Japan's Aging Society Affect Its Economy?" *The Diplomat*, 13 Nov. 2019.

<https://thediplomat.com/2019/11/how-does-japans-aging-society-affect-its-economy/>

¹¹ McBride, James, and Beina Xu. "Abenomics and the Japanese Economy." *Council on Foreign Relations*, 23 Mar. 2018, <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/abenomics-and-japanese-economy>

¹² Keyue, Xu. "Japan Warned of Being 'Biggest Destabilizing Factor' in E.Asia as Kishida Sets Defense Spending at 2% of GDP for 1st Time." *Global Times*, 30 Nov. 2022. <https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202211/1280795.shtml>

¹³ Nye, Joseph S., and David A. Welch. *Understanding Global Conflict and Cooperation: Pearson New International Edition: An Introduction to Theory and History*. Pearson, 2014. pp. 86.

With the rise of the Asian powers has also risen the desire by said powers to take greater roles in economic and political leadership in the region¹⁴. The specifics of these goals have varied from country to country; for example, China is looking to fully reunify with all of the territories it had lost in the centuries prior while India has been building up its military to solidify its strength¹⁵. Because of this competition, issues between the Asian powers on the international stage can be both tense and volatile as seen in the Indian intervention of the Sri Lankan Civil War, the Sino-Vietnamese War, or the Takeshima islands dispute between Japan and Korea (both North and South Korea have claimed sovereignty over the islands)¹⁶.

While the most recent and relevant case of Asian geopolitical volatility is the ongoing tension between mainland China and the island of Taiwan, I wanted to focus on something that has not been as extensively considered. In less confrontational instances, the countries attempt to extend their sphere of influence through development strategies or intergovernmental cooperation. Given Japan's inclination to play a more pacifist role in international diplomacy thanks to its partnership with the United States, it is a prime choice to study in this respect. Japan's FOIP is an example of this approach that highlights a lot of the different factors in play on the international stage in the region of Asia. I am most interested, however, in seeing if Japan's foreign policy stances have been made in response to the shifting power dynamic between the world's leading economic giants. Specifically, does Japan still firmly align with the stances held by the U.S. or is it looking to explore other options? As it stands, Japan is a large beneficiary of American diplomacy but recent governing administrations have taken actions that suggest that the U.S. may be looking to abate some of its regional responsibility. At the same

¹⁴ Purnendra Jain, and Peng Er Lam. *Japan's Strategic Challenges In a Changing Regional Environment*. World Scientific, 2012. pp. xvi.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Government of Japan. (2022). *Diplomatic Bluebook 2022*. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. pp.63.

time, China is looking to capitalize on its growth success and expand its foreign policy domain with projects such as the Belt & Road Initiative¹⁷ or the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road¹⁸.

Therefore, it may be predicted that Japan, sharing significant economic ties in close proximity with China, will implement foreign policy that is more compatible with China consistent with the relative decline of American influence in Asia.

In the following thesis, I will explore Japan's history of foreign relations with particular attention to its relationship with China and the U.S. The literature review section will define and present the diverse interpretations of hegemony in international relations theory. This section of the thesis highlights the Japanese perspective of its relationship with an existing hegemon in the U.S., and a prospective hegemon-to-be in China. Thereafter, the methodology section will detail the design by which I will perform my research. Specifically, this paper engages in a qualitative study that places a large emphasis on historical analysis as a tool to understand the events of today. Following the methodology will be a case study of a brief and general history of Japan as an international actor. The case study covers Japan from antiquity to the formation of its modern government that has been in place since the end of the second world war. Finally, Japan's present-day foreign policy plans are reviewed and assessed towards determining which hegemonic power they are shifting towards, if any.

Literature Review

This study is primarily concerned with the creation of modern Japanese foreign policy measures as they relate to existing and potential hegemonic spheres of influence. It is important for this study to lay a solid foundation for defining the term "hegemony" because the concept of

¹⁷ People's Republic of China. (2022). *Jointly Building "the Belt and Road" and sharing a Brighter Future*. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China.

https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjb_663304/zwjg_665342/zwbd_665378/202203/t20220330_10657688.html

¹⁸ People's Republic of China. (2022). *Building the Maritime Silk Road of the 21st Century with Open Mind and Bold Courage*. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China.

https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjdt_665385/zyjh_665391/201502/t20150212_678276.html

hegemony is one that is both massive in scope and of great importance to fundamental international relations theory. A vast body of literature exists on the subject illustrating distinct differentiations about understandings of the term, often dependent on the perspective from which it is viewed. Hegemony, at the most textbook level, can be defined as the ability to exercise a specific kind of control within a system of states (the types of control may be military, financial, both, etc.)¹⁹. For example, since the official collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the United States of America has largely been considered to be a singular global military and financial hegemon²⁰. In a case like this, the United States would also be considered a unipolar and true hegemon; this occurs when there is only one state that exercises predominant power within the international system²¹.

Given the concept's prominence in the field, it is not surprising that each of the principal international relations schools of thought have differing conceptualizations and understandings of implications of the term. Realists, who typically share a preponderant view that the international order is anarchic, view hegemony as a dependable source of stability until said hegemon inevitably deteriorates or is challenged by a rising power and thus is prone to eventual conflict²². On the other hand, liberalists hold that the presence of a hegemony in an increasingly globalizing international order will actually promote greater cooperation between states and decrease conflicts as a byproduct. Aside from the theories put forward by the different international relations paradigms, the concept of hegemony can be distinct with regard to regional context as well.

¹⁹ Nye, Joseph S., and David A. Welch. *Understanding Global Conflict and Cooperation: Pearson New International Edition: An Introduction to Theory and History*. Pearson, 2014.

²⁰ Ibid, pp. 384.

²¹ Ibid, pp. 49.

²² Ibid, pp. 86.

As a unipolar hegemon, the United States has had a hand, directly or indirectly, intentionally or unintentionally, in political and economical influence in all regions of the world. But the Asia-Pacific has long been a particular focal point of American foreign policy and strategy since the late 1800s and many of the governing administrations since have indicated that it will continue to be so for the foreseeable future. The current U.S. predominance in the region continues a longer-run pattern of power projection²³. The most obvious historical evidence of this is remembered in Commodore Perry's expedition to Japan or military involvement in the Philippines, Korea, and Vietnam. More recently, however, American presence is not only felt by the near 100,000 troops indefinitely stationed in South Korea and Japan²⁴. It is also felt in how the United States is the primary export market for the export-focused economies of Southeast Asia, Japan and China altogether²⁵. Relatedly, the U.S. remains as an essential and easily accessible source of extra-regional foreign direct investment and can reliably be called upon to provide some type of aid in the event of a crisis.

Yet despite the recognized pervasiveness and gravity of American power in the Asia-Pacific region, scholars of international studies and other related disciplines still challenge the role that the United States plays in this regional order and whether its actions generally result in net positive or net negative outcomes. Wu Baiyi, a senior fellow and deputy director of the research department at the China Foundation for International and Strategic Studies, takes the stance that the U.S. is indeed a dominant player in Asia-Pacific affairs but points out that the divergent understandings of goals and appropriate methods to achieve them makes it difficult to coordinate with the Asian nations despite sharing a common interest in preserving peace and

²³ Bisley, Nick. "Neither Empire nor Republic: American Power and Regional Order in the Asia-Pacific1." *International Politics*. vol. 43, no. 2, Apr. 2006, pp. 197-218.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

prosperity²⁶. Wu predicts, “As Asia copes with the forceful drive of globalization, an awareness of equity and the need for a greater sense of cooperation can be expected to grow significantly”²⁷. According to Wu, this will be shown through: a greater desire to co-lead initiatives with the U.S., a shift to preserving national interests rather than implementing more universal principles, mutual participation in security, and a rejection of the justifications of U.S. hegemonic leadership²⁸.

While the points Wu brings up are of valid concern, it would seem that he underestimates the capacity of Asian countries to adapt and compete in an American-led international order. This is most clearly evidenced when he says, “An indiscriminate adoption of Western democracy has proven counterproductive to the development of Asian societies”²⁹. This blatantly appears to overlook the Four Asian Tiger economies of Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan, and South Korea as well as the economy of Japan all of which developed rapidly under the era of American hegemonic influence. Perhaps most significant to note is that each of these countries were able to become advanced economies and have remained as some of the top-performing ones whilst employing democratic forms of government. Instead, it appears that those embracing to play by the rules of the contemporary game have the opportunity to thrive.

Taking that into consideration, it becomes clear how a hegemon impacts the way countries view themselves and the scope within which they act. As mentioned before, Japan has largely been a beneficiary of the United States hegemonic global order and so it is interesting to see how they have implemented foreign policy in relation to that. In general, Japan has been characterized as a reactive-state, one that is passive, risk-averse, and enacts policy based on

²⁶ Wu, Baiyi. “A Response to Derek J. Mitchell: Four Basic and Controversial Issues in the U.S.-Asian Relationship.” *Asian Affairs*, vol. 28, no. 3, Oct. 2001, pp. 166-169.

²⁷ *Ibid* pp. 167.

²⁸ *Ibid*.

²⁹ *Ibid*.

external stimuli as opposed to fulfilling domestic needs³⁰. A term that does not take long to find when researching U.S.-Japan relations is *gaiatsu*, which literally means “external pressure” but is more colloquially used among Japanese to refer to foreign political pressures particularly from America³¹. Akitoshi Miyashita, a professor of International Relations at Tokyo International University, describes the relationship as such: “The Japanese government often alters its course of action under U.S. pressure even if doing so would apparently undermine its own interests”³².

He dismisses the notion that Japan simply aligns itself with America because “what is good for the United States is good for Japan” as their interests do not always match. Miyashita cites examples from the past when Japan sought to provide foreign aid for potential partnerships in Vietnam and Iran, only for those projects to be suspended until given permission by Washington³³. He goes on to reason that Japan’s propensity to act in accordance with U.S. policy originates from an asymmetrical interdependence between the two countries. In other words, Japan is more dependent on the U.S. than vice versa. These dependencies materialize in two critical factors: the U.S. as a source of an export market as well as a provider of security. On the export market front, the U.S. has historically been Japan’s largest export market and has only recently been surpassed by China. Data from the Observatory of Economic Complexity shows that in 2020, China was the destination for 21.3% of exports whereas the U.S. remains to be a destination for a substantial 18% of Japanese exports³⁴.

As for security, the prevailing U.S.-Japan Treaty is immensely beneficial to the Japanese government. While the U.S. is compelled to defend Japan in the event of an attack, Japan has no

³⁰ Vidal, Lluc Lopez. “Beyond the Gaiatsu Model: Japan’s Asia-Pacific Policy and Neoclassical Realism.” *Journal of Asian Security and International Affairs*, vol. 9, no. 1, Apr. 2022, pp. 26-49.

³¹ Miyashita, Akitoshi. “Gaiatsu and Japan’s Foreign Aid: Rethinking the Reactive-Proactive Debate.” *International Studies Quarterly*, vol. 43, no. 4, Dec. 1999, pp. 695-731.

³² *Ibid.*, pp. 695.

³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 697.

³⁴ “Japan (JPN) Exports, Imports, and Trade Partners.” *OECD*, <https://oec.world/en/profile/country/jpn/>

such reciprocal obligation. Likewise, a U.S. guarantee of protection also allows more resources to be allocated to more efficient areas of economic need. Miyashita intriguingly notes another advantage: “The security treaty saves the Japanese government from confronting the difficult question of Japan’s large-scale rearmament (any, by implication, its past) on both the domestic and international fronts”³⁵. Despite the fall of the Soviet Union and subsequent phasing out or reform of most communist regimes, the security environment of the Asia-Pacific still remains volatile between the rapid military build-up of China and the nuclear aspirations of countries such as North Korea or India. Any sudden attempt at a large-scale rearmament on the part of Japan would only further aggravate the environment, as it would draw ire and distress from many of its neighbors who were victims of Japanese atrocities during the country’s imperial years. To this effect, the U.S. hegemonic presence acts as a stabilizing force in the region protecting Japan from others as well as itself.

These two factors help illuminate the nature of the significance of United States hegemony to the U.S.-Japan relationship and how it impacts the foreign policy decisions that Japan makes. As Miyashita puts it, “While Japan is capable of formulating independent policies based on its own definition of national interests, whether and to what extent it will pursue such policies depends on the strength (as the Japanese government perceives it) of U.S. objection to them”³⁶. As a final point, Miyashita’s findings are helpful in understanding the development and motivation of Japanese foreign policies.

Despite the U.S. 's staying power as a unipolar hegemon, this does not mean it is completely impervious to challenges to its position in the international order. Thanh Duong, a scholar of international relations and international political economy, provides a commentary on

³⁵ Miyashita, Akitoshi. “Gaiatsu and Japan’s Foreign Aid: Rethinking the Reactive-Proactive Debate.” *International Studies Quarterly*, vol. 43, no. 4, Dec. 1999, pp. 702.

³⁶ *Ibid* pp. 704.

the complexity of relations between countries with respect to hegemony in an increasingly globalized environment in their book: *Hegemonic Globalisation: US Centrality and Global Strategy in the Emerging World Order*. Duong notes that the most delicate relationship in the globalization era is that of the U.S. and China³⁷. As discussed earlier, Japan benefits from adhering to U.S. hegemony rather than challenging it for economic superiority, which leaves the other would-be challengers to be the European Union and Russia. While the EU has yet to definitively outline its political and military ambitions, it like Japan can be characterized as a supporter of the U.S. hegemonic order³⁸. The invasion of Ukraine has exposed Russia to political and economical turmoil, causing its chances of rivaling the U.S. to diminish greatly. With all other candidates ruled out, this leaves China as the only possible contender.

The current iteration of China is one that rejects the legitimacy of the U.S. hegemonic order. It is important to note that this is not an attitude that is held exclusively because the seat of power lies in the West; during the Cold War, the Chinese rejected the notion of Soviet leadership as well. According to Duong, the goal of China's PRC governance is to instead be able to take part in global affairs and international problem solving on equal footing with its counterparts³⁹. To this effect, the Chinese government employs a "chameleon practice of diplomatic relations"⁴⁰.

As Duong best puts it:

The nature of Chinese diplomatic practice has seen a combination of war, peace, and intrigue...China takes advantage of others, especially where other great powers are in decline or in demise in a specific region on the one hand, whilst on the other, it plays by the rules with the 'hegemonic' power when it serves Chinese interests and where it feels it cannot gain from challenging the existing rules⁴¹.

³⁷ Duong, Thanh. *Hegemonic Globalisation: U.S. Centrality and Global Strategy in the Emerging World Order*. Vol. First edition. London: Routledge, 2017. pp. 158.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid, pp. 175.

⁴⁰ Ibid, pp. 160.

⁴¹ Ibid.

In doing so, the Chinese government has been able to legitimize its claim as a great power in domestic public perception by acting in its own interests and sidestepping the association of globalization with American hegemony. This has also served to contradict the idea that rapid development and economic liberalization would eventually pave the way for social and political stability from which a liberal democracy would naturally manifest.

Duong goes so far as to liken the current state of China and its ambitions to Germany of the 18th and early 19th century. For context, following its unification in 1871, Germany achieved rapid industrial and economic growth⁴². Not only did these developments fail to organically bring about a liberal democracy in the new Imperial Germany, but the Second Reich also set out to reorganize the balance of power instead of simply being satisfied with its new status in the existing European system⁴³. There is a need to consider if the confidence and affluence aggregated by China's similar successes will set it down this path. Duong notes, "Many Chinese remain bitter at the humiliation endured during the reigns of European, Japanese and American imperialism in the 19th and early 20th centuries"⁴⁴. If this ends up being the case, there is a potential threat that China may look to even the score with its former aggressors.

Because there is even a possibility that this scenario can occur and that the implications would be severe for Japan, it is treated as a serious matter in consideration of their foreign policies. While Duong's comparison of a rising power in China to that of a unified and industrialized Imperial Germany seems fair given the analogous pretexts, it is an example of an extreme scenario. This aligns with the realist perspective that two nations vying for hegemony will fall into the Thucydides Trap, a seemingly inevitable conflict between an existing great power and a rising power as was the case with Sparta and Athens during the Peloponnesian

⁴² Ibid, pp. 178.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

Wars⁴⁵. Duong, however, has already identified Chinese diplomatic relations as chameleon-like with a need to conform to the existing international order to succeed economically which challenges this idea. Instead, any need or desire to check the rising power of China will see more politically nuanced action rather than open confrontation.

Methodology

This study uses qualitative research methods primarily in its investigation of Japanese foreign policy. The parameters of this study include reviewing existing and former foreign policy objectives and how they relate to each other. A somewhat comprehensive overview of the current state of economic factors in Japan is also necessary and helpful in understanding why these foreign policy objectives were created and determining if they are viable. In addition, this study aims to use the levels of analysis tool within international relations as an analytical device to think about who and/or what purposes do these foreign policy objectives serve.

For the purposes of this research, qualitative research is preferred to the quantitative variety for several reasons. Information researched is predominantly derived from sources that originate from written records as opposed to mathematical models or experimental analysis. Many, if not all of the sources referenced in this thesis come from academic journals, books, or official government documents available to the public including but not limited to official statements, press releases, and plans or publications found on the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs' website. Moreover, this study largely uses qualitative research because of the fundamental nature of the inquiry in question, that is, "Will Japan be able to achieve its foreign policy goals?". This question is, in essence, highly speculative. As such, this paper cannot expect to have a large sample size of analytical data to work with as the outcomes of events that the

⁴⁵ Nye, Joseph S., and David A. Welch. *Understanding Global Conflict and Cooperation: Pearson New International Edition: An Introduction to Theory and History*. Pearson, 2014. pp. 20.

foreign policy goals may depend upon have yet to take place. Therefore, this study will rely on qualitative research that will allow for a hypothesis that can sufficiently fulfill the research question to be formulated.

Qualitative research methodologies come in many different forms ranging from more participatory approaches dealing with populations such as surveys and polls, interviews, focus groups or behavioral observation to more document related approaches such as online or archival research and literature review⁴⁶. The main mechanism that this thesis applies is the case study research method, an example of the latter type of approach. Case study research is an investigation and analysis of a single or collective case, intended to capture the complexity of the object of the study⁴⁷. Furthermore, multiple data collection and analysis methods are adopted to further develop and understand the case, shaped by context and emergent data⁴⁸. In this light, case study research is useful because it allows the researcher to gain a thorough and exhaustive knowledge of a situation as opposed to merely reviewing only the most important factors. It allows a researcher to explore the how's and why's of event's occurrences and also provides them the opportunity to describe and explain them in detail. Finally, case studies typically deal with numbers of units that are small in scale but can conversely deal with a large number of variables, some of which may be unknown⁴⁹.

Case studies can vary in number, with some studies analyzing multiple cases at the same time to have the ability to compare and contrast. Because this paper is solely interested in the actions and the perspective of the Japanese government, the approach under these circumstances will be to perform a single case study. To synthesize what was briefly mentioned earlier, a

⁴⁶ Szitanyi, Stephanie. "IS Senior Thesis Seminar" INST 4000, 10 Oct. 2022, Fordham University. Class lecture.

⁴⁷ Stake, Robert E. *The Art of Case Study Research*. Sage Publications, 1995.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

singular case study of Japan that will be sufficient enough to answer the research question will have to first identify what the country's most important foreign policy goals are. Not only does this consist of finding out the objectives verbatim but also what it will mean for them to be achieved and by what measure can they be considered successful. This will naturally require an examination of both the past and present relationships with other foreign powers that the country has been involved with. In the same vein, it will also have to consider the motivations of Japan's interactions with other countries for which the framework can be provided by the different schools of thought in modern international relations. These will chiefly be the realist, liberalist, and constructivist perspectives⁵⁰. This project also assumes that the overall health of the Japanese economy will play a large role in whether it will be able to achieve its foreign policy goals or not. Taking that into consideration, this case study will also have to explore trends in the domestic economy and the role that recent governing administrations have played in that as well as any major policies that they may have enacted to influence the market.

It is important to note that within the case study exists a considerable need to pay attention to the role that Japan has played regarding diplomacy and foreign relations in the past, given that those actions have laid the foundation for the state of diplomatic relations for Japan today. On account of this, a significant portion of the case study itself will rely on its own qualitative method of research: historical analysis. Historical analysis is a method of the examination of evidence in coming to an understanding of the past⁵¹. Performing historical analysis allows the researcher to gain a high degree of accuracy in regard to what the facts of the past are, and also gives them the chance to establish a chronology as a byproduct. By

⁵⁰ Nye, Joseph S., and David A. Welch. *Understanding Global Conflict and Cooperation: Pearson New International Edition: An Introduction to Theory and History*. Pearson, 2014.

⁵¹ Thorpe, Richard, and Robin Holt. *The Sage Dictionary of Qualitative Management Research*. SAGE, 2008.

substantiating the cause and effect between the facts learned, the researcher can begin to understand why things happened then and why things may be happening currently.

A General History of Japanese Foreign Relations: Antiquity–1945

The primary goals of Japanese foreign policy are like those of any other ordinary country: to further enhance the nation's security and, by extension, to help ensure the nation's success and prosperity. For the better part of the past seventy years, Japan has largely been fortunate in achieving these goals. Since the end of the second World War, the country has reimagined itself from a devastated and defeated empire into an economic powerhouse and simultaneous champion of democracy⁵². Japan was remarkably able to achieve this at a time when the Asian region was mired with a myriad of destructive conflicts such as the various wars and revolutions that occurred between 1945-2000 including the Chinese Civil War, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and so on⁵³. The capacity for which Japan was able to bypass these crises relatively unscathed can be attributed to the foundation of Japanese foreign policy in this postwar era which relied heavily on Japan's unique relationship with the United States⁵⁴.

It is important to briefly note the foreign policy of Japan before World War II, as it gives context to the history and significance of its important relationships with other powers. It can be said that in regard to international relations, the events of the past directly affect how we make decisions in the present. Therefore, it is best to understand the Japanese foreign policy as a continuous stream in which its interaction with countries in the past have a significant impact on the course of relations today. Throughout the majority of its history, Japan has largely been rendered an isolationist country by virtue of its geographical situation as well as by law imposed

⁵² Solis, Mireya. "Japan's Democratic Renewal and the Survival of the Liberal Order." *Brookings*, 9 Mar. 2022, <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/japans-democratic-renewal-and-the-survival-of-the-liberal-order/>

⁵³ Sugita, Yoneyuki. *Toward a More Amicable Asia-Pacific Region: Japan's Roles*. UPA, 2016. pp. 1.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, pp. 2.

by ruling samurai that restricted contact with other nations⁵⁵. Japan has had its oldest relationship with China, from whom early on it had borrowed writing systems, legal codes, and other cultural traditions⁵⁶. Official records of attempts to establish diplomatic relations between the two occur as early as around 57 A.D.⁵⁷. The first written instance where the distinct archipelago of Japan is recognized and was referred to as “the land of the rising sun” occurs in a correspondence between the royal courts of China and Japan around 607 A.D.⁵⁸. From this point on, ambassador missions were sporadically sent to China throughout the centuries at times when it was deemed necessary to procure knowledge, technology, culture, or to re-initiate and facilitate trade⁵⁹.

During this time, relations with the Korean peninsula were similar in terms of diplomatic missions sent between the two but quickly soured after failed invasions by both countries. Korean-supplied ships and ports were used by the Mongol empire’s attempts in the 1200s⁶⁰. Likewise, samurai led by Toyotomi Hideyoshi briefly occupied the peninsula in the late 1500s before being repelled by intervening Ming Chinese forces⁶¹. Also taking place in the sixteenth century is the first appearance of Westerners visiting the Japanese islands⁶². The introduction of trade with Portuguese and Dutch sailors also comes with the introduction of western technology and religion – both muskets and Christianity alike were seen as disruptive and threatening to the

⁵⁵ Welfield, John. *An Empire in Eclipse : Japan in the Post-War American Alliance System: A Study in the Interaction of Domestic Politics and Foreign Policy*. Bloomsbury Academic, 2012. pp. 5.

⁵⁶ Marmé, Michael. “Modern Japan.” HIST 3920, 7 Sep. 2021, Fordham University. Class lecture.

⁵⁷ Xiong, Victor Cunrui. “Ambassadors from the Islands of Immortals: China-Japan Relations in the Han-Tang Period.” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, vol. 67, no. 1, June 2007, p. 214.

⁵⁸ Clements, Jonathan. *A Brief History of Japan : Samurai, Shogun and Zen: The Extraordinary Story of the Land of the Rising Sun*. Tuttle Publishing, 2017.

⁵⁹ Xiong, Victor Cunrui. “Ambassadors from the Islands of Immortals: China-Japan Relations in the Han-Tang Period.” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, vol. 67, no. 1, June 2007, p. 216.

⁶⁰ Clements, Jonathan. *A Brief History of Japan : Samurai, Shogun and Zen: The Extraordinary Story of the Land of the Rising Sun*. Tuttle Publishing, 2017. pp. 124.

⁶¹ Marmé, Michael. “Modern Japan.” HIST 3920, 7 Sep. 2021, Fordham University. Class lecture.

⁶² Ibid.

power structures in place⁶³. In summary, before the Edo Period (1603-1868) Japan held amicable relations with China and working but inimical attitudes towards Korea and the West.

During the Edo Period, the Tokugawa shogunate took power and began reforms to shape the newly reunified Japan into an image of its ideal. One of the major reforms included enforcing *sakoku*, literally meaning “chained country” referring to national isolation⁶⁴. *Sakoku* policy restricted national foreign contact to only those countries that would accept its guidelines⁶⁵. Those countries ended up just being China, Korea, the Ryukyu Islands (at that time considered a Chinese vassal state rather than just being an extension of the Japanese archipelago itself) and Holland, whose East India Company had agreed to a deal that limited them to private trade and allowed them to port only at Nagasaki⁶⁶. Furthermore, *sakoku* prohibited the Japanese themselves from freely traveling abroad. Doing so would effectively result in permanent exile as the penalty for such an offense upon return was execution⁶⁷. As a result, the *sakoku* policies domestically began to enforce the idea of a Japan-centered world where Japan would determine the footing in which it dealt with foreign nations (virtually making it certain that the country would never be placed in a position of inferiority)⁶⁸. This was directly opposed to the China-centered world order that had dominated the region up until this point in history⁶⁹. Additionally, this new Japan-centered worldview clearly defined the actors as Japan versus the rest of the barbaric nations that existed⁷⁰. This would remain the case for the better part of the next 200 years until the arrival of the Americans at the islands in the second half of the 19th century.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Kazui, Tashiro, and Susan Downing Videen. “Foreign Relations during the Edo Period: Sakoku Reexamined.” *Journal of Japanese Studies*, vol. 8, no. 2, 1982, pp. 283–306.

⁶⁵ Ibid, pp. 288.

⁶⁶ Ibid. pp. 288-289.

⁶⁷ Marmé, Michael. “Modern Japan.” HIST 3920, 10 Sep. 2021, Fordham University. Class lecture.

⁶⁸ Kazui, Tashiro, and Susan Downing Videen. “Foreign Relations during the Edo Period: Sakoku Reexamined.” *Journal of Japanese Studies*, vol. 8, no. 2, 1982, pp. 289.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

Commodore Matthew Perry of the United States Navy was sent on back-to-back expeditions in 1853 and 1854 to force the opening of Japan to establish trade and foreign relations with the Americans by direct order from then-President Millard Filmore⁷¹. The abrupt appearance of steam frigates in what is now Tokyo Bay, disrupting supply chains and presenting a potential threat to national security, had torn the veil off for Japan. The country was made to accept the American's terms, opening ports to American ships, and allowing a consulate to remain in Japan⁷². Similar deals with the British, Russians, and Dutch would be made soon afterwards⁷³. With the devastating losses faced by China to the British in the concurrent Opium Wars and the colonization of Indochina by the French, it immediately became evident that the technological prowess and ever-growing presence of Western influence in the region could not be ignored⁷⁴. The brute force used by the Western powers also served to reaffirm the ideology that every other nation that wasn't Japan were barbarians and presented a constant threat⁷⁵. Dissatisfied with the weak handling of international diplomacy by the shogunate, a rebelling faction of samurai overthrew him and restored power to the emperor in 1868⁷⁶.

With the restoration of the Meiji emperor, the Japanese governing system was quickly reorganized into an oligarchy in order to ensure a tightly controlled and fluid transition to an eventual constitutional monarchy modeled as a hybrid between both the British and Prussian systems⁷⁷. The new Meiji government began looking to quickly gain the means to compete with the West on equal footing as a powerful, progressive, and respected nation⁷⁸. Due to the character

⁷¹ Marmé, Michael. "Modern Japan." HIST 3920, 21 Sep. 2021, Fordham University. Class lecture.

⁷² Marmé, Michael. "Modern Japan." HIST 3920, 21 Sep. 2021, Fordham University. Class lecture.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Clements, Jonathan. *A Brief History of Japan : Samurai, Shogun and Zen: The Extraordinary Story of the Land of the Rising Sun*. Tuttle Publishing, 2017. pp. 189.

⁷⁸ Marmé, Michael. "Modern Japan." HIST 3920, 12 Oct. 2021, Fordham University. Class lecture.

of the 19th century world order, it was clear that it would be difficult to achieve their goal of recognition without being industrialized and an imperial power. One of the first steps that they took to advance this agenda was to firmly establish its regional sovereignty by consolidating its territories⁷⁹. Initially, this consisted of exerting their claim to Hokkaido and the islands branching to the South, namely Okinawa and the Ryukyu Islands⁸⁰. Following this train of thought, the strategic argument was made that overseas possessions such as foreign bases and an increasing sphere of influence would be necessary to maintain and defend Japan's territorial stability against the expansionist Western powers⁸¹.

It was, then, this ideology that by and large characterized the foreign policy of Japan during the imperial years. Alongside this, Japan saw itself as the country that would be at the forefront of Asian modernity, rivaling the West and leading its neighbors in a greater Asia co-prosperity sphere of Pan-Asianism⁸². The Korean peninsula was believed to be vital for the defense of the country, likened to “a dagger pointed at the heart of Japan”⁸³. Anti-Japanese violent protests outside the Japanese legation in Seoul prompted the dispatch of military intervention in 1894⁸⁴. The Korean government had backing from both the Qing Chinese and Tzarist Russia, resulting in the subsequent First Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895) and Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905)⁸⁵. Japan's military dominance in its first forays into international conflict netted them the possession of Manchuria, Taiwan as a colony, and annexation of Korea by 1910⁸⁶.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Marmé, Michael. “Modern Japan.” HIST 3920, 12 Oct. 2021, Fordham University. Class lecture.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

The involvement (and consequent) weakening of most of the world's great powers in World War I paved the way for Japan's international ascension and legitimization. During the war, Japan moved to take Germany's areas of influence in China in accordance with their alliance with Britain⁸⁷. By the time of the Treaty of Versailles, Japan was accepted as one of the big five powers alongside the United States, United Kingdom, France, and Italy⁸⁸. Japan had successfully achieved the most rapid industrialization of any modern country over the span of around fifty years⁸⁹. To be confined to the Japanese home islands would leave Japan resource limited, given the small area to work with and lack of diverse natural assets. And so, to maintain its industrial prowess as well as increase its military capabilities for an inevitable showdown with the West, the Japanese began expanding across Asia⁹⁰. Given its pan-Asian superiority complex, Japanese occupants were notably harsh and cruel. At the height of its empire, Imperial Japan controlled the Japanese islands, the Korean peninsula, Manchuria, most of populated China, French Indochina, and Burma, as well as every island between the mainland and Australia⁹¹.

The fighting of World War II had devastating consequences for Imperial Japan. Nearly all of its taken territories had been liberated by the U.S. Navy, while the Soviets pushed into Manchuria and Korea from the North⁹². Its cities had been ravaged by bombs, both of the fire and atomic varieties. Its military had been dismantled and it was occupied by its conqueror, the United States, but this did not come without its perks. The new global world order was shaped with the U.S. as the dominant, central component⁹³. The Bretton Woods Conference virtually

⁸⁷ Marmé, Michael. "Modern Japan." HIST 3920, 19 Oct. 2021, Fordham University. Class lecture.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ "Japan's Territorial Expansion 1931-1942." *Worldview*, Stratfor, 8 Dec. 2014, <https://worldview.stratfor.com/article/japans-territorial-expansion-1931-1942>.

⁹² Welfield, John. *An Empire in Eclipse: Japan in the Post-War American Alliance System: A Study in the Interaction of Domestic Politics and Foreign Policy*. Bloomsbury Academic, 2012, pp. 21.

⁹³ Ibid.

established the Federal Reserve as the world bank, binding fully convertible national currencies to the dollar which was backed by gold⁹⁴. This was further supported by the creation of the official World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, as well as the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade⁹⁵. Japanese goods that were priced to the dollar allowed the goods to become a more competitive product, and consequently more favorable in the international market⁹⁶.

Given the nature of its relationship with the U.S. occupation, essentially a client state, Japan was at the U.S.' will yet they were perfect candidates for America's vision of a postwar Asia⁹⁷. It was understood, through the viewpoint of President Roosevelt's social democratic philosophies, that a demilitarized but politically stable Japan guaranteed participation in world trade would be beneficial to American interests as well as to the economic development of the region⁹⁸. The generous peace terms offered by the Americans in the San Francisco Treaty of 1951 fully restored sovereignty to the Japanese government abiding by the new constitution drafted under the guidance of the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers⁹⁹. While Japan was barred from developing any form of military forces itself, it did provide for the United States to indefinitely maintain its own military bases on the Japanese home islands¹⁰⁰. While the primary purpose of this was to allow the U.S. freedom to pursue its own policy objectives in Asia, it also effectively served as a guarantee of security to Japan at no cost¹⁰¹. Furthermore, because these costs that would have been needed to maintain a military were now freed up, this allowed for a large number of resources to be allocated to other areas of need¹⁰².

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Marmé, Michael. "Modern Japan." HIST 3920, 16 Nov. 2021, Fordham University. Class lecture.

⁹⁷ Welfield, John. *An Empire in Eclipse : Japan in the Post-War American Alliance System: A Study in the Interaction of Domestic Politics and Foreign Policy*. Bloomsbury Academic, 2012, pp. 26.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Marmé, Michael. "Modern Japan." HIST 3920, 16 Nov. 2021, Fordham University. Class lecture.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid.

The Significance of American Postwar Partnership

While the San Francisco Peace Treaty of 1951 was a more than adequate starting point for the Americans, it was certainly not the most ideal situation for the Japanese government and left a lot to be desired. While the United States retained the right to maintain military bases on the Japanese islands for an indefinite period of time, there was no specific guarantee that the U.S. would protect Japan should the need arise (in contrast to the newly formed NATO member states, which did have explicit guarantees of American protection)¹⁰³. In a similar vein, there were not any provisions within the treaty necessitating Japanese participation in any American-backed regional security agreements or arrangements¹⁰⁴. The terms of the treaty also forced Japan to relinquish any claim it had to its former colonial possessions such as any Pacific islands, Korea, and Taiwan¹⁰⁵.

The reason that this initial treaty did not require much from and gave much leniency to Japan was chiefly because foreign policy strategists within the U.S. nearing the conclusion of the second World War viewed China as the centerpiece of America's plans for postwar Asia¹⁰⁶. The primary objectives for Washington in Asia were to prevent Japan from becoming a military power capable of rivaling the U.S. again, and to prevent the spread of communism¹⁰⁷. Chiang Kai-shek, having experience in both of these fields (dueling with Mao's Chinese Communist Party during the Chinese Civil War and leading the resistance against the Imperial Japanese Army during the second Sino-Japanese War) had seemingly proven to be a capable candidate¹⁰⁸. It started to become clear in 1947 that a different course of action needed to be taken, as Chiang

¹⁰³ Welfield, John. *An Empire in Eclipse: Japan in the Post-War American Alliance System: A Study in the Interaction of Domestic Politics and Foreign Policy*. Bloomsbury Academic, 2012, pp. 25.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, pp. 27.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, pp. 26.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, pp. 27.

Kai-shek's Kuomintang forces began to falter amid collapsing military positions and reports of corruption¹⁰⁹. Because of this, leading strategists within the U.S. increasingly came to view their relationship with Japan as a major focal point to their Asian policy plans.

To this end, the United States desired to integrate Japan into its rapidly emerging global anti-communist strategy without allowing it to become a leading military-industrial complex once again. George Kennan, director of the State Department Policy Planning Staff, believed that Japan was the key to the east as Germany was the key to the west¹¹⁰. He argued that the two former Axis powers should then be reconstructed to the point where they each could play their part in the Eurasian balance of power and yet to a point not so far advanced as to permit them again to threaten the interests of the maritime world of the West¹¹¹. In this light as well as within the context of the postwar realities of the international political order, the plan for Japan was to effectively become an American satellite state that was constructed in a way in which its government's action would consistently align with supporting U.S. interests¹¹². John Welfield comprehensively outlines the widely accepted design intentions for Japan in regard to this from the Department of State around this time:

To achieve this goal it would be necessary to design a peace settlement that enabled Washington to retain 'veto power over what she [Japan] does'. If this could be arranged the United States should have no objections to renewed Japanese ascendancy in Korea and other (unspecified) surrounding territories. This would serve to 'counter and moderate Soviet influence there'. An appropriate level of Japanese-Soviet conflict, it was suggested, could be created over the issue of the northern islands. At the same time the Japanese economy should be closely linked with those of the newly independent non-Communist states of South-East Asia, the great arc of resource-rich territories extending through the Philippines, Indonesia and Indochina to the Indian subcontinent and Afghanistan. In this way the United States could construct a solid wall of politically stable, economically viable, anti-Communist states extending all around the periphery of continental Asia. It was essential, of course, to ensure that Japan itself did not re-emerge as an independent and competitive centre of power. Kennan believed that this objective could best be

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid, pp. 28.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid.

realized maintaining indirect controls ‘foolproof enough and cleverly enough exercised really to have power over what Japan imports in the way of oil and other things’¹¹³.

A significant point to note here is that the strategists of the Truman administration were content with containing the influence of the Soviet Union as opposed to actively and openly combatting and trying to overthrow it, if possible. Otherwise, it appears that the Japanese would be allowed a considerable degree of freedom in exerting political and economic influence so long as it fell within the parameters deemed acceptable by Washington.

Up to this point much of what has been recounted in this section has been described from an American perspective given that history is written by the victors as the saying goes. But the Japanese did, in fact, have their own visions for their role in the postwar world. Aside from the political complex at large which was wholly dedicated to fighting for victory until the bitter end and did not envision anything other than achieving its imperial goals, there did exist a small group of high-ranking and senior officials from the old establishment which did prepare for a less than favorable outcome to the war¹¹⁴. The initial prospective peace settlement conceived by the Marquis Kōichi Kido in January of 1944 proposed that: any matters regarding the Pacific be settled by the countries that bordered it, that the territories occupied by Japan including the islands in the Pacific be turned into a demilitarized zone, all independent countries except for the great powers be declared as perpetually neutral in the same manner as the Swiss model, and a joint commission be formed between the Japanese, Americans, British, Russians, and the Chinese¹¹⁵. In this scenario, Japan would have been permitted to remain as an independent great power with its major imperial acquisitions in Korea and Manchuria and security in the Pacific

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid, pp. 31

¹¹⁵ Ibid, pp. 32.

would have been stabilized through the combination of the demilitarized zones and agreements via the joint commission.

As the military situation continued to decline, it became increasingly evident that the Japanese would most likely not be able to dictate their own terms and would instead have to choose between an Anglo-American or Soviet relationship. Those that advocated for partnership with the Soviet Union, such as military leadership, cited the compatibility of Russian interests with Japan¹¹⁶. Chief of the Imperial Japanese Army General Staff, Yoshijirō Umezu, reported to the emperor: “Japan must under no circumstances make peace with the United States. The Americans have a contempt not only for Japan as a state but for the Japanese as a race...The only people we can ask favors of now are the Russians”¹¹⁷. Furthermore, Stalin’s immediate interests lay almost solely in Eastern Europe potentially giving Japan the opportunity to continue pursuing its imperial interests in at least China and the South Sea¹¹⁸. The more politically-minded advisors such as former Prime Minister, Prince Fumimaro Konoe, advised the emperor to reach an Anglo-American settlement fearing a domestic revolution akin to that which toppled the Russian Empire in the waning years of World War I. As it is said in Konoe’s Peace Memorandum:

Defeat will undoubtedly cause cracks to appear in the edifice of Japan’s Sacred National Polity [*kokutai*]. Nevertheless, opinion in Great Britain and the United States has not, at least until the present time, gone so far as to demand changes in this order...Still, I believe defeat gives us little grounds for concern about the preservation of the Sacred National Polity. What we need to fear, far more than than defeat, is the Communist revolution that will follow it¹¹⁹.

As Konoe saw it, the Soviet Union had been very proactive in installing pro-Communist governments in the countries surrounding it and was only aided by the political pushback against fascism which would manifest in Japan as well given the chance. Prince Konoe’s petition proved

¹¹⁶ Ibid, p.33.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

to be more compelling and it would be his faction, led by Shigeru Yoshida, which would guide Japanese foreign policy construction during the occupation and leading into the peace treaty negotiations¹²⁰.

Yoshida, who served as Prime Minister from 1946-1947 and once again from 1948-1954, was already predisposed to fostering good relations with the West; he had spent time as an ambassador to the U.S. from 1916-18 and served multiple diplomatic missions to the U.K. between 1920 and 1938¹²¹. Yoshida, like the old visionaries of the Meiji Restoration, believed that Japan's survival as an independent great power was contingent upon it being a Western-style empire that would preside over the Asian continent. It is important to recognize that China is critical to this pan-Asian idea¹²². As Welfield puts it, "For Yoshida, China was not simply an indispensable piece of strategic real estate, a source of raw materials and a market for the empire's manufactured goods"¹²³. Aside from these factors, China was also an object of admiration; the source of the Confucian culture that the well-to-do Japanese had been classically educated in as well¹²⁴. Unlike his Meiji ideological contemporaries, however, Yoshida acknowledged the influence the British and Americans held in China and that Japan would do best to cooperate with them rather than prepare for an inevitable showdown¹²⁵. Additionally, both Britain and the United States were highly organized, immensely wealthy, controlled vast resources, and dominated the sea-lanes of the world¹²⁶. Japan, aiming to be a commercial and industrial island nation, was dependent on resource import and open-seas and therefore could not

¹²⁰ Ibid, pp.36.

¹²¹ Ibid, pp.39.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Ibid, pp.40.

¹²⁴ Marmé, Michael. "Modern Japan." HIST 3920, 14 Sep. 2021, Fordham University. Class lecture.

¹²⁵ Welfield, John. *An Empire in Eclipse: Japan in the Post-War American Alliance System: A Study in the Interaction of Domestic Politics and Foreign Policy*. Bloomsbury Academic, 2012, pp. 40.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

overlook the Anglo-Saxon as a benefactor. The Japanese defeat at the hands of the Allied Powers in the Pacific Theater only confirmed these viewpoints.

Yoshida's fear instead was that Japan would become too large of a focal point to the American Far East strategy, hindering its ability to reclaim its status as an independent great power that would be friendly with Washington but also able to make its own arrangements of its own accord¹²⁷. The outbreak of the civil war in Korea quickly dispelled any notion of this as the establishment of military bases in Japan became a minimum requirement for the Americans in peace treaty negotiations¹²⁸. The Treaty of San Francisco alongside the Security Treaty between the United States and Japan was signed on the 8th of September, 1951¹²⁹. The San Francisco peace treaty reintroduced Japan as a fully sovereign nation with the acceptance of its democratic, pacifist constitution and formally ended the postwar occupation¹³⁰. The security treaty, on the other hand, outlined how in what capacity the U.S. would be allowed to maintain forces in Japan in regard to this official disarmament of the nation¹³¹. Together, these two treaties would become known as the San Francisco system and would define the U.S.–Japanese relationship as well as Japan's role on the international stage that continues today.

The partnership between the United States and Japan proved to be immediately constructive. In exchange for practically becoming an unsinkable aircraft carrier off the coast of mainland Asia for American military forces, the Japanese benefitted from U.S. willingness to cheaply license technology to them as well as open their market for Japanese goods. The crucial inclusion of Article 9 in the new Japanese constitution prohibiting the maintenance of a military as well as renouncing the right to declare war¹³². This allowed for a large amount of resources to

¹²⁷ Ibid, pp.45.

¹²⁸ Ibid, pp.47.

¹²⁹ Government of Japan. (2022). *IV. San Francisco Peace Treaty*. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Government of Japan. (2022). *Japan-U.S. Security Treaty*. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan.

¹³² Government of Japan. (2022). *The Constitution of Japan*. Prime Minister's Office of Japan.

be allocated to other areas of need such as heavy and chemical industries. Furthermore, the Dodge Line established a fixed exchange rate between the dollar and the yen to help stabilize the yen on the world market and create more competitive products¹³³. Altogether these factors resulted in the Japanese economy experiencing a record period of growth kickstarted by the need for the Americans to quickly supply the effort in the Korean conflict¹³⁴.

Following the events of the early 1950s, Japan continued to accommodate American foreign policy objectives. Close alignment with Washington and participation in the expanding network of organizations that had begun to link the countries of the non-Communist world produced immediate and tangible results¹³⁵. The American assistance toward the formation of the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) in 1954 was accompanied by agreements between the Yoshida cabinet and SEATO member states on the matters of war reparations, with the aims of setting the stage for future development of diplomatic relations as well as impeding any desire to stray towards Moscow or Beijing¹³⁶. The increasing influence of the United States in the Middle East, from involvement in restoring the Shah in Iran to criticizing the British dispatch of troops to the Suez Canal, also saw Japan begin to transition from a coal-based economy into one that relied upon imported oil¹³⁷.

At the end of the decade, the security treaty signed in 1952 expired and was renewed with more fair terms under the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between the United States and Japan in 1960¹³⁸. This treaty did include an explicit guarantee of protection of the Japanese islands by the American military and solidified the partnership between the two countries that

¹³³ Marmé, Michael. "Modern Japan." HIST 3920, 16 Nov. 2021, Fordham University. Class lecture.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Welfield, John. *An Empire in Eclipse: Japan in the Post-War American Alliance System: A Study in the Interaction of Domestic Politics and Foreign Policy*. p. 90. Bloomsbury Academic, 2012.

¹³⁶ Ibid, p.95

¹³⁷ Ibid, p.96

¹³⁸ Government of Japan. (2022). *Japan-U.S. Security Treaty*. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan.

remains in effect today¹³⁹. Since then Japan has largely come into its own, having grown into one of the world's largest economies and developing its own policies and strategies independent of direct U.S. influence. In the case of significant events, history has still seen Japan follow the American's lead however. For instance, Japan restored normalized diplomatic relations with the People's Republic in 1972, within a year of President Nixon's visit to China¹⁴⁰. Otherwise, Japan broadly has been an advocate of free and open, de-escalatory foreign policy that perhaps could be seen as a successor of the non-Communist global system that arose during the postwar era.

An Analysis of Modern Japanese Foreign Policy Objectives: The FOIP

Japan's current foreign policy objectives and formal positions are outlined in their Diplomatic Bluebook, an annual report on Japan's foreign policy and activities relating to international diplomacy published by their Ministry of Foreign Affairs¹⁴¹. The periodical publication began in 1957 with each issue since 1971 (including the most current one) available for the general public to view on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' website with translations in the major languages of English, French, and Spanish accessible¹⁴². Each issue of Japan's Diplomatic Bluebook situates the current state of international relations between Japan and key countries for that given year.

The Bluebooks, aside from presenting Japan's specific relationships, also provide the Japanese government's perspective and commentary on contemporary global trends and issues ranging from those categorized as economic to those related to energy challenges and all the other major challenges that fall in between. More recently, the Bluebooks have consistently placed a particular emphasis on rising matters of contention with respect to its immediate

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Government of Japan. (2022). *Joint Communique of the Government of Japan and the Government of the People's Republic of China*. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan.

¹⁴¹ Government of Japan. (2022). *Foreign Policy*. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. <https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/other/bluebook/index.html>

¹⁴² Ibid.

neighboring countries such as evaluating the series of North Korean nuclear ballistic missile tests as a potential military threat. The Bluebooks, in view of these points, signify a desire by Japan to make contributions to the international community at large while at the same time displaying insight into its own agenda and ambitions and how they change over time.

The most recent iteration of the Diplomatic Bluebook opens with a first chapter that provides a summary overview of the international situation and outlook for diplomacy from the Japanese point of view, but gets into more detail with the second chapter titled “Japan’s Foreign Policy by Region”¹⁴³. The chapter consists of eight sections, with each division having its own regional focus. In order, the sections are as follows: (1) Promotion of a “Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)”, (2) Asia & Oceania, (3) North America, (4) Latin America & the Caribbean, (5) Europe, (6) Russia & Central Asia/Caucasus, (7) The Middle East & North Africa, and (8) Africa. Given that the chapter begins with the section dedicated to Japan’s personally constructed foreign policy project, followed by a section devoted to its closest neighbors to its West and subsequently its next closest neighbors in the East, it can be assumed that the sections are ordered in terms of relative strategic importance.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs takes a lot of care to place special emphasis on the promotion of a free and open Indo-Pacific (FOIP). This FOIP concept, the brainchild of the remarkably lengthy Abe administration, replaces the more historically popular idea of the Asia-Pacific as a region through which many different countries interact. The traditional idea of the Asia-Pacific is too limited in scope for a modern worldview and the incorporation of the Indian Ocean and the countries that have physical contact with it as an important regional factor acknowledges the globalization and level of interconnectedness that has occurred. In their own words, “Japan has long emphasized the importance of taking a holistic view of the Indian and

¹⁴³ Government of Japan. (2022). *Diplomatic Bluebook 2022*. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan.

Pacific Oceans”¹⁴⁴. The Indo-Pacific region, then, stretches all the way from the Asia-Pacific to the Middle East and eastern coast of Africa. The confluence of the two seas in such a holistic view must also recognize that it is taking on an outlook that encompasses more than half of the world’s population from countries that have some of the strongest military capabilities and political or economical influence. Along with that also come the variety of challenges and threats present in the region, namely: piracy, terrorism, illegal fishing, the proliferation of nuclear weapons, natural disasters, and other acts that otherwise undermine the rule of law¹⁴⁵.

Japan’s aim is to remedy these challenges by promoting a free and open order bolstered by the rule of law to better ensure harmony and prosperity. To this end, the Japanese government has worked to promote this concept made official in 2016 in cooperation with countries who share similar values and strategic views. Consequently, the United States, Australia, India, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and the European Union have all since adopted some form of the vision proposed by Japan. These actors have formalized various policy guidelines that adhere to the ideals set out by Japan’s FOIP. For example, the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific was created during the ASEAN Summit in June of 2019 and the EU released their Council Conclusions on an EU Strategy for Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific in April of 2021¹⁴⁶. Partnership and collaboration is an essential component in building the kind of international community that can achieve and maintain the goal set out by the FOIP.

The Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs has outlined five different measures which must be worked towards in order to realize a more free and open Indo-Pacific. These objectives are to promote policy on maritime order and share insights on maritime law with the international community, engage in rule-making to expand a free and fair economic area,

¹⁴⁴ Ibid. pp. 26.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

enhance connectivity between the Indian and Pacific oceans, enhance governance through capacity building, and to ensure maritime security and other marine safety¹⁴⁷. To these ends, Japan has given training and assistance to Southeast Asian countries as well as Pacific island countries related to developing capacity building of maritime law enforcement. They have entered into the Japan-UK Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement, the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership, the Japan-EU Economic Partnership Agreement, the Japan-U.S. Trade Agreement and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership; all of these pacts involve trade rules that encourage a free and open international economy against the global protectionist trends brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic¹⁴⁸.

Japan has already helped expand connectivity by funding infrastructure projects such as the construction of bridges, tunnels, and ports in the East-West and Southern Economic Corridors, helping give better access from Vietnam and Laos to Thailand, Myanmar, and the Indian Ocean¹⁴⁹. To help stimulate self-sustained and long-term growth, Japan provides official development assistance to countries in Africa and Asia¹⁵⁰. Alongside ODA, macroeconomic training and advising has been given for capacity building in fiscal policy and public debt management¹⁵¹. Lastly, Japan is also providing assistance in shoring up maritime law enforcement security capacity to the countries along Japan's shipping lanes such as the Philippines; this includes the provision of patrol vessels, coastal monitoring radars, and other necessary equipment¹⁵².

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid, pp. 27.

¹⁴⁹ Government of Japan. (2022). *Diplomatic Bluebook 2022*. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. pp.27.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Ibid.

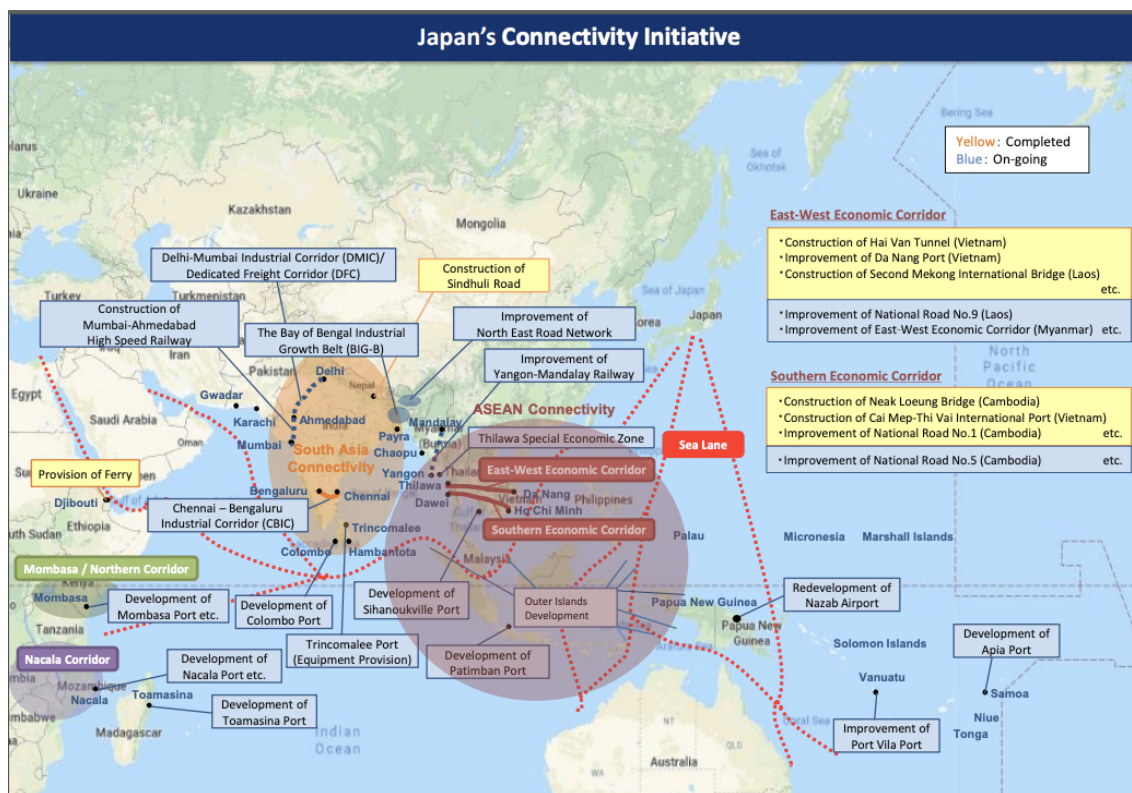


Image 2: Figure displays examples of both completed and on-going infrastructure projects in areas of emphasis for the FOIP¹⁵³.

Source: Website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan (<https://www.mofa.go.jp/files/000430632.pdf>)

The evidence shows that Japan has worked on various projects as well as cooperated with various countries in ways that are consistent with the methods described by the FOIP. Given this, it can be concluded that Japan does truly desire to grow and uphold a free and open international community. To reiterate, the key values that inspire the FOIP are peace, prosperity, and stability. In this light, Japan's efforts to bring together an international community toward a like-minded and mutually beneficial purpose is reminiscent of, if not the direct natural progression of, the democratic, liberal world order that the United States tried to accomplish during the Cold War.

¹⁵³ Government of Japan. (2022). *Free and Open Indo-Pacific Basic Thinking Material*. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. pp.4.

This becomes even more apparent when reviewing the reasons which are thought to necessitate this large-scale collaboration between countries. Specifically, Japan frequently uses language such as “attempts to change the status quo”¹⁵⁴. Again, when situating the FOIP in the Bluebook it states, “At the same time, the region is home to several countries with strong military capabilities, and there have been some acts that undermine the stable order based on the rule of law”¹⁵⁵. While Japan explicitly mentions North Korea as one of these perpetrators, the other countries are left ambiguous. According to World Population Review and of the countries that fall within the domain of the FOIP, seven (not including Russia or the United States) rank among the top ten of countries with the highest total numbers of military personnel¹⁵⁶. Furthermore, from those seven countries, only four have recently been involved in threatening actions multinational in caliber: North Korea, India, China, and Pakistan. With North Korea’s missile-testing already accounted for, Pakistan being detailed within the plans for FOIP provisions and India safely being ruled out as a potential suspect given that it is a key member of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, the only remaining actor that Japan could be referring to is China.

Notably, mention of the terms “China” or “Chinese” are completely absent from any of the documents specifically pertaining to the FOIP despite inexorably being the most important actor economically and militarily in the region. In this case, the glaring omission of the region’s largest actor perhaps speaks louder than the inclusion of the North Korean nuclear arsenal. Given the stature of China’s economy and magnitude of its resources, China’s diplomatic and financial influence would be an invaluable ally in helping advance the goals of the FOIP. Surely China

¹⁵⁴ Government of Japan. (2022). *Free and Open Indo-Pacific Basic Thinking Material*. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. pp.1.

¹⁵⁵ Government of Japan. (2022). *Diplomatic Bluebook 2022*. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. pp.26.

¹⁵⁶ (2022). *Military Size by Country 2022*. World Population Review.
<https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/military-size-by-country>

itself would benefit from a more stable regional atmosphere and a better connected international economy. Instead, their exclusion suggests at the very least that the Chinese government's foreign policy goals do not to some unknown degree align with those of the Japanese government; at the worst, their exclusion suggests that the Chinese are the very transgressors that the FOIP is designed to provide a bulwark against.

At the time of this document's writing, bilateral relations between Japan and China can be best described as one that is hot and cold. On one hand, and thanks to their storied history, the two nations have close ties sharing a great quantity of people-to-people and general cultural exchange. Indeed, 2022 marks the 50th anniversary of the renewed normalized diplomatic relations established in 1972 and exchanges between foreign officials from each have reciprocated a vision of a constructive and stable relationship¹⁵⁷. In his message to Chinese President Xi Jinping on the occasion, incumbent Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida stated, "Japan and China share a great responsibility to achieve peace and prosperity in the region and world...In view of the next 50 years...I hope to work with you to build constructive and stable Japan-China relations"¹⁵⁸. Likewise, given their positions as the third and second largest economies in the world¹⁵⁹ respectively, a substantial amount of economic interdependence exists between the two. The main causes of tension in the Japan-Sino relationship are largely territorial. The dispute over possession of the Senkaku Islands, continued construction of maritime structures to develop natural resources bordering Japan's Exclusive Economic Zone in the East

¹⁵⁷ Miki, Rieko. "Japan, China mark 50 years of diplomatic ties as tensions mount." *Nikkei Asia*, 29 Sep. 2022, <https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/International-relations/Japan-China-mark-50-years-of-diplomatic-ties-as-tensions-mount>

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ World Economic Outlook. (2022). "GDP, Current Prices." *International Monetary Fund*. <https://www.imf.org/external/datamapper/NGDPD@WEO/OEMDC/ADVEC/WEOWORLD>

China Sea, and a broadening range of excursions by Chinese naval and air forces all remain precarious points of contention¹⁶⁰.

It is in this light that one of the leading motivations behind the FOIP as Japan's primary foreign policy project is unveiled. The ambiguity behind China's military strength and the extent to which the country will go to achieve its territorial aspirations is a clear and legitimate area of concern for the Japanese government. The FOIP and its emphasis on the large area encapsulated as the Indo-Pacific takes what can be considered a panoramic perspective of the region. By directly joining Southern Asia, the Middle East, and Africa with support from Europe, Oceania, and North America, the FOIP can be interpreted as creating a blockade within which potential Chinese aggression can be contained with prepared, coordinated efforts. A significant point of note in this scenario is that it is necessary for Japan itself to construct such a network as it can only contribute to security in a limited capacity due to the prohibition on maintaining a military.

As it stands, Japan heavily relies on the Japan-U.S. Security Alliance for its own protection. Japan acknowledges this, as it states in the Bluebook: "The Japan-U.S. Security Alliance, with the Japan-U.S. Security Arrangements at its core, is the foundation of peace, security, and prosperity, not only for Japan but also for the Indo-Pacific region. In the midst of an increasingly severe regional security environment, the Japan-U.S. Alliance is more important than ever"¹⁶¹. The United States has never shown any indication of wavering in its commitment to its close partnership with Japan and guarantor of its national security. Contextually speaking, however, a lot of the initial action taken based on the FOIP's blueprint was done at a time when there was a fear that the U.S. would become detached from the Asia-Pacific of its own accord. This initially arose as a subtle concern during President Obama's second tenure when military

¹⁶⁰ Government of Japan. (2022). *Diplomatic Bluebook 2022*. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. pp.47.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.* pp.34.

expenditure decreased every year¹⁶², representing the administration's desire to take a step back from the role of the world's policeman. This concern became even more intensified as a possible reality during the succeeding administration when President Trump officially withdrew from the Trans-Pacific Partnership in 2017¹⁶³. Since then, a visit to Taiwan by Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, Nancy Pelosi, in August of this year has reaffirmed faith in U.S. devotion to its Asian allies. Nonetheless, the second reason behind the implementation of the FOIP is evident: to act as a hedge in the case that America's influence in the region declines for whatever reason.

Taking into account the rapid growth of China and potential waning influence of the United States, Japan's rationalization of a Free and Open Indo-Pacific is twofold: a hybrid of both realist and liberalist foreign policy theory. The liberal approach of facilitating cooperation between many countries deters any attempts to topple the existing international order. The allocation of resources to participants promotes development, interconnectedness, and overall stability. As a byproduct, any action that would threaten this stability could be met with coordinated resistance. Furthermore, it allows Japan and participating countries to alternatively compete with China's own global development strategy, the Belt and Road Initiative, in a potentially prosperous way that avoids conflict. From the realist perspective, Japan via the FOIP can be seen as effectively bringing together a coalition that would serve to protect its general interests abroad. In balancing the shift between hegemonic powers, Japan persists in its clear alignment with its closest ally in the United States and the system that it built but prepares in the event that it loses it as its strongest pillar of support.

¹⁶² (2022). *Military expenditure (% of GDP) - United States*. The World Bank.
<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/MS.MIL.XPND.GD.ZS?locations=US>

¹⁶³ Federal Government of the United States. (2022). *The United States Officially Withdraws from the Trans-Pacific Partnership*. Office of the United States Trade Representative.
<https://ustr.gov/about-us/policy-offices/press-office/press-releases/2017/january/US-Withdraws-From-TPP>

Conclusion

This thesis took on the task of exploring Japan's foreign policy goals and how those goals reflect an in-flux state of hegemonic influence. A review of some of the existing literature on the topic found that hegemony is a critical component of international relations and is a significantly determining factor in how countries view themselves within the international order as well as how they will act accordingly. In the case of this study, Japan finds itself formulating policy in consideration of two superpowers: the United States of America, which has held global hegemonic status for roughly the past seventy years, and China, which looks to challenge and eventually supplant the U.S. as the dominant global power. Hegemony has been a constant element in modern Asian geopolitics during a period of time when other variables have been susceptible to sudden change.

The methodology section of this thesis determined the best tools for evaluating Japanese foreign policy in relation to the hegemonic powers in question. A qualitative analysis of materials officially publicized by the Japanese government proved to be sufficient for the purpose of understanding what exactly Japan's foreign policy goals are and how they can be accomplished. Furthermore, the source materials (the Japanese Diplomatic Bluebooks, in particular) were instrumental in gleaning the motives behind Japan's foreign policy plan as well as Japan's attitudes towards both China and the United States. Additionally, a general historical analysis of Japan's foreign relations was performed to best situate the current state of its foreign affairs. Japan's long history of competing as a great power has guided it to become a leader amongst the Asian nations and an advocate for cooperation in the international community at large. At the same time, Japan's past has left it with unresolved tensions between it and some of its closest neighboring countries. Most importantly, however, is Japan's unique relationship with

the U.S. that to a great extent influences the capacity and direction to which Japan acts on the international stage.

At the culmination of this study's research, it was found in the analysis that Japan's implementation of its Free and Open Indo-Pacific concept as its primary foreign policy plan is indeed a preemptive safeguard against a potential shift in the balance of hegemonic power. The level of cooperation for infrastructure and security that is called for between the Indo-Pacific states is only necessary in the event that the United States is effectively no longer able to exert the influence necessary to guarantee a stable international order on its own. It was also confirmed that China is indeed the aggressor that the FOIP aims to defend against. Surprisingly, Japan's position was not found to sway favorably towards China despite its clear respect to it as the dominant regional power. Instead, Japanese foreign policy intends to rely on its companionship with the U.S. and will attempt to uphold the international order that it built even in the case that it can no longer do so by itself. The FOIP is still an ongoing project and it remains to be seen whether the measures taken here were effective, or even necessary, in the event that China either succeeds or fails to overcome the United States in the struggle for hegemonic influence.

These findings are very insightful for devising foreign policy strategy and clarifying at which point Japan stands in its relationships with both the U.S. and China. Furthermore, at this point the FOIP project has successfully endured through regime changes in both Japan and the United States. Likewise, attitudes in China will not likely see drastic change anytime soon given that term limits have been removed for incumbent President Xi. Because of this, it can be assumed that the FOIP will be the framework through which geopolitical strategy in the Asia-Pacific region will be conducted for the foreseeable future.

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