

MS THESIS

USA –JAPAN STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT IN EAST ASIA: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CHINESE SECURITY



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|----------------|--|
| ABAO | Airborne Assault Operations |
| ASEAN | Association of Southeast Asian Nations |
| ACDA | Arms Control and Disarmament Agency |
| ACM | Air Chief Marshal |
| BRI | China's Belt and Road Initiative |
| CPATP | Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans Pacific Partnership |
| EAC | East Asian Community |
| FDI | Foreign direct investment |
| FONOPs | Freedom of navigation operations |
| PLA | People's Liberation Army |
| QUAD | Quadrilateral Security Dialogue |
| RCEP | Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership |
| R&D | Research & Development |
| ROK | Republic of Korea |
| WW I | World War One |
| WW II | World War Two |
| UNFPA | United Nations Fund for Population Activities |
| US | United States |

DEDICATION

I dedicate this Research Work to my beloved Parents for their kindness, unparalleled inspiration and endless support throughout my studies.

Dear Ami and Abu Ji, your selflessness will always be remembered.

Thank you for enabling me to achieve this feat.

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ABSTRACT

The US - JAPAN strategic collaboration is unique and deep rooted. The relations of both states remained strained since the advent of WWII, so as so that the only nuclear catastrophe world witnessed was amongst them. There are no permeant friends and foe in International Relations this phrase suits so well in context of US and Japan relationship that despite of extreme enmity both states have had strong diplomatic, economic, and strategic soon after the clouds of war are gone. This research proposal aims to investigate the complex dynamics of U.S-Japan collaboration in East Asia and its profound implications for China and regional stability. This region is assumed to become next great pivot. The presence of warm waters, emerging economies of world and resource richness has made it strategically most important. This research work will also highlight the past evolution of U.S.-Japan relations in the context of East Asian geopolitics, as well as China's responses and developing foreign policy. Study will also pursue to shed light on the effect of this association on the balance of power in the region. Furthermore, it will discover the potential costs for regional stability and the broader global geopolitical scene. Eventually, this research aims to provide an inclusive study of the unified associations between the United States, Japan, and impacts on China in East Asia. Study will also contemplate on to how these nations may play a better role in ongoing changes in regional dynamics.

INTRODUCTION

The East Asian region has long been a crucible for geopolitical complexities, where the interplay of major powers profoundly impacts regional dynamics and global security. At the center of this intricate web of relationships lies the dynamic alliance between the United States and Japan. The U.S.-Japan strategic alliance, forged in the ashes of World War II, has evolved into a formidable partnership with vast implications, particularly in the context of East Asia. Over the years, this alliance has become pivotal to both nations' security and foreign policy objectives, with a notable strategic aim: to closely monitor and counterbalance the rise of China as a regional and global power. The U.S.-Japan strategic alliance, solidified by the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security signed in 1960, represents one of the most enduring and vital partnerships in contemporary international relations. Rooted in shared democratic values, security concerns, and economic interests, this alliance extends far beyond the mere sharing of military capabilities. It encompasses a wide range of diplomatic, economic, and technological collaborations that reflect a collective vision for the Asia-Pacific region. A central element of this alliance is the significant U.S. military presence in Japan, consisting of naval bases, airfields, and a substantial contingent of American troops. Presence of more than 5000 U.S. troops in Japan is the shared intention to monitor and, if necessary, counteract the rapidly growing influence of China in East Asia. China's economic ascent and expanding military capabilities have led to an intricate strategic landscape in which the United States and Japan perceive their joint efforts as a stabilizing force in the region. This stance not only safeguards their own national interests but also aims to preserve the freedom of navigation in the vital sea routes of the Asia-Pacific, most notably the South China Sea. By

securing these maritime routes, the U.S. and Japan assert their ambitious commitment to hold regional dominance. China, on the other hand, interprets this U.S.-Japan nexus as a security challenge that impedes its ambition to expand its influence and assert territorial claims in the East and South China Seas. China views the American military presence in Japan as part of a broader containment strategy that attempts to limit its rise and curtail its regional activities. Consequently, this strategic rivalry has triggered significant security implications, both regionally and globally, contributing to the emerging geopolitics of the Asia Pacific.

In response to the U.S.-Japan alliance, China has adopted a multifaceted approach, characterized by assertive territorial claims, naval modernization, and the creation of a formidable anti access/area-denial (A2/AD) strategy. China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which seeks to expand its economic reach across the region, is seen as a complementary measure to balance the U.S.-Japan alliance's influence.

Strategic alignment means relationship of nations at higher level. It basically deals the alignment in three domains i.e political, economic and military front.

This research aims to delve deeper into the intricate tapestry of the U.S.-Japan alliance and its consequences on regional stability, including the response of China and its impact on the evolving geopolitics of East Asia. By examining historical developments, policy shifts, and the multifaceted dynamics among these major actors, this study intends to provide a comprehensive analysis of the forces at play in the Asia-Pacific region and their implications for global security.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

US – Japan strategic alignment and engagement is deep rooted and well calibrated since 1950s. The growing strategic cooperation in the areas of politics, economy and military would seriously impact on the Chinese strategic interests in the region and invite greater competition

among the US, Japan and China. This is going to create a serious challenge for the regional and global security and would have far reaching implications for China in the region.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How the US – Japan strategic alignment is taking place in East Asia?
2. What are the implications of US – Japan strategic collaboration for the Chinese security?
3. How US-China’s strategic competition would impact on the Regional Security?

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The current study will be carried out with the following objectives in mind;

1. To examine the US – Japan strategic engagement in East Asia.
2. To analyze the impacts of US – Japan strategic collaboration for China in East Asia.
3. To explore the Implications of US-China strategic competition for regional security

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The research on U.S.-Japan collaboration in East Asia and its effects on China holds immense significance due to its far-reaching implications for global geopolitics, regional stability, and the rise of China as a global power. Understanding the dynamics between the United States, Japan, and China is vital for assessing regional security, trade routes, and economic interests in the Asia Pacific. It also sheds light on the complex interplay of power among major nations, influencing not only regional diplomacy but also global relations. This research will provide critical insights into one of the most complex and consequential dynamics in international relations today.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study will encompass a review of the scholarly work and an analysis of different perspectives on the said topic.

Review of the related literature

This book *The Trans-Pacific Imagination Rethinking Boundary, Culture and Society* describes the Historical nexus of US – Japan with a focus on post world war collaborations both eco and military. The anthology critically re-examines and re-articulates the discursive boundary that binds the region called East Asia in order to produce Trans-Pacific Studies. Recognizing that the creation of regional boundaries depends on a new configuration of both inter- and intra-national power relations and the ideological constructs that generate historical, ideological, and cultural effects, this volume proposes that the term "trans-Pacific" be mobilized to complicate the phrase "East Asian" as the boundary of academic discipline and socio-cultural discourse. The anthology also examines the historical conditions under which "East Asia" was constructed as an area and the trans-Pacific directives that nurtured the sense of nationality in each component nation of East Asia (Yoo & Sakai, 2022).

This book *Troubled Partnership-History of US -Japan Collaboration on the FS-X Fighter*, thoughts light on US Japan interdependency on each other. Editor has given special focus on military partnership with an extra aim of highlighting the Area dominance through Fighter jets. During World War II. Japanese fighters, such as the famed Zero, were among the most respected and feared combat aircraft in the world. But for decades following the defeat of Japan in 1945, a variety of political and economic factors prevented Japan from developing its own modern national fighter. This changed in the 1980s. Japan began independently developing its first world-class fighter since World War II. After several years of contentious negotiations, the Japanese agreed to work with the United States to cooperatively develop a minimally modified F-16, the FS-X. The new fighter, however, has evolved into a world-class aircraft developed largely by Japanese Industry primarily due to errors committed by the U.S. side. By the fall of 1995, fifty years after

the end of World War II, the Zero for the 1990s will have made its first flight, catapulting Japan into the elite ranks of nations capable of developing the most advanced weapon systems. In *Troubled Partnership*, Mark Lorelle traces the evolution of the FS-X, disclosing the conflicting economic and security objectives advanced by U.S. officials, the flawed U.S. policy of technology reciprocity, and the challenges of international collaboration. Its deep Intimacy with the Interplay of policy and economy will make this volume of Intense Interest to political Scientists, military studies specialists, historians, and government officials (Lorelle, 2020).

In order to achieve global power status, a state must possess strong military, economic and political influence along with other determinants such as technological advancements, geographical location, population, etc. US massive military buildup and a fast pace growing economy reflect US quest for retaining global power (Routledge, 2012).

Asia-Pacific Security US, Australia and Japan and the New Security Triangle. The aim of this book is to explore the implications stemming from the recent upgrading of Australia Japan-US security interactions and the implications for Asia-Pacific regional security that these represent. While a fully functioning trilateral security alliance binding Australia, Japan and the United States is unlikely to materialize or supplant existing bilateral arrangements, the convergence of the strategic interests of these three states makes it imperative that the full-range of such interests and the policy ramifications flowing from them warrants extensive investigation. The need to do so is particularly compelling given that the ‘Trilateral Security Dialogue’ is one of several contending recent approaches to reshaping Asia-Pacific regional security architectures and mechanisms for confronting new strategic challenges in a post-Cold War and post-9/11 environment. Key issues to be considered in this volume include the theoretical and empirical

context of ‘trilateral’; the evolving history of the Australia-Japan-United States trilateral security relationship; its connection to and impact on the U.S. bilateral alliance network in Asia; how domestic politics in each country relates to regional security politics; Sino-Australian and Sino-Japanese bilateral security ties; arms control, maritime security and the ‘economic security nexus’ (2017, Tylor and Francis).

This book *Regional Responses to U.S.-China Competition in the Indo-Pacific Japan* is a well-written book which describes the Chinese concern over US – Japan alignment in Asia Pacific and probable Sino responses. The 2017 U.S. National Security Strategy and the National Defense Strategy summary describe a world characterized by a return to great-power competition, most notably with China in the Indo-Pacific region. America's enduring alliance with Japan not only is the cornerstone of U.S. force posture in the Indo-Pacific region, but also magnifies and bolsters U.S. influence across that vast swath of territory. Within the region, Southeast Asian countries have been particularly exposed to China's expanding influence and coercive diplomacy in recent years, making the ten countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) a key focus for U.S. national strategy and the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) in particular. The author leverages a framework that RAND developed for a seven-part series on regional responses to U.S.-China competition, with this report focusing on Japan's perspective. This report assesses the prospects for deepening U.S.-Japan alliance cooperation and coordination in Southeast Asia through 2030 to compete with China. It surveys official Japanese documents, draws on a wide variety of secondary source analyses, and reports the results of more than 25 face-to-face interviews with Japanese defense and foreign policy officials, military officers, think-tank analysts, and academic specialists (2021, Harold).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Neo-realism, proposed by Kenneth Waltz, is a prevailing theory in the field of international affairs. Neo-realism asserts that the international system is characterised by anarchy, as there is no higher authority present. The realism school of thought is characterised by a focus on power politics, asserting that states are the main actors in international relations. The major goals of the state within this framework are the preservation of the nation and the pursuit of self-sufficiency through independent efforts. Consequently, states behave in accordance with their utmost national interest.

The security or lack thereof of all states in the international system is contingent upon the degree to which they are able to maximise or minimise the power they acquire. The concept distinguishes between two types of power: hard power and soft power. However, the idea primarily emphasises the acquisition of hard power.

Neo-Realism encompasses two distinct variations: Offensive Realism and Defensive Realism. John Mearsheimer proposed the theory of offensive realism, which argues that nations must have the ability to launch military attacks in order to establish domination and hegemony, thus ensuring their survival. Offensive realism is relevant for comprehending the hegemonic ambitions of the United States in relation to its global influence. The deployment of numerous troops on Asian territory, equipped with advanced military capabilities, in order to restrain opponents through military and economic conflicts, is a clear demonstration of offensive Neo-Realism. The objective is to prevent the loss of the unipolar power idea.

When examining China's complex relationship with the United States in recent years, we observe a consistent pattern of China's efforts to assert its relevance in the global power structure, which aligns with the concept of Defensive Neo-Realism. The collaboration between the United States and Japan in defence is helping to the modernization of the Chinese military, which poses a danger to the strategic stability of the area. In line with the security conundrum, China will also seek to enhance its conventional military might in relation to its economic dominance in order to safeguard its national security and maintain strategic equilibrium in East Asia.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study will be based on *qualitative* research methodology. Both *primary* and *secondary* data will be used to investigate and elaborate different aspects of the study. The methodology for this study would involve in-depth interviews of retired military officials, scholars & researchers from different think tanks/ academicians linked with national and international security environment. These interviews will provide an opportunity to understand under-lying problems, key concepts and will help in formulating implications and options for Pakistan's security apparatus

RESEARCH GAP

Existing research often focuses on U.S - Japan collaboration and its implications from the perspective of the United States and Japan. A research gap may exist in understanding how China perceives this collaboration with special emphasis on Japan's role in shaping trilateral relations and how it strategically responds to it. Analyzing Chinese viewpoints, strategies, and their effects on regional dynamics could be a valuable addition. Very less research work is done with respect to Japan's strategic shift from defensive to offensive approach to mitigate threat, from China and

North Korea in region. The study would explore emerging strategic dynamics of East Asia where many nuclear weapon states are competing for strategic dominance

Research Design

The study is based on a qualitative research and qualifies in the Descriptive, Exploratory, and Predictive data analysis approaches. Both primary and secondary data will be used to investigate and elaborate different aspects of the study.

Population

The methodology for this study would involve in-depth interviews of diplomats, researchers at different Think Tanks/Academicians linked with Strategic Studies and International Relations special focus on East Asia. It would clarify the strategic issues and debate related to the subject matter. These interviews will provide an opportunity to understand underlying problems, key concepts and help in formulating a perspective/narrative on this issue which falls in the literature gap.

Sampling

In this research, I would use snow-ball sampling to collect further information. Only relevant, qualified and highly professional people can take part in this study. Therefore, snowball sampling will be used. Through snowball sampling target person will be reached.

Instrumentation

Structured and un-structured interviews will be conducted from retired military officials, diplomats, academicians of Strategic Studies and International Relations and member from think tanks while close ended questionnaires will also be filled.

Data collection

In this study, both primary and secondary data will be collected. Primary data will be collected through interviews of retired military officials, diplomats, academicians of Strategic Studies and International Relations and members from think tanks while secondary data will include the official documents and other published work including books research article and reports.

Data analysis

In this study Data will be analyzed through grounded theory. Grounded theory is a useful approach when little is known about a subject. Grounded theory starts by formulating a theory around a single data case. This means that the theory is “grounded”. It’s based on actual data, and not entirely speculative. Then additional cases can be examined to see if they are relevant and can add to the original theory. Moreover, this study will be descriptive and exploratory. Similarly, for data analysis the deductive approach will be used which involves analyzing qualitative data based on a structure that is predetermined by the researcher. A researcher can use the questions as a guide for analyzing the data.

ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

The proposed study can be organized into the following chapters:

Chapter 1: US Japan Strategic Alignment

This chapter will focus on the basic features of US Japan, defense and economic collaboration with emphasis after Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security. This chapter will broadly include following sub headings: -

- Overview of the Current U.S.-Japan Alliance
- Military Cooperation

- Security Agreements and Treaties
- Joint Exercises and Operations
- Diplomatic Collaborations

Economic and Trade Relations

This chapter will also analyse how U.S.-Japan economic and trade relations are crucial for China. Also, endeavours will be put in to find interconnectedness of economic and security Issues among the subject states. How trade is being used as diplomatic tool and importance of soft power and increasing influence in region, furthermore this chapter will cover following areas: -

- Economic Ties Between the U.S. and Japan
- Trade Agreements and Economic Cooperation
- Economic Implications for East Asia with special focus on China

Chapter 2: Security Dynamics in East Asia

This chapter will predict a focus on monitoring and counterbalancing China's growing influence, the U.S.-Japan collaboration has direct implications for security in the East Asia region. This research sheds light on the security arrangements and tensions in the area, which are of utmost importance for regional and global stability.

- Regional Security Concerns
- Shared Objectives and Challenges
- Role of the U.S.-Japan Alliance in Regional Security

Chapter 3: China's Perceptions and Responses

Understanding China's perception of the U.S.-Japan strategic alignment in East Asia is crucial for following several reasons: -

- China's Security Concerns

- Diplomatic Responses to the U.S.-Japan Alliance
- China's View on the Balance of Power

CHAPTER ONE

US Japan Strategic Alignment

1.0 Introduction

2024 is the 170th anniversary of the signing of the pact of Kanagawa, which was the first peace pact between the US and Japan. This accord has experienced a dynamic evolution, characterized by periods of both significant progress and severe setbacks. The bilateral relationship can be divided into three distinct phases, each spanning approximately half a century. Phase I commenced under the coercive circumstances surrounding the treaty's signing in 1854 but evolved positively, concluding around the time of the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905. This phase witnessed Japan's emergence from isolation, adopting Western technologies and practices while navigating the pressures and influences of Western powers. Phase II began on a hopeful note with the Treaty of Portsmouth in 1905, which formally ended the Russo-Japanese War and was mediated by the United States. However, this phase ended disastrously with the Pacific War (World War II), a period marked by intense conflict, culminating in Japan's defeat and the devastation brought about by atomic bombings. Phase III commenced in 1952 with the signing of the San Francisco Peace

Treaty, which officially ended the state of war between Japan and the Allied Powers, restoring Japan's sovereignty. This phase has been characterized by a strong and enduring alliance between the United States and Japan, bolstered by mutual economic interests and shared democratic values, and continues to the present day. Understanding these phases provides a nuanced perspective on the evolving dynamics between the United States and Japan, reflecting

both the resilience and complexities of their bilateral relationship over the past 170 years. (Ota, 2021)

1.1 US Military Presence in Region.

For many years, US leaders have considered their nation to be a dominant force in the Pacific region. They have maintained military personnel and sophisticated weaponries in region at numerous locations right after World War II. Initially USA was targeting to dominate region to maintain its position as superpower later on to keep check on USSR then threat to USA. In late 20th century when world witnessed dissolution of USSR into 15 new nations US focus got shifted but not for longer period as new contender was soon to emerge. It was early 21st century when another competitor arose from eastern region not Russia but People's Republic of China (PRC). Chinese swift and rapid economic and military progress posed perpetual threat to unipolar world and that point, United States began to seriously consider imposing dominance over the Asia Pacific, with a particular emphasis on East Asia region, in order to limit China's ongoing rapid progress in all three domains i.e economy, military and diplomacy. It is a well-known fact that during the course of the past seven decades, the United States has maintained military presence in over 200 states and territories (Haddad, 2021). If we focus of current deployment a rough estimate depicts US 170000 active military personals employed on 750 military bases, spread over 80 countries and the heaviest presence is on East Asia region (APRN, 2023). Approximately 50% of the US military forces deploy outside America i.e 80,100 troops, are stationed in Japan (53,700) and South Korea (26,400) only. Hence making Japan the largest military ally overseas. There are 120 US bases in Japan surrounding water bodies of North Pacific Ocean including Yellow Sea, East Sea, South and East China Sea. This shows practical manifestation of latest US strategy known as “*Pivot to Asia*” that emerged in Obama tenure, idea was conceived to counter China’s

rapidly-growing regional and global influence. Since 2011, it has buttered up its political and military allies in East Asia. US and Japan military strategic alignment can be justified in context of above-mentioned facts. Other than Japan, South Korea and Philippines are also worthy allies hence Chinese concern regarding US hegemonic intent and regional unjust dominance stands genuine. (Blackwill, 2023)

1.2 US Regional Alliance Hindering Chinese Objectives.

President Joe Biden has implemented a policy like to those of his predecessors, with the objective of bolstering the American military presence in partner states across the Asia-Pacific region and deploying diverse new weapon systems in those areas. Furthermore, he has stated that the United States military would protect Taiwan in the event of a Chinese attack. President Biden officially authorized a significant amount of military aid and expenditures amounting to almost \$95 billion on April 24th. This money had been previously approved by Congress. This Act allocates a particular amount of \$8.1 billion only for the purpose of confronting China in the area. Secretary of State Antony Blinken visited Shanghai and Beijing in April 2024 to engage in discussions with President Xi Jinping and other government representatives. During these meetings, Blinken objected to China's army operations in the Taiwan Strait and the South China Sea, categorizing them as "activities that cause instability." Xi Jinping responded by advising the United States to refrain from participating in a "zero-sum game" and creating "exclusive alliances." He stressed the need of both nations having allies, but cautioned against targeting, opposing, or causing harm to each other. In addition, the United States persistently provides weaponry and deploys Green Beret trainers to Taiwan, a self-governing island that serves as the main source of disagreement between the United States and China. Xi has restated his firm conviction that China must ultimately establish dominance over Taiwan, even if it necessitates the use of military might.

(Wong, 2024). Recently in March 2024, Premiers of both nations Japan and Philippines met with President Biden at the White House for the inaugural trilateral summit between aforesaid states, which included agenda of joint naval training and exercises in waters of North Pacific Ocean, in conjunction with other partners. The Pentagon has verified that US Navy vessels would participate in enhanced collaborative drills with Japanese naval troops in the western Ryukyu Islands, located in close proximity to Taiwan. The purpose of these drills is to enhance the defensive capabilities and foster collaboration between the United States and Japan. This verdict arises in reply to the Chinese coast guard's interference with Philippine-controlled ships and installations in the region. In vogue of this, the Marine Corps that is now based in the Pacific region have effectively deployed short- and long-range missiles that are mounted on sophisticated vehicles. This missile system was earlier prohibited under the old pact. The Osprey tilt-rotor (bell boing) aircraft or larger cargo jets may quickly transport these missiles loaded vehicles to desired locations, or alternatively, they can be driven away to refrain from potential Chinese counteroffensive also the placement of a fresh fleet of US Army ships in East Asian water region might serve the dual purpose of repositioning personnel and launchers across islands. These all-recent actions speak true of President Xi concerns he raised with US administration. The primary purpose of going deep against China with this aggressive approach is to offset China's endeavors to strengthen its military capabilities that might potentially pose a challenge to aircraft carriers in North Pacific waters or US military bases in Japan and South Korean territories (Ismay, 2024).

1.3 US Backed Japanese Military Modernization.

US is not only using Japanese land for its interests but now modernizing its forces to respond befittingly in case of any aggression from Chinese block. Japanese armed forces will be equipped with 400 Tomahawk missiles, which have got the precise capability to hit ships at sea as

well as land-based targets from longer distances too (approx 1,150 miles). This is unprecedented that Japan will own such sophisticated missiles. The inclusion of a rehabilitated and reassembled US Marine coastal regiment on Okinawa will boost the land forces capability to engage and mark vessels in naval battles. The US has also reached into bilateral mutual defense contracts with other supporting (Philippines, Guam, Papua New Guinea) nations in the area. These treaties offer that an attack on the resources of one state may result in a reciprocal response from the other. Enhancing the number of US troops deployed in friendly countries reinforces the notion of shared defense. Chinese premier and other representatives in Beijing have observed these actions of the US with serious worry. The encirclement of their country is stated to as an endeavor by the United States to limit its economy, military and diplomatic growth (Robles, 2024).

1.4 US – Japan Economic ties.

USA is the largest GDP with 25.5 trillion USD and Japan no 3rd with 4.4 USD both countries are currently dominating world economy. In 2023 Bilateral trade touches high worth of 224 billion USD from 86 billion USD in 1987 and till March 2024 both nations have shared 56 billion USD trade (US Census Bureau, 2024). This shows their mutual economic bond is one of sturdiest in the world and features substantial trade and investment flows. Economic ties further hit new heights when in Oct 2019 for exponential growth both nations signed two sophisticated trade agreements, named as U.S.-Japan Trade Agreement and the U.S.-Japan Digital Trade Agreement. The U.S.-Japan Trade agreement eradicates or decreases tariffs on almost \$7.2 billion in exports whereas the U.S.-Japan Digital Trade Contract contains high-standard provisions that ensure data can be shifted across borders without limitations, guarantee consumer privacy security, promote observance to common rules for addressing cyber security challenges, support real use of encryption technologies, and lift digital trade. (US Department of State, 2020) United States further

aims to expand access to Japan's markets, increase mutual investment, stimulate local demand-led economic growth, promote economic reforms, improve the environment for U.S. investors, and elevate the standard of living in both countries. Japan represents a main market for many U.S. goods and services, including agricultural stuffs, chemicals, insurance, pharmaceuticals, films and music, commercial airplane, nonferrous alloys, plastics, medical and technical supplies, and machinery. U.S. imports from Japan comprise automobiles, machinery, optic and medical instruments, and organic chemicals. U.S. direct investment in Japan is mostly in the finance/insurance, manufacturing, and wholesale sectors. Japan direct investment in the US is mostly in the wholesale trade and manufacturing sectors. Japan has devoted over USD \$480 billion in the U.S. economy and Japanese owned firms support 8.6 million jobs in the United States. US, Japan partnership in the areas of science and technology is also remarkable. Under the sponsorships of the U.S.-Japan Science and Technology Agreement, both countries have cooperated for over 25 years on scientific research in fields such as new energy technologies, supercomputing, and critical materials. In recognition of these achievements, the United States and Japan announced in 2014 an extension of bilateral Science and Technology Agreement for an additional 10 years. The U.S.-Japan Comprehensive Dialogue on Space reflects deepening cooperation among both nations in space. In 2016, both countries celebrated the 50th anniversary of the U.S.-Japan Cooperative Medical Sciences Program, which has grown up over the period of time to cover attention to health issues affecting other Pacific nations, particularly in East Asia (Office of Historians, 2021).

1.5 China Specific East Asian Impacts.

The economic relations that exist between the United States of America and Japan have enormous repercussions for China and the East Asian region that China is surrounded by. The linkages between these two countries have significant repercussions for China and the surrounding

region in a variety of important ways. The intricate patterns and movements of trade operations between various countries and areas are both included in the scope of the concept known as trade dynamics. China is operating in an environment that is extremely competitive as a result of the strong economic linkages that exist between the United States and Japan. In the fields of manufacturing, innovation, and high-tech industries, Japan and the United States are both big players. These sophisticated economies are posing a significant threat to China's commercial and technological sectors, which are the subject of severe competition. Alterations in trade patterns are being brought about as a result of the USJTA 2020 trade agreement between the United States of America and Japan.

These alterations could provide China with a possible challenge. The United States and Japan might potentially shift business away from China if they enter into trade deals. The circulation of capital is a crucial factor that contributes to the limitation of China's market power on both the regional and global levels. As a result of their respective levels of foreign direct investment (FDI), the economies of the United States and Japan are significantly influenced by one another, as stated by Lewis (2023). When nations place a higher priority on their economic alliance, it may result in a reduction in the amount of investment that is going into China. The occurrence of this phenomenon occurs when there is a greater level of mutual investment between nations. There is a possibility that this will make it more difficult for China to acquire technology and generate revenue from these powerful economies throughout the world. Strengthened relations between the United States and Japan can assist in the creation of alternative supply networks, which may impede China's ascension to the position of leading economy. According to Hattori (2023), efforts to lessen reliance on Chinese industries could result in increasing investments in

manufacturing and technology within the corridor that connects the United States and Japan by way of transportation.

The United States and Japan have a strong alliance, which has strong security characteristics that can have an impact on the geopolitical dynamics of East Asia. The strengthening collaboration between the United States of America and Japan can be interpreted as a means of counteracting the growing influence of China in the South-east Asian region. There is a possibility that this circumstance could result in heightened tensions and will have an effect on the strategic choices made by other East Asian nations. Through the provision of a counterbalance to China's forceful behaviour in the East and South China Seas, the deepening of collaboration between the United States and Japan can contribute to the stability of the area from the standpoint of the United States. The stability that was indicated can have a significant impact on the level of economic confidence and investment in the region. The acceleration of innovation in significant fields such as semiconductors, autos, and biotechnology can be achieved by collaborative efforts at the research and development (R&D) and technological levels. When it comes to establishing itself as a competitor in these areas, China confronts a number of hurdles. When it comes to competition, China may find itself at a disadvantage as a result of the flow of technology and information between the United States of America and Japan. Within the realm of the digital economy, cooperation in a variety of disciplines have the ability to set benchmarks and principles that may be difficult for China to exert influence over. It is possible that this will have a substantial impact on China's strategic ambitions with regard to controlling the technical landscape. When it comes to developing tough standards for commerce, environmental protection, and labour legislation, the United States of America and Japan frequently collaborate with one another. There is a possibility that China's competitiveness will be questioned if its rules are perceived to be less

stringent, which could have an effect on global norms and practices. The United States of America and Japan are able to successfully handle unfair trade practices and protect intellectual property by executing coordinated economic measures. This allows them to impose control over China's economic activities. On February 24, 2017, discussions regarding this topic took place during the second session of the One Hundred Third Congress of the House of Representatives.

The concept of regional economic integration refers to the process by which nations that are located within a certain geographical region work together to form agreements and partnerships that promote economic cooperation and integration. The elimination of trade obstacles, the implementation of shared economic policies, and the establishment of a regional market that encourages the development of trade agreements and partnerships are all examples of initiatives that could fall under this category. The Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) is one example of an economic initiative that could benefit from the strengthening of the economic relationship between the United States of America and Japan. However, the region has not yet reached its full potential for growth for a number of reasons, including the tremendous rivalry that exists and the fact that China is not included in these agreements. There is a significant impact that the marginalisation of China has on the patterns of commerce and the integration of the economy. Alternatives to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) include the United States and Japan working together on infrastructure projects and providing development aid in Asia. These activities have the ability to offer alternative options to China, which might potentially have an effect on China's influence in the region. To put it another way, the economic link that exists between the United States of America and Japan is a significant factor that contributes to the formation of the economic landscape of East Asia. It involves a combination of collaboration and rivalry, which has an effect on a number of different sectors of

the economy of the region. The participation of China in these relationships confronts the economy of the area with a number of obstacles as well as opportunities, as China attempts to preserve its significance in power politics (Newby, 2018).

1.6. US – Japan defense ties.

USA with world largest defense budget of 850 billion USD has strong rooted defense ties with its Asia companion. Japan who faced restrictions after WWII still manages to run its country with huge defense budget (Jim Garamone and C. Todd Lopez, 2024). In 2024 Japanese defense budgets stays at world no 8 with worth 56 billion USD. Since early 21 century, US and Japan have enhanced the operational ability of the alliance as a joint force, despite of Japan social, politico and legal constraints. She has incorporated reforms to make its force (called Self-Defense Forces, SDF) more skilled, flexible, and interoperable with U.S. military. Japan funds approximately \$2 billion per year to cover the cost of stationing U.S. military personnel in Japan. Furthermore, Japan remunerate compensation to locals for hosting U.S. troops, base rentals, and the costs of new facilities. US influx in concentrated areas are so much so that over half of U.S. Forces Japan (USFJ) personnel are stationed in Okinawa, an isle chain that contains less than 1 percentage of Japan's total land area. Most Okinawans and Okinawan representatives are against U.S. military presence in Okinawa, and Okinawans have long expressed extensive opposition to the construction of new U.S. bases in their region (Takahashi, 2023).

1.7. Japanese transition, from Defensive to Offensive Posture.

Japan was restricted in its full potential to use military force by its U.S.-drafted pacifist constitution 1947. Post-world war, general public popular hesitation to engage in any military conflict was also another impediment for Japanese govt. However, as potential threats from DPRK and China have grown more serious, Japan's government and populace are being reconsidering the

country's approach to national security. In 2022, government released security papers that could chart a essential shift in the alliance and Japan's approach to defend itself. The documents disclosed China as an "unprecedented regional & strategic challenge," declare Japan's intent to make a "counterstrike" missile ability to attack enemy missile sites, secondly an outline which plans to rise Japan's defense expenditures to 2% of its national gross domestic product (GDP), in line with NATO standards. (Post-war Japan generally has limited defense spending to 1% of its GDP.) If this surge comes to effect, Japan's defense budget could become the world's third largest (after USA and China). The credentials do not stipulate how Japan would execute these goals, or to what extent Japan would follow them in support with the United States. Japan has unconditional US back and encouragement for regional and cross regional alliance that are on pro American agenda.

That's why Japanese are not reluctant in expanded security cooperation with Australia, the United Kingdom, and the Philippines. US by supporting Japan in its paradigm shift from defensive to offensive posture is basically trying to build its strong foothold as major regional actor. Hence, Japan with strong defense and economy will be in better interest of USA in case of both war and peace (Kitamura, 2024).

1.8. Diplomatic and Political ties.

International relations amongst Japan & United States began in the late eighteen and early nineteen centuries. US- Japan first formal diplomatic mission commence in 1856 under Townsend Harris.

In 1858 the historical agreement occurred between USA and then Japanese military government (Tokugawa Shogunate) named Treaty of Amity and Commerce which unleashed the seaports of Kanagawa and 4 other Japanese towns to trade and granted extraterritoriality to outsiders, with several trading conditions. It was endorsed on the deck of the Powhatan present day Tokyo Bay (Tanaka, 2021). Americans and Japanese governments enjoyed cordial relation until 1937 when US got annoyed of multiple aggressions including invasion of China. 1941 after

the Japanese attack on US naval base at Pearl Harbor, United states in response declared war on Japan as well. The story of strained relations touches at peak when in 1944, USA bombed two Japanese cities with nuclear weapon resultantly unconditional Japanese surrender and WWII finally came to end. Japan surrendered, and was conditioned to decade long military occupation by the US, during which under General Douglas MacArthur demilitarized Japan. US intention was not only to rebuilt the country's economic and political systems but also was also to bar Japan in participating any future peace killing activity, hence demilitarization was carried out on US guarantee to safeguard Japanese soil in case of any outside aggression.

In the 1950 - 60s Japan formally jumped into military coalition with the US, and gained unprecedented economic advancement under the U.S. nuclear umbrella safety, captivating full benefit of U.S.-backed free trade arrangements, and supplying military good and grounds to Americans in wars of Korea and Vietnam. This results in Japanese drastic expansion of exports to the United States in the postwar period, with Japanese automobiles and electronics being particularly famous, Japan emerged the world's 2nd major economy after the United States. However, China gained 2nd position in 2010 by dropping Japan to third place (Green, 2007). If we summarize the overall relations of both nation a prominent quote with regards to international relations that “There are no permanent friends and foe in IR” is must to be quoted here. US Japan overall relations in 19th and early 20th centuries were ideally crafted by both sides with remarkable collaboration and cooperation in multiple domains, even in 1st world war both fought in same allied block against central powers. However; In very short span of time bilateral relations dipped so badly that in initial stages of 2nd world war Japan executed brutal attack on US bases and US in response destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki without considering even norms of humanity. Then again US – Japan relations turned so swiftly that in next few years both nations closer again, acted together under mutual cooperation and gained much than any of the other nation in the world. There is nothing permanent, after 9/11, lost military campaigns in middle east, pandemic, economic recessions and current great challenge of maintaining the stature of superpower, US is losing its grip the way it used to had earlier.

Furthermore, intent to shift its ideology to offensive in nature, Japan is looking pave way for flexible and more independent foreign policy. How much Japan will success in achieving it, it is yet to see. However, Japan in this quarter of century has come a long way from living under US

coaching in the alliance system to solicit a place for itself in the global communal. Current leadership seems much confident and has enabled this path in which domestic requirements, financial and security concerns have found a new implication. As strategic race increases, the deepening Sino-US rivalry and United States losing its clutch on the modern world strategic atmosphere compel Japan to concentrate its devotion on the Indo-Pacific. The road is being cleared, and as Japan prepares itself for new leadership and the commitment to the Indo-Pacific as a pivot for its foreign policy will only deepen and strengthen (Toshihide Ando, 2023).

CHAPTER TWO SECURITY DYNAMICS IN EAST ASIA

2.0 Introduction

This chapter will examine the importance of balance of power and China's increasing influence vis a vis USA an extra regional dominating Player. Furthermore, the partnership between the United States and Japan has significant consequences for security in the East Asia area. This research will put in efforts to illuminate the security measures and conflicts in the area, which are crucial for both regional and global stability. In addition to it, Issues regarding security at a regional level, common goals, and difficulties that are faced collectively will be highlighted. There are quite chances that U.S.-Japan alliance can play a role in maintaining regional security provided countries with vary differences should also be incorporated in regional peace measures. This chapter will also focus on regional geography, land and terrain details along with states. Security dynamics also includes strategic regional importance that merely comprises of land and maritime routes, populations dynamics, ethnic and religious identities. This section will also ponder on historical back ground of perpetual issues i.e Sino Japan conflicts and post conflicts issues, unresolved Taiwan issue, war of dominance in region and security wise impacts of extra regional powers in East Asia.

For more than half a century, there has been curiosity and focus on the role and dynamics of regions and states. During the era of Cold War, the focus on regionalism trends arose. The idea of regions is imagined and built and therefore, the population in these regions are understood as communities. From a constructivist viewpoint, regionalism has been perceived as the process of creating a 'new world order' in which shared identities, ethics and cultures are depicted. Regions raising a sense of commonality of values & norms and ethics, which facilitates regional

collaboration through the formation of multiple organizations in ahead stages. However, multilateral organizations alone do not fully brief the advent of mutually exclusive zones and the intensity of the dynamics within them. Within a region, mutual interests are found, whether or not all the regional nations have a shared sense of identity. One of the prominent features of regionalism is the presence of materialist and rationalist features in which boundaries and power lead to the conceptualization of regional formations. (Dr Vijay Sakuja, 2023). The Regional Security Complex Theory (RSC theory) idea floated by *Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver's* is mostly focused today in international relations. This model envisages the importance of territorially coherent subsystems that are defined by interlinking patterns of securitization. In this theory, there are existing non-territorial security groups, which could take the form of multinational, global, or even sub-systemic non-territorial organizations that are largely ignored. The circumstances of regional safety that may be recognized by states within the regional security lens are individual/joint responses intended to deal head-on with overall security issues. These include emerging and general security glitches of inter-state defense and are characterized by the 'security dilemma' consequence. The RSC theory has a new attention on significantly autonomous zones that face insecurity and witness securitizing activities. There are two aspects of regional security, first the scope and patterns of danger and conflict within the region and second the main conflict that may threaten the integrity of the region. These are autonomous localities of insecurity that are defined as 'regional security complexes' (RSC) within the scope of the RSC theory. The RSC theory thus defines the various identifiable groups of states as 'security complexes' because they represent certain specific, regionally bounded inter-state and mutually affective intra- state security conditions. (Dr Vijay Sakuja, 2023).

2.1. East Asia Region: Geography and Features

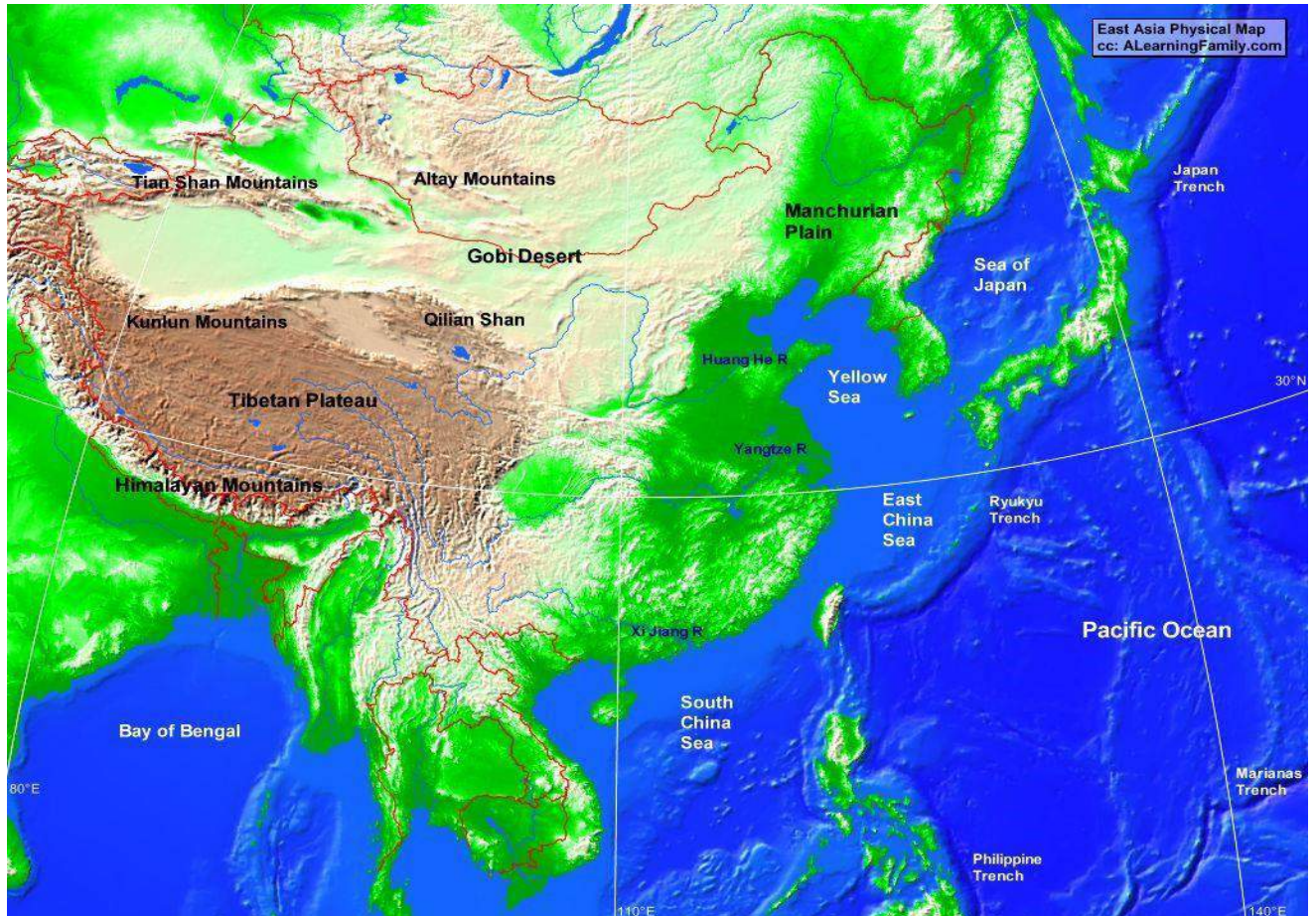


Modern day East Asia comprises of six countries i.e China, Japan, Mongolia, North Korea, South Korea and Taiwan. Region also comprises of two autonomous small territories Hong Kong and Macau under governance of China. The existing population in of East Asia in 2024 is approximately 1.7 billion (United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), 2024). Its total populace is equal to 21 % of the entire world inhabitants. East Asia zone is ranked number 2 in Asia among subregions ranked by Population. The population density (person per kilometers) in region is 144 per Km². The total land area is 11,560,456 Km² (4.4 million sq. miles) (worldometers, 2024). The sub division of counter wise population is; China with leading manpower crossing 1.4 billion people followed by Japan 124 million, South Korea with 51.7

million, North Korea 26.1 million, Taiwan 23.9 million, Hong Kong 7.4 million, Mongolia 3.4 million and Macau 0.7 million people. It is pertinent to mention the pollution of USA here which is 333.3 million. China is in region has the most influential position due to its vast territorial boundaries, home to world biggest population and shaping world economic into news heights. The isle of Taiwan, off the eastern shoreline of PCR, has a sovereign government that has been separated from mainland China after World War II. On the south eastern coast of China is Hong Kong, a former British possession with one of the best ports in Asia. Under an agreement of autonomy, Hong Kong and its port were turned over to the Chinese government in 1997. Next door, to the west of Hong Kong, is the former Portuguese colony of Macau, which has also been returned to Chinese control. In western China is the autonomous region of Tibet. Tibet has been controlled by Communist China since 1949, shortly after the People's Republic of China (PRC) was declared a country. Lobbying attempts by the Dalai Lama and others for Tibetan independence have not been successful. The region of Tibet has recently become more integrated with the country of China because of the immigration of a large number of Chinese people to the Tibetan region. Japan has arisen as the economic tycoon of East Asia. Its people have now maintained a very high living standards, and country has been a trade hub for the Asia Pacific Rim. Emerging economic tigers like Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and South Korea have also shown worthy economic development and are in queue becoming global economies. To counter the advances of emerging economies and Japan, China has made excellent use of its extensive skilled labor that contributed a lot in taking China ahead of aforesaid nations. North Korea, in region is lacking behind, it has isolated itself under an authoritarian dictatorship since World War II. A prudent collective act in region that's commendable is number of countries that were earlier enemies in World War II are now trading partners (e.g., China and Japan). Economic trade to some extent ties cultural gaps with

common goods and services. However, cultural and political differences between these countries remains there regardless of everything (Sultan, 2024).

2.2. Land Forms and Water Bodies



East Asia is bounded by a number of mountain ranges in the west, Mongolia, and Russia in the north, and Southeast Asia to the south. The Himalayas border Tibet and Nepal, Karakoram Ranges, Pamirs, and the Tian Shan Mountains adjacent to Central Asia. Whereas the Altay Mountains are next to Russia. The portion of Himalayan Mountains touches East Asia which is among the world's highest mountain range. These high ranges create a rain shadow effect, generating the dry arid conditions of type B climates that dominate western side of region in China.

Melting snow from the high elevation feeds many of the streams that transition into the major rivers that flow toward the east and submerged into Indian ocean and Pacific Ocean. (Finlayson,

2024). Moving towards water bodies, East Asian major seas are Bay of Bengal, part of Indian Ocean. East China Sea, Sea of Japan, South China Sea and Yellow Sea, Part of western Pacific Ocean. Major rivers of region are; Huang He River, Xi Jiang River, Yangtze River. Besides this Mekong and Indus also originates from same region later passes through South east Asia and South Asia.

2.3 The Strategic Regional Importance

East Asia is home to over 1/5 of the global population. Located on the western Pacific Rim, East Asia has vital strategic importance. It is a true pivot for global economy as almost 60 percent of maritime trade passes through this region. South China Sea only assumed to be 1/3rd contributor of sea trade. Warm waters and access to sail throughout the year further increases its value in modern times. The pro US alliance of region i.e South Korea, Japan, and Taiwan in close proximity of mainland China, creates a hyped business environment that has arose the human entrepreneurial spirit to new level. Manufacturing has powered the high-tech engines of the Pacific Rim economies, which have recently taken benefit of the huge labor pool of the Chinese heartland. That is why due to multiple factors and consideration global eyes are always here. Across the Pacific from East Asia are the superpower of the United States and its NAFTA partners and countries that are both competing for & against trading with the East Asian Community (EAC). According to Dr Manzoor Afridi who closely observed East Asian culture and are currently attached with IR department of IIUI with special expertise in Chinese affairs.

The geo strategic importance of region has forced global superpowers including USA to incorporate East Asia in his preference. That is why in 2012 under the tenure of

Barak Obama a new comprehensive policy was launched named as “Pivot to Asia policy”. I think its more of just strengthening bilateral ties with regional countries, definitely one of the major targets is to check China and keep US appearance alive here

Secondly USA would be looking for exploring and getting maximum benefits out of such huge and rich maritime domain which is yet to be explored in its full potential (Afridi, 2024).

2.4. East Asia in Drop of Perpetual Regional Issues.

This region despite of economic growth had a long history of perpetual crises and political turmoil. World bear witnessed one of the bloodiest conflicts in past, the 1st Sino Japanese conflict held from 1894 till 1895. The war was fought to take supremacy in Korean territories. The war came to end when weaker China sued for peace also recognized the independence of Korea and ceded Taiwan, the surrounding Penghu islands, and the Liaodong Peninsula in Manchuria. 2nd Sino-Japanese Wars held between 1937–45. War that took out when China began a full-fledged opposition to the extension of Japanese influence in its land, which had already begun in 1931. The war was not officially declared until WWII. This conflict may be divided into three phases: in 1st phase its rapid Japanese advancement till late 1938. In next round virtual stalemate until 1944, and the last phase when allied counterattacks, principally in the Pacific and on Japan’s home islands, brought about Japan’s surrender. Although later both nations did not come across any head-onhead physical confrontation however relationships between both nation remains strained. Both countries found chasing each other in several other regional issues. During Korean war 1950 – 1953. China entered the war right from the outset and pushed United Nations forces back into the south. During the first half of 1951 fighting stuck and cease-fire negotiations began in July (IMW, 2023). However, the negotiations achieved little opening success and the belligerents continued to fight each other in dugouts in closer proximity for the next two years. North Korea was fully supported

by USSR and China both being in communist bloc, whereas South Korea was supported USA, Japan and several other western powers including UNO. Further ahead in decades long Vietnam war (1955- 1975) proved to be proxy war once again where both nations supported opposite sides. In late 1990s during great economic crises that took entire Asian emerging nations proved devastated for both sides. Both countries later sustained but during recession an economic cold war kept both nations further distant (Anis Chowdhury, Iyanatul Islam, 2001). Former Prime minister of AJ&K and member of legislative assembly of Azad Kashmir, Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan explained the conflict situation of East Asia comparing with ongoing situation in South Asia in his words;

I believe western civilization has learned from past bitter experiences of World wars and realized that perpetual growth of America and west lies in opening borders and play constructive role in regional stability. To large extent they successfully transformed war - torn and conflict high societies in to advanced nations. However, on contrary their pessimist hegemonial approach in other regions are source of unrest and chaos. One side hue and cries over Ukraine war and other side turning a blind eye over Kashmir issue despite of endless brutalities by Indian occupied forces. On Palestine issue the way US & western community has supported Israel despite clear sign of genocidal acts by IDF is big shame. I think in case of East Asia, US must adopt rational policy of accepting due rights and authority of regional states actors, She must not trigger

regional insecurity by ambitiously involved in East Asian dominance. In that case balance of power is likely to be disturbed and chances of major conflict can not be overruled, which will cause nothing but once again pain, agony and chaos to people of east Asia (Khan, 2024).

2.5. Shared objectives and Challenges

The first and foremost shared objective amongst under study nations is perpetual peace and stability in region. However, a fog of war is also expected as all three nations want regional influence with leading role. Whatever differences are, the most prudent approach of this trio should be to keep bilateral, trilateral and multilateral trade and investment options open at all costs. All three states practically are pursuing increased business and investment opportunities within and beyond the region, this notion is eventually promoting economic growth and stability. Access to East Asia market keeping in view of its vast population and potential of development is another point of mutual interest for China, Japan and US. Keeping alike socialist ideology and bilateral alliance with China aside, addressing the security hazard posed by North Korea's nuclear program is another shared objective that has also emerged as a challenge as well. Infrastructure development is another field where all three states unified or in entities are ambitiously employed. The Belt Road Initiative (BRI) project of China is a real game changer not only for East Asia region but for cross continents as well. China Pakistan economic corridor (CPEC) is an example of BRI that has truly created a difference. Infrastructural development, establishment of special economic zones and nets of roads and railways tracks are producing great results for common people and both governments. Maj Gen (Retd) Inam ul Haque who is renowned defense analyst and column writer in national English newspaper in an interview said,

“Leading power like US, Japan and China are maintaining their extraordinary influence in world due to reputed economic conditions, augmented with strategic territorial location and strong defensive forces equipped with latest unmatched technologies. They all are wise enough to incorporated and facilitate FDI received amongst or outside world, hence economic progress is there first and foremost shared aim. Followed by others including staying away from direct confrontation that may lead to regional catastrophe but they resort to counter each other by indulging themselves into proxy wars against each other through several other vias. (Haque, 2024)”

While China's endeavors to invest in infrastructure across Eurasia via the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) seem to have the backing of both the US and Japan, there exist slight disparities in the two countries' stances on the Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP). FOIP, short for fair and impartial application of norms to all parties, represents the allies' regional foreign policy vision for Asia. Its objective is to optimize information sharing and ensure equal access for all states to regional benefits. (This implies a less stringent hierarchy controlled by a few numbers of powerful nations and a greater emphasis on a transparent system governed by established regulations.) The Japanese government has been reconciling the military perspective with the potential for collaboration between the Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) Initiative and the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in terms of economic and non-traditional security aspects. In contrast, U.S. policymakers primarily perceive FOIP as a means to counter China, with a focus on security concerns. Although the notion of FOIP allows for future interpretations and implementations, it is important for the United States and Japan to avoid giving China and other concerned nations the impression that there are substantial discrepancies in their understanding of FOIP. Both allies must

ensure that their opinions are aligned and their policies are coordinated. In addition, Japan strongly desires the continued engagement of the United States in Asia. Tokyo's primary focus is on the prospects of US involvement in regional multilateral frameworks such as the East Asia Summit and the Asia Pacific

Economic Cooperation (APEC) Summit. However, the likelihood of American engagement in Asia is diminishing as U.S. President Donald Trump was absent from both the APEC summit and the East Asia Summit in November 2018. The current situation may lead to divergent viewpoints among the allies about China.

2.6 Concerns Regarding Korean Peninsula

Japan has also highlighted concerns about a possible misinterpretation of North Korea between Tokyo and Washington. Many Japanese observers are worried that Tokyo does not perceive Pyongyang's short- and medium-range missiles as a significant threat, despite the strong objections raised by the US against North Korea's long-range ballistic missiles. Following the third impromptu U.S.-North Korea meeting at Panmunjom in June 2019, Japan grew increasingly worried when prominent U.S. media sources indicated that the Trump administration might contemplate accepting a nuclear freeze agreement (Lim, 2012). This agreement would halt the production of additional nuclear weapons but allow North Korea to maintain its existing nuclear arsenal. To effectively manage matters in line with resolutions of the UN Security Council and other relevant international agreements, it is imperative for the United States, Japan, and other involved nations to synchronise their viewpoints on North Korea. Beijing's dedication to the disarmament of North Korea is contingent upon the coordination of policies between Tokyo and Washington. While American experts in East Asian security acknowledge Japan's fears, it remains

uncertain to what extent the Trump administration considers these apprehensions in its decision-making process (Lim, 2012).

The current situation on the Korean Peninsula is a source of concern. Japan is apprehensive about the Korean Peninsula for a variety of reasons, with a particular emphasis on North Korea's nuclear and missile capabilities. These concerns are inextricably linked to the dynamics of East Asian security, which further complicates the situation. The complex and occasionally contradictory policies that Tokyo and Washington have implemented towards Pyongyang have exacerbated these concerns. This is particularly true in light of the indirect diplomatic interactions between the United States and North Korea.

The missile threat posed by North Korea is one of the most significant issues on which the United States and Japan have divergent perspectives. North Korea's long-range ballistic missiles, which are capable of reaching the American mainland, are the primary concern of the United States of America. Conversely, Pyongyang's short- and medium-range missiles are much more directly of concern to Japan. The national security of Japan is directly threatened by the capability of these missiles to target Japanese land. Conversely, Japanese observers have expressed their apprehension that the United States government may not have a comprehensive understanding of the extent of the threat that these missiles pose to Japan (Raska, 2019). This may lead to a discrepancy between the strategic priorities and the threat assessments.

Japan's level of concern was further heightened in the immediate aftermath of the unexpected encounter between the United States of America and North Korea at Panmunjom in June 2019 (Raska, 2019).

It is imperative that the United States of America, Japan, and the other nations involved synchronise their policies and perspectives in order to effectively confront the threat posed by

North Korea and to comply with resolutions passed by the United Nations Security Council and other international accords. The United Nations Security Council has authorised a number of resolutions with the objective of halting North Korea's nuclear and missile development programme (Congressional Research Service, 2023). These resolutions have resulted in the demand for denuclearization and the imposition of severe penalties. It is imperative that the allies work together to ensure that these resolutions are implemented and to apply as much pressure as possible on North Korea to comply.

Another factor that contributes to North Korea's disarmament is the coordination of policies between Tokyo and Washington, which in turn influences China's stance. Beijing, the capital of China, has expressed its endorsement of the concept of denuclearization, as it has a substantial stake in the preservation of peace and tranquilly on the Korean Peninsula. In order for China to fulfil its obligation to enforce sanctions and increase pressure on Pyongyang, it is imperative that the United States and Japan establish a unified and consistent strategy (Rajat, 2022). North Korea has the opportunity to capitalise on the circumstance when Tokyo and Washington's policies diverge. They are capable of manipulating both parties in order to advance their own interests.

Security specialists from the United States who specialise in East Asian security acknowledge and comprehend Japan's fears and apprehensions. The security concerns that Japan has are distinct from those of the United States of America due to its proximity to North Korea. These specialists are cognizant of these concerns (Rajat, 2022). Addressing Japan's security concerns is widely recognised as one of the most critical components of a robust and effective alliance. Nevertheless, the extent to which these concerns are considered during the decision-making processes of the United States administration remains unclear. This is particularly accurate when considering the Trump administration's foreign policy, which is frequently unpredictable.

The significance of strategic reassurance and diplomatic engagement. Two of the most critical actions that must be taken to resolve the Japanese concerns are the provision of strategic reassurance and the maintenance of uninterrupted diplomatic engagement. It is imperative for the United States to maintain open and transparent communication with Japan in order to guarantee that any diplomatic initiatives and agreements regarding North Korea are conducted in an open and transparent manner (Le Thu, 2020). Collaborating on joint military exercises, engaging in high-level diplomatic consultations, and working together on missile defence are among the most critical elements of this reassurance. The safety of the region is significantly impacted by the disparities in the ways in which threats are perceived and policies are approached. In the event that Japan believes that its concerns are not sufficiently addressed, it may contemplate the possibility of upgrading its own defence capabilities independently (Yacoob, 2023). This could potentially result in an increase in the quantity of military deployment in the region. There is also the potential for Japan to adopt a more cautious and protective approach, relying heavily on its alliance with the United States to secure security assurances. This situation underscores the importance of developing a well-coordinated and coherent strategy that considers the security needs of all parties involved.

It is imperative to prioritise Japan's security concerns and resolve them in a timely and effective manner in order to preserve peace in the region and strengthen the alliance between the United States and Japan. It is imperative to have a comprehensive policy that prioritises diplomacy, provides strategic assurance, and implements a cohesive approach in order to effectively navigate the intricacies of the Korean Peninsula and the broader security landscape of East Asia.

CHAPTER THREE

CHINA'S PERCEPTIONS AND RESPONSES

3.0 Introduction

While conducting an analysis of the strategic partnership between the United States and Japan in East Asia, China meticulously evaluates a variety of factors, including historical occurrences, political calculations, and strategic objectives. Throughout the early 20th century, Japan's aggressive actions and occupation have resulted in an enduring negative impact, which has been the source of strong animosity. Japan's present military and geopolitical objectives are in close alignment with those of the United States, a fact that is particularly significant in light of their shared historical background. It is evident that Japan's military and strategic objectives necessitate a human element. China is currently experiencing strategic anxiety as a result of the potential for the alliance between the United States and Japan to challenge its recently established regional dominance. This alliance is deemed indispensable by the United States in order to maintain its strategic dominance in East Asia, thereby restricting China's capacity to increase its military capabilities and influence in the region. The United States' perspective is embodied in this collaboration. In China, the increased military cooperation between the United States and Japan is perceived as a direct threat to its national security and regional ambitions. This involves the deployment of advanced missile defence systems and the participation of the United States and Japan in collaborative military exercises.

China has instituted a dual strategy, with one aspect emphasising diplomatic engagement and the other emphasising the enhancement of its military capabilities. It has consistently prioritised the development of strong diplomatic relationships, thereby demonstrating to its

neighbours that it values their friendship. However, deliberate endeavours have been made to undermine the solidarity between the United States and Japan through a variety of methods, including the exploitation of economic interdependence and international cooperation frameworks that exclude the United States. China is making substantial investments in the modernization of its armed forces with the objective of acquiring capabilities that can rival the military might of the United States in the region. Specific capabilities are being developed to impede or deter military activities conducted by the United States in East Asia in order to achieve this objective.

Furthermore, this has led to the perception that China's strategic posture is more expansive. Beijing should establish a new security architecture in Asia that prioritises inclusivity and diminishes the United States' dominance. This objective is exemplified by the Belt and Road Initiative and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, which foster economic and strategic integration in the region. The tensions in the region have been significantly exacerbated by China's belligerent actions in the South China Sea, as well as their strong nationalist rhetoric. Consequently, the United States and Japan have established a strategic alliance. This alliance may be perceived by countries in this region as a necessary response to China's assertiveness, with the objective of safeguarding their strategic interests and sustaining a regional balance.

As a consequence, China will regard the strategic partnership between the United States and Japan in East Asia as a significant form of rivalry and will approach it with caution. The alliance is perceived by Beijing as a direct threat to its regional objectives. Consequently, Beijing is planning to enhance its military capabilities and implement diplomatic strategies to influence the regional dynamics in its favour. For the foreseeable future, it is likely that this persistent pattern will continue to influence the geopolitical landscape of East Asia.

3.1 China's Security Concerns

The expanding defence partnership between the United States and Japan has raised a variety of security concerns in China. The concerns are the consequence of a combination of historical, strategic, and geopolitical factors that have incited the situation. In the past, China has regarded the alliance between the United States and Japan as a vestige of the Cold War. This was done in order to limit the alliance's influence and expansion in the Asia-Pacific region (Naidu, 2014). China is concerned about being encircled by a coalition of antagonistic nations as a result of the expanding defence relationship between the United States and Japan, particularly in areas such as cyber security, missile defence, and joint military exercises. This is particularly accurate in regions where Japan and the United States are collaborating.

Concerns have been expressed by China regarding the United States' recent deployment of advanced military assets in Japan. The following assets are included: missile defence systems and surveillance technologies. This accumulation of assets has the potential to render China's missile capabilities, which are a critical element of the country's defence policy, ineffective. Additionally, the strategic partnership between the United States and Japan has the potential to significantly influence Japan's self-defense forces and shift their emphasis towards offensive capabilities (Adarsh, 2022). It is conceivable that this will affect the current military equilibrium in the region. This action is particularly concerning for China, given the ongoing territorial disputes in the East China Sea. Both nations desire to be acknowledged as the legitimate proprietors of the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands. Japan may adopt a more assertive stance towards these disputed territories as a consequence of its enhanced military cooperation, which could potentially lead to confrontations (Adarsh, 2022).

China regards the United States' increased defence collaboration with Japan as a component of the United States' objective to preserve its dominance in the Asia-Pacific region by fortifying alliances and partnerships from a geopolitical perspective (Hu, 2022). This strategy, which is occasionally referred to as the "Indo-Pacific Strategy" or the "Pivot to Asia," is being implemented in an effort to counterbalance the increasing power of China (Ozer, 2022). Challenges for China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which seeks to expand its economic and strategic influence globally, are presented by a strengthened partnership between the United States and Japan (Zaho, 2021). China's objectives in the region and its assertions regarding the seas that are in dispute are significantly challenged by the presence of United States military bases in Japan and the increasing frequency of combined naval operations in the South China Sea, which is widely recognised.

Furthermore, the enhanced collaboration between Japan and the United States of America may result in an intensification of the competition for military superiority in the region (Adarsh, 2022). This, in turn, may motivate China to expedite its efforts to modernise its military capabilities. This may result in instability in the region, as countries that are geographically near to one another may feel compelled to enhance their defensive capabilities in response. This contributes to the instability of the regional security environment by increasing the probability of inadvertent clashes and erroneous calculations.

China has legitimate concerns about the stability of the security situation in relation to the heightened defence partnership between the United States and Japan. These concerns are deeply rooted and are influenced by a diverse array of factors, including historical grievances, strategic calculations, and the dynamics of geopolitical situations. The increasing influence of this alliance is perceived as a direct challenge to China's regional objectives and a potential source of instability in the Asia-Pacific region.

3.2 Balance Of Power in East Asia:

Within a hegemonic context, the task of preserving a condition of equilibrium in power becomes challenging and is contingent upon the security frameworks and interests that each particular state upholds. It has been proposed that hegemonic regimes can limit the balance of power by employing a combination of coercive and non-coercive strategies to showcase their significant capacity to shape global policy. Comprehending the dynamics of power balance is crucial for understanding national security plans and their objectives in ensuring survival in a geopolitically volatile environment. East Asia is a region characterised by its diversity, where countries compete for dominance in terms of their political, economic, and military might both within the area and globally. Due to the importance of countries such as China, North Korea, South Korea, and Japan in the global order, scholars have dedicated considerable attention to the region in recent decades. Nevertheless, due to the limitations of this paper, our focus will be on analysing the security models and strategies of China and Japan. These two countries are the main ideological groups that shape hegemonic stability and power transition. China is represented by the Sino bloc, while Japan is represented by the Japanese-Western bloc. Analysing the security concern in East Asia necessitates considering the influence of the United States and its dominance over the region. Emphasising the existing tensions between the United States and China is crucial at this juncture. Following the conclusion of the Cold War, several matters have put pressure on the relationship between the two countries. The most significant ones include commerce, security, and adherence to international law and institutions. The distinct historical backgrounds, cultural viewpoints, and material capabilities of the two nations have played a vital role in comprehending their differing approaches and objectives in terms of security. China is likely to adopt a more independent approach, while the United States has shown a willingness to engage in both bilateral and

multilateral accords with countries from other regions in order to uphold its own leadership. The military security rivalry between China and Japan, the primary members of the pro-Western bloc, has undeniably posed a threat to the stability of East Asia, since they have opted for confrontation instead of diplomatic or negotiating channels. The increase in security plans, the growth in defence budgets and capabilities, and the refusal to resolve past territorial disputes suggest that tensions are escalating and hindering the achievement of a more balanced power environment.

3.3 The Intricacies of the Competition Between China and the United States in East Asia.

The competition between China and the United States in East Asia is influenced by several causes, all of which add to its intricacy. The business relationship between China and the United States is characterised by a combination of competition and dependence on the economic front. Both countries want to limit economic losses while managing trade imbalances and resolving tariff disputes. Moreover, there are disparities in the investment strategies used by the United States' Indo-Pacific Strategy and China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). While the United States focuses on making important investments in the security and technology sectors, China places its emphasis on projects related to connectivity and the development of infrastructure. The primary emphasis of the Sino-US competition is in the domain of technical innovation. Both countries make substantial expenditures in research and development (R&D) with the aim of becoming leaders in advanced technologies such as 5G, quantum computing, and artificial intelligence. China's rapid military modernization and advancement of naval capabilities have presented a security challenge to the United States' military dominance in the Asia-Pacific region. The use of state-of-the-art armaments and the establishment of military bases in the South China Sea give rise to significant security apprehensions. The United States is compelled to join in regional security agreements and strategic

alliances due to sovereignty disputes over places such as the South China Sea and the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands, which further escalate tensions. China and the United States both strengthen their positions by forming security relationships and strategic alliances with East Asian states at the same time. However, these partnerships also contribute to the process of militarising the region and provide complex security issues. Ultimately, the ideological aspect adds an additional layer to the Sino-US conflict. China prioritises non-intervention and the recognition of state sovereignty in its efforts to establish a multipolar global system, which stands in opposition to the liberal international order led by the United States. The United States promotes liberal democracy, human rights, and the rule of law as global values. Diplomatic relations in East Asia become a challenging endeavour as countries try to manage the shifting dynamics and power alignments caused by China's economic incentives and the U.S.'s security pledges.

The rivalry between the United States and China is frequently analysed in relation to their role as major global powers, with many regions of the world serving as arenas for their competitive interactions. Third countries, albeit far weaker than the United States or China, should not be underestimated as they possess some degree of defensive capability, leverage, and agency. Due to the intricate dynamics in Southeast Asia, the governments in the region are faced with the difficult task of achieving a nuanced equilibrium. However, individuals also have the ability to navigate the possible hazards and benefits that result from this competition. The rivalry between the United States and China in East Asia is influenced by a multifaceted interaction of geopolitical, economic, and military elements, which are indicative of their greater pursuit of global power and regional control.

Alliances and Regional Influence:

The primary objective of the rivalry is to establish dominance and exert influence within the region. The United States has long been a key player in East Asia, forging robust alliances with countries such as the Philippines, South Korea, and Japan. This network is strengthened by prioritising military bases, security agreements, and a steadfast dedication to respecting international rules. Nevertheless, China's emergence as a dominant force in the area has prompted its endeavours to extend its sway through many strategies, including the establishment of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and the implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). China seeks to reconfigure the regional system to more closely correspond with its own interests and values.

The South China Sea is of significant geopolitical relevance in East Asia due to ongoing territorial disputes. China's territorial claims have intersected with the territorial claims of other Southeast Asian nations. The United States carries out Freedom of Navigation Operations (FONOPs) in order to contest China's territorial claims and guarantee unrestricted maritime routes, although not being a claimant itself. The confrontations between Chinese and American naval forces have heightened the potential for inadvertent conflict.

Economic Factors:

The United States and China, as the world's leading economies, engage in economic competition by strategically influencing international trade and investment standards to maximise their own interests. China's economic strategy in East Asia is establishing a comprehensive network of trade routes that connect China with other nations, while simultaneously boosting investment and strengthening commercial connections. Initiatives such as the Belt and Road

Initiative (BRI) are being implemented to achieve this objective. In order to counter China's economic dominance and ensure entry into regional markets, the United States has enacted its own economic measures, including the now-defunct Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP).

The rivalry between the US and China is significantly influenced by technological competitiveness, as both countries embrace innovation and technology. Both countries are competing to be at the forefront of sophisticated technology development, including quantum computation, 5G, and other new disciplines. The objective of China's "Made in China 2025" strategy is to diminish dependence on foreign technology and establish itself as a prominent participant in high-tech sectors. Conversely, the United States has implemented measures to restrict China's capacity to obtain crucial technologies, citing apprehensions regarding national security. Consequently, there has been a heightened focus on Chinese investments in American technology companies and restrictions placed on Chinese tech giants such as Huawei.

Aspects Related to the Military: China has initiated a comprehensive military modernization effort with the goal of countering the United States' power projection in the region. This encompasses the enhancement of cyber capabilities, naval resources, and sophisticated missile systems. China's military policy centres around the prioritisation of "Anti-Access/Area Denial" (A2/AD) to prevent US engagement in its coastal seas. Nevertheless, the United States upholds a substantial military presence in the region, which encompasses aircraft carriers, forward-deployed personnel, and sophisticated assets such as the F-35 fighter jet. The United States' military strategy in East Asia is designed to thwart aggression and safeguard the freedom of navigation by employing a combination of defensive measures and deterrence.

Collaboration and strengthening of defences are greatly facilitated by partnerships and alliances in the field of security. In order to preserve its advantageous position in East Asia, the

United States utilises its alliances and partnerships. Enhancing defence collaboration with established allies like Japan and South Korea, as well as cultivating ties with rising partners like India and Vietnam, are all crucial elements of this endeavour. The United States also endorses endeavours such as the Quad (Quadrilateral Security Dialogue) with India, Japan, and Australia, which seek to further the cause of a liberated and unobstructed Indo-Pacific area. In reaction, China is strategically undermining the alliances of the US by providing economic incentives to US allies and promoting its own security endeavours, such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO).

Strategic Implications: China and the United States adopt strategic ambiguity to safeguard their interests and avoid outright conflict, while also protecting their red lines. China views Taiwan's position and territorial claims in the South China Sea as absolute boundaries that cannot be negotiated. The United States places the highest priority on guaranteeing the security of its allies and protecting the freedom of navigation. The strategic environment is very volatile due to the delicate equilibrium, which has the potential to escalate in the event of errors or misunderstandings.

The rivalry between the United States and China has a substantial influence on the wider global order and stability inside specific regions. Although governments publicly express their commitment to upholding peace and stability, their actions frequently result in heightened tensions and a perception of unpredictability. Smaller regional states frequently have a challenging situation as they strive to manage their economic connections with China while simultaneously depending on the United States for security. The strategic choices made by these states will exert a substantial influence on the future of the regional arrangement.

The rivalry between the United States and China in East Asia is a multifaceted war with substantial repercussions. This complex network encompasses a wide range of strategic objectives

and alliances, as well as geopolitical moves, economic rivalry, and military positioning. This region remains a crucial area of worldwide strategic rivalry, where significant shifts in power balance and regional dynamics are possible, as both powers endeavour to assert their influence.

3.4 The Influence of the Competition between China and the United States on the Security Situation in East Asia.

The competition between China and the United States has multifaceted implications for East Asian security, including political, military, and economic dimensions. Currently, there is an escalation of military capabilities in East Asia as a result of competitive dynamics. China and the United States are investing significant financial resources in modernising their military forces, resulting in the development and deployment of state-of-the-art weaponry and defensive systems. Furthermore, the proliferation of weaponry in this arms race gives rise to concerns about the security of the surrounding regions. Moreover, the competition intensifies the militarization of contested regions, particularly in the East and South China Seas. The assertive actions taken by China, including as the creation of islands and establishment of military bases, have heightened tensions and may potentially escalate the issue. The security situation in the area is precarious due to the militarization of disputed land. Furthermore, the United States strengthens its military position in East Asia via strategic alliances with countries such as South Korea, Australia, Japan, and South Korea. These alliances form the basis of US security strategy, enhancing the ability to prevent and discourage potential threats, while establishing a structure for joint defence against regional dangers. The security landscape in East Asia is further complicated by the establishment of military alliances. The competition between China and the United States has detrimental political consequences for diplomatic relations in East Asia.

To safeguard their interests, the countries in the region must engage in negotiations between the two dominant powers. China's strong attitude and territorial claims have led to strained relations with the United States and its neighbours, since these actions contradict the established norms of international relations. The tight diplomatic atmosphere is impeding stability and cooperation in the region. Moreover, regional power is also influenced politically. The United States and China engage in a rivalry to exert their influence on the regional order. China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the United States' Indo-Pacific policy are both efforts to expand their influence and establish friendships in East Asia. This competition for domination may lead to tensions and power struggles among the countries in the area. From an economic perspective, trade disagreements between the United States and China undermine worldwide supply chains and impede economic growth in East Asia. The imposition of tariffs, trade restrictions, and retaliatory measures exacerbates economic tensions, affecting investors, consumers, and firms across the region. Commerce conflicts provide uncertainties and challenges for East Asian countries heavily reliant on foreign commerce. Meanwhile, China and the United States are engaged in a competition in the realm of technology. Both countries want to be at the forefront of critical industries such as semiconductor manufacturing and artificial intelligence. Furthermore, increasing competition intensifies conflicts around the entry into markets and the protection of intellectual property rights. East Asian states, positioned between two dominant powers, have challenges when it comes to navigating trade and technological progress. Moreover, East Asian economies reliant on global trade have challenges stemming from disruptions in supply chains, exacerbated by trade conflicts and geopolitical uncertainties. The presence of weaknesses in supply chains, particularly in sectors such as electronics and automotive, emphasises the need for implementing policies to enhance

resilience and promote variety. East Asian countries must devise strategies to enhance the resilience of their supply chains and reduce their dependence on any one market or country.

The security dynamics in East Asia are significantly influenced by the rivalry between China and the United States, which has led to a dynamic and occasionally volatile environment. Through the dynamics of alliances, territorial disputes, economic interdependencies, military operations and positioning, and the dissemination of security frameworks and norms, the rivalry has a substantial impact on regional security. Military posturing is the intentional demonstration of military power, frequently with the intention of menacing or influencing others.

A highly competitive arms race and military modernization efforts are presently underway in East Asia between China and the United States. Both nations are making considerable investments to improve their military capabilities. Currently, China is enhancing its military capabilities by expanding its naval forces to operate in unrestricted waters, advancing missile technology, enhancing cyber warfare capabilities, and establishing systems that can limit access to specific regions. The purpose of these technological advancements is to counteract the military dominance of the United States and prevent any intervention in regional conflicts, particularly in the South China Sea and Taiwan Strait.

Through strategically located bases in Japan, South Korea, and Guam, the United States maintains a robust presence in the region. Additionally, there has been a significant increase in the investment of new military technologies, including advanced fighter aircraft, sophisticated missile defence systems, and modern naval capabilities. Freedom of navigation operations (FONOPs) and collaborative military exercises with regional allies are conducted on a regular basis by the US

Indo-Pacific Command. The purpose of these activities is to underscore its dedication to regional security and to avert any potential aggression from China.

Escalated Military Conflicts: The United States and China's armed forces frequently engage in combat as a consequence of their increased military deployments and operations. The probability of inadvertent collisions, which have the potential to escalate into more substantial conflicts, is elevated by incidents such as the near encounters between naval vessels and aircraft. The South China Sea is characterised by frequent occurrences as a result of its strategic significance and the ongoing territorial disputes.

The United States is reliant on its extensive network of allies to counterbalance the increasing influence of China by establishing robust alliances and partnerships. The alliances with the Philippines, Australia, South Korea, and Japan are fortified through increased defence cooperation, joint military exercises, and arms sales. Additionally, in order to foster a liberated and all-encompassing Indo-Pacific region, the United States has been fostering partnerships with emerging nations such as India and Vietnam, including the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad). By fostering bilateral connections with American allies and partners and offering economic benefits, China's diplomatic and economic strategy aims to undermine the alliances of the United States. The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) of China offers numerous opportunities for economic development and infrastructure investment, which have captivated the attention of numerous countries in the region. In order to enhance its influence and establish alternative security frameworks, China also supports security initiatives such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO).

Economic Interconnectedness

The security environment is complicated by the economic interconnectedness between China and several East Asian countries. These nations depend on security assurances from the United States, while also benefiting from Chinese investment and commerce. The strategic conflict between two significant powers presents a challenge for regional governments to manage. The security strategies of neighbouring countries are influenced by economic measures implemented by the United States and China. In order to exert pressure on nations that oppose its geopolitical objectives, China implements economic strategies, including trade and investment restrictions. For example, the implementation of the US THAAD missile defence system in South Korea resulted in economic repercussions from China. In contrast, the United States implements sanctions and restricts technological access to counteract Chinese influence, as demonstrated by its actions against Huawei and other Chinese technology firms.

The ongoing rivalry between the United States and China has a significant impact on the South China Sea and East China Sea, which are regions typified by intense territorial disputes. The territorial and maritime entitlements of neighbouring nations, including the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, and Brunei, are at risk due to China's militarization of islands in the South China Sea and its assertive assertions. The United States ensures the freedom of navigation while challenging China's assertions by supporting the claims of these countries through diplomatic endeavours and Freedom of Navigation Operations (FONOPs).

The Taiwan Strait continues to be a region in East Asia that is both highly sensitive and potentially unstable. China considers Taiwan to be a rebellious province and has not ruled out the possibility of utilising military force to achieve reunification. The United States provides Taiwan with defensive armaments and adheres to a policy of strategic ambiguity to deter Chinese attack

in accordance with the Taiwan Relations Act. This policy is achieved by refraining from making explicit military security commitments to Taiwan. This fragile equilibrium creates a high-risk environment in which errors could result in significant discord.

The United States and China are engaged in a conflict over the promotion of distinct security frameworks and standards in East Asia. The United States strongly supports a system of international governance that is predicated on established regulations, emphasising the significance of the nonviolent resolution of conflicts, the unobstructed movement of ships and aircraft, and adherence to international law. China prioritises regional solutions and promotes the concept of "Asia for Asians" as a strategy to diminish US influence and establish its own vision of regional order.

In addition, regional security frameworks, including the East Asia Summit (EAS) and the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), are influenced by the competition between China and the United States. The strategic rivalry frequently leads to diplomatic impasses and opposing interests, which impedes the ability of these forums to effectively address security concerns, despite their stated objective of fostering discussion and cooperation.

Possibility of Increased Tension: The probability of escalation in East Asia is increased by the strategic rivalry between the United States and China. Disputes regarding territory, misinterpretations, and incidents that occur at sea or in the air have the potential to escalate into more significant conflicts. A high-stakes situation with minimal margin for error is the result of the military dispositions and preparedness of both nations.

The stability of the region is significantly impacted by the rivalry between the United States and China. It encourages the proliferation of weapons and cultivates a sense of scepticism among

the nations in the region. Challenges are frequently encountered by smaller nations, as they are required to navigate complex networks of alliances and partnerships and make decisions. This can result in internal schisms and inconsistencies in their policy. The regional and global order will be profoundly and enduringly affected by the long-term strategic adjustments that result from the competition between the United States and China. In the event that China achieves dominance, it has the ability to restructure regional norms and institutions to align with its own interests. In contrast, the United States would bolster the current system by adhering to established regulations if it persists in its assertion of dominance. The strategic choices made by states in the region will have a substantial impact on the future distribution of power in East Asia.

The security dynamics in East Asia are significantly impacted by the rivalry between the United States and China. A complex and occasionally unpredictable environment is the result of the substantial influence of technology on military strategies, alliance relationships, economic interdependencies, territorial conflicts, and security structures. The stability of the region, the distribution of power, and the potential for a global order in East Asia are all significantly affected by the ongoing rivalry between the two nations.

American restrictions on technology transfer to China have a significant influence on regional economies and technological progress. The United States aims to limit China's acquisition of technologies that might hinder the technological progress of East Asia. Consequently, China is actively seeking self-sufficiency in crucial technologies, leading to ambiguity over the separation of technological systems between the two countries and adding complexity to the economic landscape. The Sino-US competition has significant and wide-ranging impacts on the security of East Asia. The military implications include an escalation in the weapons race, increased militarization of disputed regions, and the formation of alliances. Furthermore, there are political

consequences in the shape of conflicts for control and tense diplomatic relations. The intricate economic landscape of East Asia is shaped by trade wars, the competition for technical supremacy, interruptions in supply chains, and restrictions on technology transfer. In order to effectively handle and mitigate the risks arising from the competition between China and the United States in the region, policymakers and other stakeholders need to fully understand these consequences.

3.5 Implications for Regional Security

The complex and diverse competition between China and the United States in East Asia has significant implications for the political, military, and economic dimensions of the regional security structure. The regional security framework is being substantially impacted by the intricate and diverse competition between the United States and China in East Asia. This competition encompasses the political, military, and economic components, each of which influences and is influenced by the others. In order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the geopolitical processes at play, it is imperative to completely appreciate these factors. political considerations

Diplomacy and Geopolitical Influence:

The political rivalry between the United States and China is centred on the influence of global standards, diplomatic alliances, and regional governance. China's strategy is to leverage its economic power to acquire political influence through initiatives such as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). China endeavours to establish advantageous positions and foster positive political relations with various nations in East Asia by providing economic incentives and financing infrastructure initiatives. This approach allows China to create regional policies that are in alignment with its objectives and strengthens its geopolitical influence.

In contrast, the United States advocates for a global system that is predicated on regulations, with a focus on the rule of law, human rights, and democratic government. Establishing alliances

and partnerships is a strategy employed by the United States to preserve its leadership position and mitigate the increasing influence of China. In order to promote economic collaboration and collective security, the United States places significant emphasis on multilateral organisations such as ASEAN, the East Asia Summit (EAS), and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC). The diplomatic initiatives, such as the Quad, which comprises the United States, Japan, India, and Australia, are clear indications of the endeavours being undertaken to counteract China's regional ambitions.

Examining the concept of soft power and its application in the realm of public diplomacy:

Political rivalry is significantly influenced by soft power. In order to advocate for its growth model and project a favourable image, China emphasises cultural diplomacy, educational exchanges, and media influence. To improve its soft power, China implements a variety of strategies, such as the organisation of prominent international events such as the Belt and Road Forum, the support of state-sponsored media, and the establishment of Confucius Institutes. The goal is to present China as a responsible and benevolent leader on a global scale.

In the interim, the United States capitalises on its extensive cultural heritage, esteemed educational institutions, and extensive global media presence. The establishment of connections between individuals and the advancement of the fundamental principles that define America are contingent upon programmes like the Fulbright Scholarship, Peace Corps, and American cultural institutions. In order to challenge Chinese narratives and emphasise the advantages of its democratic governance style, the United States also engages in strategic communications.

Military force deployment and positioning: The military competition is defined by the nations' ongoing efforts to establish their dominance and prevent the influence of one another. The United

States has a substantial military presence in East Asia, with bases located in the Philippines, Guam, South Korea, and Japan. Prompt responses to local emergencies are facilitated by the practice of positioning military forces in advance, which also fosters trust among allies in the United States' unwavering dedication to their protection. The United States frequently engages in collaborative military exercises with its neighbouring allies, which fosters improved synchronisation and collaboration in defensive endeavours.

In response, China has implemented a comprehensive programme to modernise its military. The People's Liberation Army (PLA) is dedicated to enhancing its capabilities in order to more effectively compete with the United States military, with a particular emphasis on the marine sector. China's strategy is to discourage US intervention by employing advanced missile systems, submarines, and cyber capabilities. The development and arming of islands in the South China Sea serve as critical centres for the purpose of asserting territorial assertions and projecting influence.

The correlation between technological advancements and the arms race:

The competition is a scramble to create advanced armaments and enhance technology. Both nations are making substantial investments in state-of-the-art technologies, including hypersonic missiles, cyber warfare, and space capabilities. China's advancement in these areas is motivated by its ambition to surpass conventional military technologies and achieve a level of parity, or potentially superiority, with the United States. The United States recognises the importance of this threat and is making a concerted effort to enhance its technological innovation and modernise its military forces in order to preserve its competitive edge.

Examination of Security Interactions in a Particular Geographic Region:

In numerous respects, the dynamics of regional security are significantly impacted by the rivalry between the United States and China. It encourages countries in the region to fortify their own military

capabilities and forge more robust security partnerships with foreign forces. Japan, South Korea, Australia, and other neighbouring nations are actively pursuing the expansion of security cooperation with the United States, modernising their armed forces, and enhancing their defence capabilities. This phenomenon increases the likelihood of a localised competition for the acquisition of weapons, as well as the likelihood of misjudgement and confrontation.

Competition in trade and investment:

The continuous enmity between the United States and China is significantly influenced by their intense economic competition in East Asia. China's economic policy is centred on the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which is designed to enhance infrastructure development, investment, and trade. The objective of this strategy is to establish a comprehensive network of economic corridors that will connect China with Asia, Africa, and Europe, thereby enhancing its economic dominance and fostering mutual dependence. China's trade relations with East Asian nations are of paramount significance, as it serves as a significant trading partner and a significant source of investment for numerous nations in the region.

The United States, a prominent economic power, endeavours to counterbalance China's economic influence by promoting its own trade pacts and investments. Despite its withdrawal from the Transpacific Partnership (TPP), the United States remains supportive of initiatives that promote the principles of free trade and robust regulations and continues to participate in bilateral trade agreements. In addition to employing economic weapons such as tariffs, sanctions, and export controls, the United States employs a variety of strategies to resolve what it considers to be unjust trade practices by China and to safeguard its technological superiority.

Finance for infrastructure and development:

Different parties compete for influence in the domains of infrastructure and development financing, which are fiercely contested. The Belt and Road Initiative of China offers financial support

for critical infrastructure projects, particularly in countries that face challenges in obtaining funding from conventional sources. Nevertheless, these initiatives generate concerns regarding debt management, the necessity for transparency, and the potential for geopolitical influence. In collaboration with countries such as Japan, Australia, and India, the United States is actively advocating for alternative funding channels and infrastructure initiatives. The goal of these endeavours is to provide enduring and transparent alternatives that align with international standards.

Economic coercion is the utilisation of economic power to manipulate or influence others. It entails the use of economic pressure or control to exert influence or control over another country or entity. In this context, dependencies refer to circumstances in which one country or entity is significantly dependent on another for economic support or resources. In order to exert influence over neighbouring states, both nations employ economic coercion. In order to respond to nations that violate its interests, China implements a variety of economic measures, including trade restrictions, investment restrictions, and tourism prohibitions. Conversely, the United States employs sanctions and export controls to limit China's ability to acquire significant technologies and to penalise companies that engage in activities that are in opposition to American interests. These actions establish economic interdependencies that require regional countries to exercise caution in managing their relationships with both powers.

Strategies for Achieving Equilibrium:

In response to the intense competition between the United States and China, regional states are required to implement strategies that are designed to preserve a balance of power. Australia, South Korea, and Japan prioritise their security alliances with the United States while maintaining robust commercial relationships with China. Southeast Asian nations, particularly those embroiled in territorial disputes with China, are simultaneously seeking security assurances from the United States and pursuing economic cooperation with China to stimulate development.

Hedging and Strategic Ambiguity:

In order to circumvent the conflict between the United States and China, numerous regional states implement strategic ambiguity and hedging strategies. Their goal is to maintain their autonomy and capitalise on the advantages of both parties without explicitly demonstrating a preference for one over the other. This approach enables individuals to navigate the complexities of a fierce power struggle while simultaneously decreasing the likelihood of inciting either the United States or China.

Institutional and Normative Competition:

The competition also encompasses the process of establishing accepted standards of conduct and shaping regional institutions. The United States advocates for a system that is governed by rules and prioritises the protection of human rights, democratic principles, and international law. China is a proponent of an alternative system that prioritises the principles of sovereignty, noninterference, and regional solutions. The agendas and efficacy of regional forums such as the ARF, ASEAN, and the EAS are significantly impacted by normative competition. This frequently leads to a diplomatic impasse and contradictory objectives.

Opportunities for both Cooperation and Conflict:

The potential for both confrontation and cooperation is evident in the rivalry between the United States and China. There are opportunities for cooperation on shared concerns such as climate change, non-proliferation, and pandemic response, despite the persistence of the possibility of military conflict, particularly in regions like the South China Sea and Taiwan Strait. The stability and security of East Asia will be substantially impacted by the manner in which both powers manage their rivalry and establish shared interests.

The political, military, and economic dimensions of the region are significantly impacted by the intricate and diverse competition between the United States and China in East Asia. This conflict has a significant impact on the regional security structure, affecting strategic calculations, alliance dynamics, economic dependencies, and normative frameworks. The future of East Asia's security landscape will be influenced by the interactions between these two countries and the responses of regional governments as they vie for dominance.

3.6 Diplomatic Responses to the U.S.-Japan Alliance

China's diplomatic responses to the alliance between the United States and Japan are a demonstration of a variety of techniques. These responses reflect a combination of cautious preparation, forceful punitive acts, and efforts to alter regional dynamics in China's own advantage. The primary objective of the responses is to facilitate the promotion of China's strategic interests in East Asia while simultaneously reducing the perceived difficulties that are caused by the alliance. The promotion of cooperation and mutual understanding among nations is significantly aided by the engagement of diplomatic efforts and the multilateralism of regional institutions.

Taking Part in Diplomatic Activities: In an effort to counterbalance the effect of the alliance between the United States and Japan, China continues to work towards strengthening its diplomatic connections with other East Asian nations. In order to achieve its goal of establishing a network of states that are allies, China intends to strengthen economic relations, provide assistance for development, and encourage political cooperation. The strategy that China employs may be observed in the extensive strategic alliances that it has formed with nations such as South Korea, member states of ASEAN, and even countries that have historically been allied with the United States, such as the Philippines and Thailand.

Utilisation of Multilateral Institutions:

China is a strong supporter of regional multilateral institutions and actively participates in them. These institutions provide the inclusion of other nations a higher priority while simultaneously reducing the influence of the United States. China is afforded the opportunity to exercise its influence and advance its vision of regional order through the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) and the China-ASEAN Free Trade Area. Through these institutions, China seeks to advocate for objectives such as the preservation of national sovereignty and the pursuit of regional solutions to concerns of security. The United States of America, on the other hand, is currently playing a leadership role in the prioritisation of a worldwide system that is established on norms.

Using Economic Diplomacy in conjunction with the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI):

The majority of China's response will be carried out through economic diplomacy. In order for China to strengthen its economic might and build geopolitical alliances, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is an essential instrument that China makes use of. By making investments in infrastructure projects, offering loans, and facilitating commerce, China strengthens its economic links and obtains political leverage over the nations that are engaging in the economic cooperation. This economic engagement is being undertaken with the intention of establishing interdependencies that can be utilised to counterbalance the impact of the alliance between the United States and Japan.

China's efforts to modernise its military are a direct response to the military capabilities of the alliance between the United States of America and Japan. In order to deter military moves by the United States and Japan in its surrounding territories, such as the South China Sea and the Taiwan Strait, China is placing a high priority on the enhancement of its military capabilities. This comprises the strengthening of its capabilities in the areas of anti-access and area denial (A2/AD), advanced missile systems, cyber warfare technology, and the expansion of its naval force.

Emphasising the boundaries of the territory:

In the context of territorial disputes, China takes a more proactive approach in order to challenge the support of the United States and Japan's alliance with countries that have contested territorial claims. The Chinese government has recently expanded the amount of naval and air surveillance it conducts in the East China Sea, particularly in the region surrounding the Senkaku and Diaoyu Islands combined. The Japanese government's ability to control the islands is directly undermined by this conduct. As a means of effectively demonstrating its territorial claims and its steadfast determination to defending them, China's construction and fortification of islands in the South China Sea serves both strategic and symbolic objectives. These objectives are served by the implementation of these actions.

Collaborative partnerships and relationships that are developed for the aim of strategic considerations:

China is making a concerted effort to establish strategic alliances with nations that are capable of providing a counterbalance to the partnership that exists between the United States and Japan. Given that Russia and China have similar concerns about the United States' dominance in the region, this necessitates the formation of closer partnerships between the two countries. China and Russia have formed an alliance that involves working together in military matters, participating in joint exercises, and coordinating their diplomatic views on both regional and global issues. In order to achieve its goals, China intends to form alliances with other nations, such as Iran and North Korea, that are unhappy with the policies of the United States. In order to effectively oppose the power of the United States, the objective is to form a coalition of nations.

The ability of a nation to exert influence on other nations by the use of attraction and persuasion, as opposed to coercion or force, is referred to as soft power. A country's image and

values can be promoted to audiences outside of the country through the practice of public diplomacy, which involves the use of a variety of communication methods and activities.

Bringing attention to the human component:

In order to impose its influence through the use of soft power, China makes use of its extensive cultural past as well as its extraordinary achievements and accomplishments in the present day. Through the utilisation of Confucius Institutes, cultural exchanges, and worldwide broadcasting services, China intends to exert influence over attitudes and advocate for its principles and governance system. Through cultural diplomacy, China is attempting to demonstrate its commitment to peace and responsibility. This is an effort to highlight a clear gap between China's actions and the frequently represented aggressive attitude of the United States military.

International Leadership and the Formation of Norms:

China's goal is to establish itself as a strong player in international affairs, with a particular emphasis on significant concerns such as climate change, commerce, and development. It is China's intention to actively participate in international forums and to bring forward initiatives, such as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), in order to mould global norms and institutions in a manner that is congruent with its own interests and values. This leading position assists China in constructing a favourable image on the international stage and in winning support from nations that are able to reap the benefits of its collective efforts.

Operational Strategies for Strategic Communication and Information:

The Chinese government uses information and communication operations that are strategic in order to exert influence over regional and global narratives. State-controlled media channels and social media campaigns in China are used to draw attention to the positive aspects of China's economic growth and to express displeasure of the policies and actions taken by the United States on the international stage. By exerting influence on public attitude, China tries to weaken the

trustworthiness of the alliance between the United States and Japan and to advance its own worldview of peaceful growth and mutual advantages.

Opportunities and Obstacles in the Field of Diplomacy: The acts that China takes in the realm of diplomacy are meticulously calibrated to combine assertiveness with substantial engagement. China displays that it is ready to protect its interests through the use of military tactics, while at the same time participating in diplomatic attempts to avoid direct clashes with the United States of America and its allies. Through the implementation of this policy, China is able to emphasise its territorial claims while simultaneously allowing for diplomatic negotiations and the peaceful resolution of difficulties.

The perspectives and concerns of China's neighbouring countries over China's growing influence need to be addressed in a careful and diplomatic manner. Concerns about Chinese hegemony and coercion continue to exist, despite the fact that China's economic initiatives and diplomatic involvement have the potential to foster favourable relations. The Chinese government has a responsibility to reassure the governments of its neighbours that the country's rise is not a cause for concern but rather an opportunity for jointly achieving prosperity. It is of the utmost importance to address issues about the viability of debt over the long term, to encourage transparency and accountability, and to ensure that the safeguarding of national independence is ensured.

The Process of Adopting and Accepting Changes on a Global as well as a Regional Scale:

In order to promote its diplomatic goals, China employs a strategic approach that takes advantage of movements in global and regional dynamics. Changes in the United States' foreign policy, such as shifts in the priorities of the military or revisions to trade restrictions, create ideal conditions for China to expand its sphere of influence. It is possible that China may take advantage

of regional crises or leadership transitions in countries that are located in close proximity to it in order to build its alliances and push its vision of regional governance.

China's diplomatic approach to the alliance between the United States and Japan is both extensive and diversified. It encompasses a wide range of interactions, including bilateral and multilateral engagements, economic diplomacy, military advancements, strategic partnerships, and the use of soft power. China's strategic aims will be promoted, and the regional security situation will be shaped in a way that is beneficial to China. These efforts are aimed at addressing the perceived concerns that have been stated by the alliance. As the struggle with the United States continues to intensify, China's diplomatic efforts will play a crucial role in navigating the dynamics of regional security and establishing its position as a key global power.

CONCLUSION

The political, military, and economic dimensions of the region are significantly impacted by the complex and multifaceted competition between the United States and China in East Asia, which has led to a reorganisation of its security structure. The U.S.-Japan alliance's transformation from a period of animosity following World War II to a robust cooperation has been instrumental in effectively addressing the challenges posed by China's expanding power. The robust alliance between the United States and Japan, which is supported by a significant military deployment and commercial ties, emphasises their dedication to maintaining regional stability and ensuring unobstructed maritime passage, particularly in contested regions such as the South China Sea. China implements a dual approach of military modernization and diplomatic engagement to mitigate concerns regarding its proximity to U.S. allies and enhance its influence. In the field of economic diplomacy, a competition is currently in progress to erode the United States' influence and establish dependency through a variety of strategic partnerships and programmes. The likelihood of an arms race escalation, the dynamics of alliances, and regional security frameworks are all significantly impacted by geopolitical competition. Furthermore, it increases the probability of errors in computations and the potential for conflicts to occur. The allocation of power, the level of stability in the region, and the trajectory of East Asia's geopolitical landscape will ultimately be determined by the interactions among these significant states.. This emphasises the importance of well-coordinated and thoughtful policies in order to effectively navigate this intricate environment.

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Appendix-I

Questionnaire for Interviews

Topic

USA – Japan Strategic Alignment in East Asia: Implications for the Chinese Security

MS IR Scholar

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International Islamic University Islamabad.

Note: Sir/madam you **don't** need to answer **all** the questions. You can answer as per your own convenience/expertise. I am also not expecting **long answers** keeping in view your **busy schedule**.

Questionnaire for Interviews

1. How do you view US – Japan strategic alignment (Military, economy & political) as a potential threat to Chinese security.
2. How China would mitigate this threat while maintaining its regional dominance?
3. What impact does Sino-US rivalry have on East Asia?
4. Can you please shed some light on Japanese motives for supporting US interests in the region?
5. What role do the North Pacific seas (South China Sea, East China Sea, Yellow Sea and Sea of Japan) play in making the region a pivot for global powers?

6. Is there a possibility of limited conflict between China and the USA in their pursuit of regional dominance?
7. What policy should China adopt to counter the US – Japan alliance?
8. How would you assess Japan's strategic shift from defensive to offensive approach to address perceived threats from China and North Korea in region?
9. Considering the ongoing economic war between US – China and Japan's stance against China, how do you foresee the future of the Chinese economy?
10. Is China significantly damaging US global interests?
11. Considering current economic challenges being faced by USA and bitter past experiences in Asian soil, (Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan) will USA be able to keep its perpetual dominance in East Asia.
12. What are the chances of these leading economies of world working together harmoniously in future, leaving aside all differences for greater good of EastAsia.

Appendix- II

Interview Schedule Guide

| SR. No. | Name | Designation | Mode of Interview and Duration | Date & Place |
|---------|---------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. | Dr. Manzoor Khan Afridi | Prof of Politics and International Relations IIUI, Islamabad. | Personal Interview (32- minutes) | April 12, 2024 Islamabad. |
| 2. | Dr. Adil Sultan (Air Cdr Retd) | Dean of Faculty of Aerospace and Strategic Studies (FASS) and Chair of Department of Strategic Studies (DSS) at AIR University, Islamabad | Personal Interview (18- minutes) | May 07, 2024. |
| 3. | Lt General (retd) Amjad Shoib | Former Adjutant General Pakistan Army | Personal Interview (10- minutes) | May 18, 2024. |
| 4. | SardarAtique Ahmed khan | Former PM AJ&K Member of Azad Kashmir Legislative Assembly | Personal Interview (47- minutes) | May 22, 2024. Islamabad. |
| | Maj Gen (retd) Inam Ul Haque | Defense Analyst and Columnist Daily Tribune Pakistan | E-Mail Interview | June 6, 2024 |