

Jurgis Bekampis*

General Jonas Žemaitis Military Academy of Lithuania

China's Rising Military Threat in the Indo-Pacific Region: Change in Japan's Defence Policy in 2013–2022

Introduction

Japan, Lithuania's new strategic partner, faces similar challenges as Lithuania – it borders one of the world powers, China, which is not only hostile towards Japan, but both countries have territorial disputes. Japan is also an important NATO partner that cooperates in maritime security, cyber defence and non-proliferation (North Atlantic Treaty Organization, 2023). Japan also promotes all forms of industry, trade and investment cooperation with the EU, which strengthens the technological capabilities of European and Japanese industrial systems (EU-Japan Centre for industrial cooperation, 2023). The EU and Japan are not only linked by economic ties but also by common interests in the Asia-Pacific region, especially when concerning China and the core values of: democracy, human rights and respect for the rules of the international system. On 14 March 2022, Shinzo Abe, former Prime Minister of Japan, proposed the deployment of US nuclear weapons platforms in Japan in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. According to the leader of the LDP, Ukraine became vulnerable after giving up its nuclear arsenal in 1994, and due to China's increasing military activity in Japan's maritime space and beyond, Japan feels insufficiently safe (Lowy Institute, 2022). China's deterrence strategies were also relevant in the election of the leader of the LDP in 2021 – there was talk of the need to better protect Japan's Southwest Sea area and prevent China's attempts to change the *status quo* around the Senkaku Islands.

* *Jurgis Bekampis*, Alumnus of General Jonas Žemaitis Military Academy of Lithuania. Address: Šilo g. 5A, Vilnius, Lithuania, 10322; e-mail: jurgisbekampis@gmail.com

<https://doi.org/10.47459/lasr.2023.21.2>

© Jurgis Bekampis, 2023

© Military Academy of Lithuania, 2023

Candidates for the leader of the LDP also discussed the ability of the Japan Self-Defence Forces (JSF) to strike military targets in foreign territories in the event of war. This concern was fueled by intense missile testing in the region (Wallace, 2021). Proposals were also made to increase Japan's defence budget to the NATO standard – 2% of GDP (currently, Japan allocates more than 1% of GDP on defence and plans to increase defence spending to 2% of GDP by 2027) (Tian, 2023). In addition to all the disagreements, Japan is heavily dependent on China's rare metals industry, which is critical to the production of high-tech products (Hui, 2021). In 2021, Japan reduced its rare metal imports from China from 90% to 58%; however, it remains almost dependent on China, which may repeat the scenario of 2010 and paralyse part of the country's industry by ceasing the export of rare metals to Japan (Hui, 2021). These interstate relations affect the entire international community as they involve powers such as the US and China, and Japan is a key ally of the West in the East Asian region, helping to counter the rising power of China.

According to the balance of threat theory by Stephen Martin Walt, a state, when faced with a threat, will attempt to increase its relative power (e.g. increase its defence budget) while simultaneously seeking an alliance with another state (Walt, 1987). In its defence documents, Japan identifies China as an unprecedented and great strategic challenge, and to withhold this threat, and Japan is changing its defence policy by increasing its defence budget, creating a multidimensional military force, and strengthening its alliance with the US (Ministry of Defence, 2022). Despite this, Japan is economically dependent on China (Suzuki, 2018; Zhao, 2017), and both countries hold meetings of high-ranking officials (Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's visit to China in 2018 and the meeting between the Chinese President and current Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida in the APEC Forum 2022) in which they discuss bilateral cooperation in the field of economy and promote peaceful and reciprocal relations (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2018; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2022). Japan's Review of Diplomatic Relations of 2022 identifies China as an important partner for regional peace and prosperity with which it will continue to cooperate (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2022). Japan, China and South Korea are also preparing future trade agreements (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2019). To determine whether China affects the change in Japan's defence policy and how that change has manifested, the balance of threat theory is used. The balance of threat theory, which was founded by the school of neorealism, combines the theories of the balance of power and social constructivism, which alone cannot explain the split between democratic and non-democratic states in the global security system and how democratic states respond to new threats in a complex

security environment. The balance of threat theory incorporates factors such as a country's overall power, geographic proximity, offensive capabilities and intentions in attempting to identify a threat. S. Walt's theory helps to determine the concept of the threat facing a country and to prove the connection between the concept of threat and the balancing policy being implemented to show why and how Japan's defence policy has changed. Neorealism shows a "wider field" and, in the case study, the threat from China not only to Japan but also to the US and other states in the region. The research period chosen is from 2013 when Japan released its first national security strategy and later expanded the mandate of Japan's defence forces after Xi Jinping became the President of China and promised to make China "powerful" and "prosperous" and the beginning of the "clashes" between China and Japan near the Senkaku Islands. Thus, the research reveals how Japan's defence policy changed in the period from 2013 to 2022 in an attempt to balance the Chinese threat.

The object of the research is Japan's defence policy, and the aim is to assess the change in Japan's defence policy in 2013–2022 based on the balance of threat theory. The following objectives have been set to achieve the aim:

1. To describe the main assumptions of the balance of threat theory.
2. To analyse the perception of China as a threat to Japan's national security in 2013–2022.
3. To analyse Japan's defence policy in 2013–2022.

The topic of Japan's defence policy became relevant in the 1910s, after China tested nuclear weapons in 1993, and after the third Taiwan Strait crisis in 1995. W. Lee Radcliffe (2014), in the book *Goraikos: Japan's national security in an era of asymmetric threats*, wrote about the modernisation of Japan's national defence capabilities to meet the asymmetric challenges of the 21st century. The last chapter of *Japan-China relations in the modern era* by Ryosei Kokubun, Yoshihide Soeya, Akio Takahara and Shin Kawashima (2017) provides a brief description of the relationship between Japan and China up to 2015. The book deals with political, social and economic changes in interstate relations, paying little attention to how the Japanese military has changed over time. Jamie Gruffydd-Jones (2017) in his article *Dangerous Days: The Impact of Nationalism on Interstate Conflict* analysed how nationalism may have affected the relationship between Japan and China, and Ken Ohnishi (2017) *Japan's Security Challenges: North Korea, China, and Peacekeeping Operations* described the main challenges faced by Japan threats and analysed how Japan could counter them, but did not provide any specific numbers – how far has Japan modernised its military to counter the Chinese threat? China's threat and competition with Japan for leadership in East Asia was also discussed by Xiaoyu Zhao (2017) in the article *Japan-China Relations in East Asia: Great Power Rivalry or*

Peaceful Interdependence?; however, this study did not analyse Japan's national capabilities. Nori Katagiri (2018), in the scientific article *Between Structural Realism and Liberalism: Japan's Threat Perception and Response*, describes how, depending on the balance of power and intentions, Japan's threat perception shifted from Russia to North Korea and finally to China. The Sino-Japanese rivalry is described in a broader context in a scientific article by Kai Schulze and Verena Blechinger-Talcott's (2019) *Introduction: 11 Dimensions of Sino-Japanese rivalry in a global context*, which analyses the changing concept of the Sino-Japanese rivalry and its impact on the specific foreign policy measures of both countries in an international context. In the book *China in Japan's National Security: Domestic Credibility*, Toshiya Takahashi (2020) examines Japan's emerging national security policy toward China – nationalism, Japan's alliance policy and the changing course of Japan's security policy. Japanese policy measures are described by Bhubhinder Singh (2021) in the article *Japan's responses to China's rise: Soft balancing in Southeast Asia* as the results of a soft balancing strategy to withhold the Chinese threat. Another way of withholding the Chinese threat is described by Nobumasa Akiyama (2021) in the article *No first use in the context of the U.S.- Japan Alliance*, which discusses arms control and dialogue between major players such as the US, China and Japan.

Taking into account the mentioned monographs, books and scientific articles, the novelty of this research is based on the chosen approach to assess to the state's intentions and investigate whether there is a direct correlation between the source of the threat and the choice of the state's balancing strategy (intentions are assessed not from the side of the source of the threat, but from the target state –how the country assesses the intentions of the country posing the threat is studied). Similarly, the novelty of the article is based on the unexplored case of Japan's defence policy change as a response to the Chinese threat (focusing on changes in Japan's military capabilities) and the research period, which is from 2013 to 2022.

Based on publicly available statistical data, US Department of Defence reports on China, official documents of the Japanese Ministry of Defence and Foreign Affairs, and analytical texts on Japanese defence policy published by think tanks, this article attempts to fill the research gap concerning the evolution of Japanese defence policy in response to the Chinese threat. First, the assumptions of the balance of threat theory, threat balancing strategies and criticisms of the aforementioned theory are briefly discussed, and a new threat analysis model is formulated to help analyse China's threat to Japan. This article then describes the interdependence between China and Japan, analyses China as a threat to Japan's national security, and concludes with an analysis of Japan's military capabilities and defence cooperation with the US.

1. Balance of Threat Theory

The balance of threat theory is used to determine how and by what means Japan reacts to policies implemented by China. In this chapter, based on scientific sources, the concept of the source of the threat and the emerging threat balancing strategies are described. The second subsection is devoted to a critique of the balance of threat theory, and the chapter concludes with a definition of the interdependence variable in the context of the balance of threat theory.

1.1. Source of Threat and Balancing Strategies

S. Walt highlights the decisions of states on military power and alliance formation are influenced by several different threat components: a state's overall power, states' geographic proximity, offensive capabilities and intentions (Walt, 1987). The first element is the country's accumulated resources (population, industrial and military capabilities, technological superiority). In other words, the richer the country, the greater the threat it can pose to others (Walt, 1987). The second element refers to the geographical distance between potential rival states – the greater the distance, the less opportunity there is to use force against each other and, as a result, the potential threat decreases (Henneberg, 2013). The third element defines offensive power as the ability to threaten the sovereignty and territorial integrity of another state at an acceptable cost (Walt, 1987). The more offensive weapons a country possesses in its arsenal, the more threatened other countries will feel. The fourth element relates to the intentions of states (Walt, 1987). The states' intentions are evaluated in the assessment of China's domestic and foreign policy in terms of the state-target: the aim is to substantiate the theoretical assumptions concerning the concept of the threat source's intentions and the correlation between state-target balancing strategies. Thus, the feeling of threat consists of the sum of 4 threat components (see Figure 1).



Figure 1. **Threat perception is the sum of components.**

Source: Compiled by the author.

According to S. Walt, in the case of a threat, it is advantageous to adopt a balancing strategy and conduct internal balancing (strengthening internal military forces or the economy) or external balancing (establishing alliances, which further will be described as cooperation). The state chooses one of the external balancing strategies – balancing or sliding. In the event of a threat, the country first initiates internal balancing:

1. Arms;
2. Increases the defence budget;
3. Engages in economic development

When internal balancing is not enough to counter a threat, the country experiencing the threat undertakes external balancing. In external balancing, smaller countries have two choices with whom to form a military or political alliance:

1. Cooperate with a power that opposes the threat source. This is to deter the country that initiated the threat from any aggression as it would mean war with another power. An example of this could be the unofficial relationship between Taiwan and the US to counter China's threat (Tan T. W., 2021);

2. Create a coalition with other countries in the region. This method aims to balance the power of the region with a large number of states. A good example is the European Union's "Common Security and Defence Policy" (Dyson, 2013).

External balancing has 4 main features:

1. Developing containment strategies (Kim, 2022). A containment strategy can be military or economic in nature. Its main aim is to prevent the balanced threat from expanding its influence.

2. A public statement of security concerns that shows a clear position in the region draws the attention of other countries to the security situation and helps to form new alliances (Kim, 2022).

3. Send warning signals (Kim, 2022). Such a signal draws a "red line" beyond which the balanced state will receive a retaliatory strike.

4. Finally, the state in balancing can worsen diplomatic relations (Kim, 2022). This move shows that the politics of the country is intolerable.

Below are the threat balancing techniques (see Figure 2). All of the listed internal and external threat balancing methods are analysed in the context of Japan's defence policy to ascertain by what means Japan balances the Chinese threat.

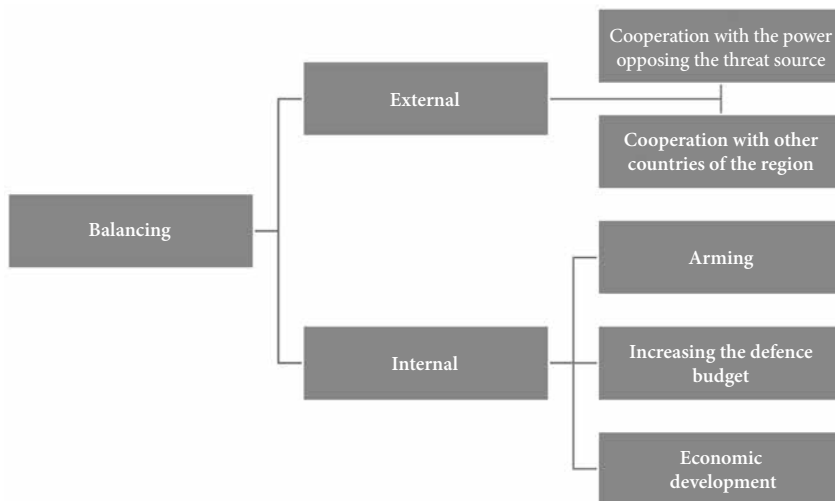


Figure 2. **Ways of balancing strategy.** Source: Compiled by the author.

Another option, opposite to balancing, is the state's assimilation to greater power in pursuit of security and national interests (Ian, 2003). S. Walt argues that weak states are more prone to sliding than strong states, that the absence of potential allies increases the likelihood of sliding, and that the incentive to sliding is particularly high when the most threatening power appears suppressed (Walt, 1987). An alliance with a state that is already a threat indicates an attempt to reduce that state's aggressive intentions in order to preserve peace or gain.

1.2. Balance of Threat Theory in Complex Security System

Based on the balance of threat theory, the problem arises when analysing offensive capabilities and trying to distinguish between offensive and defensive armament. With the modernisation of weapons and the development of increasingly advanced military systems, the divide between defensive and offensive capabilities is negligible. An offensive armament refers to weapons or equipment designed to launch an attack or gain an advantage over an enemy. Offensive armament is primarily used to inflict damage on enemy personnel, vehicles, and installations or to disrupt the enemy's ability to conduct operations. A defensive armament, on the other hand, refers to weapons or equipment designed to defend against an attack or defend a position. A defensive armament is primarily used to prevent the enemy from

entering a certain location or preventing the enemy from moving towards a certain objective. A tank, on the other hand, may be employed both offensively and defensively in the depths of the nation. The main difference between an offensive and defensive armament is their purpose; therefore, the same tool can perform both offensive and defensive functions.

When the geographical factor is examined, its significance lessens because battles are conducted with extremely accurate weaponry capable of destroying the adversary from considerable distances, and many attacks originate in cyberspace. Technological advances in transportation and communications enable rapid deployment of troops, and countries can quickly move their troops across continents and oceans to reach a conflict zone through the use of aeroplanes, helicopters and other means of transport.

S. Walt also underestimated the changing international system, which promotes interdependence of countries, mutual cooperation and affects threat assessment. A situation in which a country is armed against another while collaborating is feasible in an interpolar system. The transition from one international system to another is caused by crisis situations. Until the end of the Second World War, the prevailing multipolar system, which was characterised by the pursuit of power balance between the great powers, transformed into a bipolar system (Varisco, 2013). After the war, many states weakened; however, two great powers emerged, exerting a strong economic, military and cultural influence on their allies. With the collapse of the USSR and the end of the Cold War in the 1990s, the US became the sole superpower, and the system became unipolar. The liberal institutional order destroyed the separation of domestic and international spheres and created insurmountable problems for one country, which encouraged the cooperation of states (Baciu, 2022). Thus, the US unipolar system was replaced by an interpolar system characterised by interacting poles of different sizes: states, intergovernmental organisations, non-state players and other entities (Baciu, 2022). The interpolar system is based on 3 interrelated levels: the level of citizens (who seek security, freedom and justice), the level of elites (who focus on financial stability and growth) and the level of power relations (where the poles interact) (Baciu, 2022). All Poles have an interest in investing in cooperation to strengthen their well-being and security, which creates favourable conditions for an interpolar system that is based on polar interests and is problem-oriented (focusing on challenges that require joint efforts to solve) (Baciu, 2022). In an interpolar system, the welfare and security of states are increasingly linked; therefore, even states from opposing blocs may have to cooperate.

The balance of threat theory places great emphasis on conventional

capabilities but ignores sources of unconventional power. S. Walt's uncertain interdependence presents opportunities for hybrid threats: propaganda, cyber attacks and economic oppression. These tools are often used in conjunction with conventional tools. When used in isolation, hybrid threats destroy the line between war and peace, and war becomes ambiguous because it is difficult to define operationally. For example, the Chinese government carefully constructs its discourse of nationalism to ensure that the public is hostile towards Japan. Narratives of anti-Japanese nationalism can be found in the media, including themes of history, territorial sovereignty and mistrust of Japan, as well as street protests and hostility to Japan, expressed in cyberspace (Burcu, 2022). Such a policy can be interpreted as preparing society for military conflict. Another non-conventional threat, China's cyber capabilities, is described in the "Defence of Japan 2022" White Paper as the fastest expanding area of China's armed forces, and Japanese media reports indicate that the Chinese military is conducting cyber attacks against Japanese companies and research institutes, including the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (The Japan Times, 2021). In this way, state activities are disrupted, and secret data is leaked or changed, which poses a threat to the entire country. To stop the policies undertaken by Japan (for example, the deployment of US weapons on Japanese territory), China can blackmail Japan, choose measures of economic oppression, repeat the scenario of 2010 and paralyse part of the country's industry by stopping the export of rare metals to Japan. China's hybrid warfare can also include the country's incursions into Japanese territorial waters, described later in the article, which increases interstate tensions. Thus, hybrid warfare is not always visible but an important element in order to measure the threat posed by a country (see Figure 3).



Figure 3. Adaptation of components of threat perception.

Source: Compiled by the author.

1.3. Definition of Interdependence in the Context of Balance of Threat Theory

To adapt the balance of threat theory such that it may be based on the current inter-polar system, one more component must be added: interdependence. Interdependence exists when one country can cause damage (or benefit) to other countries through unilateral actions (Streeten, 2001). Because interdependence is measured in terms of the costs of breaking up relationships vs the advantages of their development, we may infer that the more interdependence, the less a nation will attempt to balance another state to prevent losses. The main factors that allow determining interdependence are the following:

1. Trade statistics (Delabarre, 2021). One way of assessing the interdependence of two countries is to analyse their trade statistics – the volumes of exports and imports between the two countries. This is the main indicator for showing the level of economic interdependence of the countries. In this case, Japan cannot diversify its total income and, thus, reduce its dependence on China.

2. Investment statistics. Another way to measure interdependence is through investment statistics, which include all forms of foreign investment. A high level of investment between the two states may indicate a high degree of interdependence. It is important to take into account which areas are invested in – agriculture or high technology.

3. Political connections. Treaties, alliances and joint membership in international organisations that encourage mutual cooperation and dependence. Transnational threats (common security problems, terrorism, piracy, climate change, etc.) force countries to work together. If there are no alternative partners in the event of a threat, it will be necessary to work with the source of the threat.

Thus, in the new inter-polar system, not only the general power of the state, geographical proximity, offensive capabilities, intentions and hybrid threats play an important role as a threat, but also economic relations, political goals of the countries and unifying security challenges, in other words, interdependence (see Figure 4).



Figure 4. Adaptation of components of threat perception.

Source: Compiled by the author

2. Interdependence between China and Japan

The architect of the Japanese Peace Treaty (2 September 1945), the first Prime Minister of Japan Yoshida Shigeru, believed that arming Japan was an unproductive means of fighting communism (e.g. communist China) and proposed an alternative. Yoshida Shigeru believed that the need to trade with China would eventually lead to good results, and the Chinese would change their attitude, accepting that “war is war and trade is trade” (Hiroshi, 1998). The prime minister believed that Japanese business representatives, due to their long acquaintance with and experience in China, would be the strongest pillar of democracy against Chinese communism. In the 1970s, the recognition of China by the US, the suspension of the exchange of the dollar for gold (the Nixon shock) and the oil crisis in 1973 caused a great sense of insecurity in Japan. China, unstable and abiding by its own political principles but perceived as a *de facto* ally of the West to withhold the USSR, which had real nuclear capabilities, demanded more stable relations between Japan and China. Because of these events and anxieties, Japan decided to integrate China into the regional economic framework. Prime Minister Nakasone Yasuhiro took advantage of Japan-US relations to use Japan’s economic resources to improve relations with China while supporting the US strategy against the USSR (Hiroshi, 1998). These events laid the foundations for Japan’s comprehensive security strategy and economic dependence on China.

Japan’s comprehensive security strategy was fully developed in the 1980s and emphasised economic and diplomatic rather than military measures to protect Japan’s national security (Okano-Heijmans, 2012). This policy was based on the assumption that economic and political strategic interests are mutually reinforcing and must, therefore, be considered together. Later, comprehensive security also included an environmental element (food, water, the lack of which is directly related to stability, economic security and sustainable development) and an element of human security (people’s economic well-being and economic growth are considered inseparable wholes).

In the implementation of a comprehensive security strategy, China, rich in resources and labour, has become a hybrid threat to Japan. In reality, Japan and China are not only in competition with each other but also cooperate and depend on one another. For example, China is Japan’s major trading partner and has received increased Japanese foreign direct investment, indicating China’s importance as a manufacturing location and market for Japanese companies (Ström, 2022). According to Figure 4, Japan’s exports and imports from China have only been growing since 2013 and Japan’s importance in the Chinese market has hardly changed and does not occupy an important

place. Chinese companies in Japan are mainly seeking to acquire their place in established electronics and home appliance brands (Ström, 2022). This interdependence is one-sided: it is clear that China is more important to Japan, and it has to balance its dependence on China.

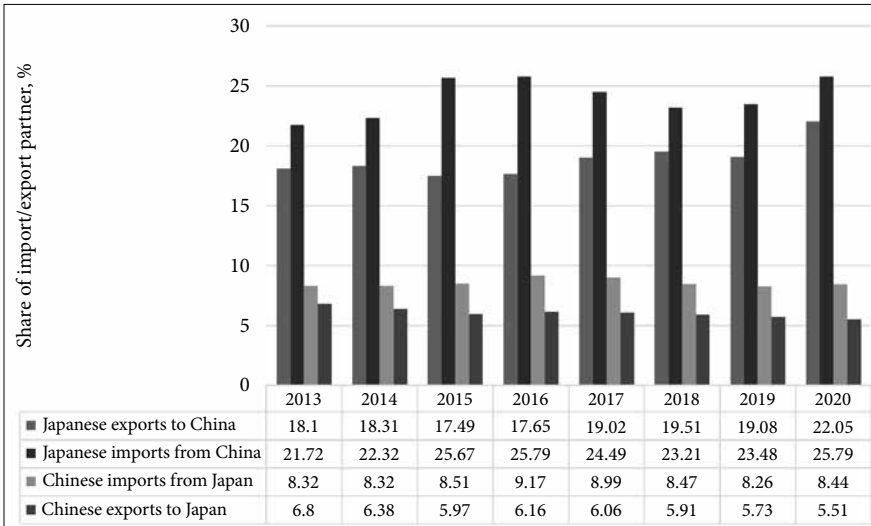


Figure 4. **A comparison of economic cooperation between Japan and China.**

Source: Compiled by the author based on (World Integrated Trade Solution, 2020).

Both countries hold high-ranking official meetings (Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's visit to China in 2018 and the meeting between the Chinese President and current Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida at the APEC Forum in 2022) to discuss bilateral economic cooperation and promote peaceful and reciprocal relations (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2018; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2022). Japan's Review of Diplomatic Relations of 2022 identifies China as an important partner for regional peace and prosperity with which it will continue to cooperate (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2022). Japan, China and South Korea are also preparing future trade agreements (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2022).

Today, unlike in the 1960s and 1970s, Japan's position in the world in terms of material resources has deteriorated due to prolonged economic stagnation and an ageing population (Satake, 2022). While it is important for Japan to maintain a more independent defence and economic security posture, in an inter-polar system, no country can increase the resilience of supply chains, develop new technologies, and respond to hybrid threats without the help of other countries.

These multifaceted and complex power politics have erased the lines between “high politics” concerned with ideology, governance and military strategy and “low politics” concerned with economics, energy supplies and social affairs (Hiroshi, 1998). In an environment of what Joseph Nye and Robert Keohane (2012) termed “complex interdependence” in *Power and Interdependence*, Japan was forced to adopt a more autonomous and comprehensive foreign security policy that could address a wider range of challenges.

To reduce Japan’s dependence on China, decisions have been made at the national and international levels. In particular, in 2020, the Japanese government supplemented the National Security Secretariat with an economic department (Togashi, 2020). The new department will address the expanding intersection of economics and national security, particularly in light of China’s growing influence. Although the outcome of this decision is not yet clear, the establishment of the department in itself is an important step for Japan to use economic instruments to realise its strategic goals.

Japan’s 2022 Economic Security Promotion Law (*ESPB*) focuses on 3 areas: the need to protect sensitive technologies, to exercise greater control over investment and exports to specific foreign entities, and to ensure that supply chains that are critical to sensitive high-tech sectors remain secure (Tan K. J., 2022). The *ESPB* also aims for Japan’s strategic irreplaceability and increases funding for companies conducting research in key existing and emerging technologies (robotics, artificial intelligence, quantum computing). These areas can also be used to develop military programs, which will allow Japan to increase security in the region, open up more opportunities to export armament to friendly countries and thus increase interaction with other countries.

In parallel, decisions are being made that promote trade with China. The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (*RCEP*), signed in 2020 and entering into force in 2022, is designed to promote investment and mutual trade throughout East Asia (Shimizu, 2022). *RCEP* accounts for half of Japan’s trade value and eliminates many tariffs between Japan and China, increasing China’s duty-free share of industrial products with Japan from 8% to 86% (Shimizu, 2022). Even with the signing of the *RCEP* agreement, China is using its advantage to unilaterally ban the import of all aquatic products from Japan (claiming that it is concerned about the release of treated radioactive water from the Fukushima nuclear power plant) (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2023). Such accusations are a cover for weakening Japan’s economy, which exports nearly \$600 million worth of aquatic products to China. Thus, Japan’s comprehensive security strategy is still applied today. At the state level, it aims to reduce dependence and protect strategic resources from China, while at the same time, trade with China is promoted in other sectors in order to ensure the human

element of security, thus guaranteeing public welfare and economic prosperity.

During the internship at Palacky University in the Czech Republic, 2 experts were interviewed on the topic of national and regional politics of China and Japan – Dr Richard Q. Turcsanyi and Dr Martin Lavička (see Annex 3). Paradoxically, both experts highlight that although Japan is attempting to threaten China, it is itself heavily dependent on it – the two nations are important trading partners, and Japan imports a large number of minerals and metals from China. For these reasons, Japan cannot provoke China too much; however, neither can it rely entirely on the protection of the US. Japan can only manoeuvre between the two powers. Thus, Japan's strong economic ties with China limit the country's freedom of choice – hostile decisions and actions towards China can lead to dire economic consequences.

3. China as a Threat to Japan's National Security

This chapter analyses China as a threat to Japan's national security. The research analysis covers the period from 2013 to 2022. The first subsection of this chapter introduces China's overall power. The second subsection describes the geographical proximity between China and Japan, analysing the factors affecting the distance between the two countries. The third subsection is devoted to the analysis of China's offensive forces, its composition and a comparison of how much China's military power has increased since 2013. The last subsection analyses the intentions of states – based on Japan's national defence documents and guidelines, the Chinese threat and Japan's attitude towards it are analysed.

3.1. China's Overall Power

The overall power of a state is the first component of the balance of threat theory, which consists of a state's population, industrial and military capabilities and technological superiority. The analysis of China's total power uses the official data from the World Bank for 2013–2022, Global Firepower Statistics, data from think tanks and US Department of Defence annual reports on Chinese power.

China's population has increased from 1.36 billion people in 2013 to 1.44 billion citizens in 2022 (Worldometer, 2022). That's an increase of 80 million people over 9 years, or 8.8 million people per year. Due to such demographics, China has been ranked first in the world by population since 1955, accounting for 18.47%

of the world's population (Worldometer, 2022). A large and young population allows resources to be allocated to investment rather than consumption, allowing for a large expansion of the military and foreign influence. China's population is predicted to begin to decline in 2035 (due to its previous one-child policy), and the decline in China's birth rate (which has already started) will severely reduce the government's ability to project global power as resources will need to be reallocated to domestic consumption rather than investment (Worldometer, 2022). Currently, China is at the "peak" of its power and, simultaneously, the greatest possible threat to its neighbours because there are two options to correct this situation: significantly increase the birth rate or secure power and resources abroad that will then support the Chinese population.

China's GDP grew from \$9.57 trillion in 2013 to \$14.72 trillion in 2020, making it the second-largest economy in the world (The World Bank, 2020). China's GDP growth rate has fluctuated between 5 and 8% in recent years, which is double the world average (The World Bank, 2020). The main sectors and industries driving China's growth are: services, agriculture, manufacturing and technology (Ross, 2022). China is also the world's largest exporter and importer (The World Bank, 2020). China has the technology and resources to produce military equipment on a massive scale (Britannica, 2022). For this reason, many industrial sectors are designated as of strategic importance and belong directly to the state.

Another important component of overall power is military capability. From \$164.07 billion in 2013, China's annual military spending has risen to \$252.3 billion in 2020 (The World Bank, 2020). This is a difference of \$88.23 billion, which allows China to rapidly develop military capabilities. Due to its rapidly growing economy, China did not need to increase the percentage of GDP devoted to military spending, which remained around 1.7% during this period (The World Bank, 2020). In 2013, the Chinese military consisted of nearly 3 million soldiers, with 2.535 million remaining in 2019 (The World Bank, 2019). The change may have been caused by the development of highly targeted weapons, the production of drones, and the development of the nuclear arsenal. These are weapons that increase military power without the need to have a large number of personnel. In 2022, China ranks third in the world in terms of military capabilities (Global Fire Power, 2022) Upon examination of regional trends, China will soon overtake second-ranked Russia to become the main rival of the US due to its economic superiority, huge population and steady increase in land, sea and air military capabilities (Global Fire Power, 2022). By possessing a nuclear weapon, China minimises the likelihood of military conflict with other nations due to the possibility of mutually assured destruction; therefore, the further development of military capabilities indicates

the country's intentions not only to defend its territory but also to expand it.

China's rapid technological progress plays an important role in geopolitical competition. China is deploying advanced technologies: 5G wireless communication, weapons that are supported by artificial intelligence, cyber security, biotechnology, surveillance and space technology (Brookings, 2020). 5G technology is seen as a means for China to upgrade its traditional industrial base for a future digital economy and become a platform that will enable China to build the necessary infrastructure for next-generation internet and applications such as autonomous vehicles, automated factories and smart cities (Triolo, 2020). Alongside 5G technology, China's military and defence industry has taken major initiatives in autonomous and AI-enabled weapon systems that could threaten global security and stability (Brookings, 2020). Such systems are being developed because of China's ambitions to dominate space. Chinese People's Liberation Army has undergone reorganisation and is seeking to integrate space, cyberspace and electronic warfare systems with its other military capabilities (Brookings, 2020). Space is used for weather forecasting, facilitating navigation and transportation, conducting scientific research, monitoring other countries and to provide access to financial transactions and many other activities in the world – it is a space of strategic importance that China seeks to militarise.

After evaluating the elements of total power, it can be said that China is a superpower. It is one of the world's most economically powerful states, whose military power competes with the US. Simultaneously, it is also a threatening state – many sectors of the economy are controlled by the state, military capabilities are increased every year, and new technologies are focused on military infrastructure or oppression within the state. A nation with such a large population, resources, military capabilities and technology may desire to secure a hegemon status in an international or regional structure and, to achieve this, use its military power.

3.2. Geographical Proximity of China and Japan

In the study of geographical proximity between China and Japan, official data from the Geodata website was used, and the analysis was based on data from the US Department of Defence's 2021 Annual Report on China's Power.

The geographical distance between states is calculated based on major borders and includes major islands. The shortest known distance between China and Japan is 603 km (Geodatos, 2022). This is the distance by sea that a Chinese destroyer could cover in less than 11 hours, and a cruise missile covering the entire territory of Japan (CSS-5, DF-17, CJ-10, H-6) can reach

the country in a few minutes (Department of Defence, 2021). In addition to conventional missiles, China also has a nuclear triad, in which missiles such as CSS-4 Mod 2 and Mod 3 can reach any point within a radius of 13,000 kilometres from Chinese territory (Department of Defence, 2021). Therefore, even a small geographical distance between states is theoretically nullified by the threat of missiles that could strike anywhere in Japan within minutes at the push of a button (see Annex 1).

3.3. China's Offensive Capabilities

Based on the analysis of China's offensive capabilities, it can be stated that China is one of the most powerful countries in the world and one of its national priorities is to become a world power. China is developing its military capabilities in all areas and has the world's most powerful navy, thus ensuring the regional and even potentially global projection of its military power. The figures in the tables are approximate because China hides its true military capabilities and spending on the military sector.

Although China's active-duty military numbers have declined (see Table 1), the military itself has become more modern and poses a threat not only regionally but internationally, with increasing investment in naval, missile and strategic support forces that can strike anywhere in the world. The newest type of Chinese military is the Strategic Support Force. These forces have cyber capabilities that serve China in three main areas: help gather information for intelligence or information attack purposes, help constrain the enemy by attacking its logistics, communications and trade systems and can serve as a force multiplier in conjunction with kinetic attacks during crises and conflicts (Department of Defence, 2013). In 2015, the People's Liberation Army Strategic Support Force was established to centralise China's strategic space, cyber, electronic, information space, communications and psychological warfare capabilities (Department of Defence, 2021). They have 2 departments: the Department of Space, which is responsible for military operations in space; and the Department of Network Systems, which is responsible for information operations (intelligence, electronic and cyber warfare, psychological operations) (Department of Defence, 2021). Beijing is investing heavily in a new space programme with the goal of using space for military operations that can operate both in space and on Earth (Department of Defence, 2021). In modern warfare, many military systems are dependent on information programmes, satellite communication, the disruption of which can destroy an entire operation and paralyse the enemy's actions.

Table 1. Comparison of active duty soldiers of the Chinese People's Liberation Army for 2013–2021

Active duty soldiers	Total	Ground forces	Naval forces	Air Forces	Rocket forces	Strategic Support Forces
2013	2,333,000	1,600,000	235,000	398,000	100,000	0
2022	1,915,000+	965,000+	260,000+	395,000	120,000+	175,000+
Change +/-	-418,000	-635,000	+25,000	-3,000	+20,000	+175,000

Source: Compiled by the author based on (International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2014; International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2022).

In 2022, the technical park of the Chinese ground forces decreased (see Table 2), and this could be due to 2 factors: a change in priorities from the ground forces to other military areas and the modernisation stage that took place all these years, the aim of which was to achieve full mechanisation of the army (Department of Defence, 2021).

Table 2. Comparison of the number of equipment of the Chinese People's Liberation Army Ground Forces for 2013–2022

Ground forces	Tanks	Artillery	Armored vehicles
2013	7000	8000	8000+
2022	5250	5854	35,000
Change +/-	-1750	-2146	Missing data

Source: Compiled by the author based on (Department of Defence, 2013; Global Fire Power, 2022; International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2022).

Within 9 years, China supplemented its naval forces with 160 ships (see Table 3) and became the country with the largest navy in the world (Department of Defence, 2021). In the near future, China's navy will have the ability to conduct long-range precision strikes against land targets, increasing its global power projection capabilities (Department of Defence, 2021). The prioritisation of the naval forces shows China's military direction – it is the strengthening of forces in East and Southeast Asia, where China has several territorial conflicts (the Senkaku Islands), many strategic resources (the Straits of Malacca) and is also trying to push its main rival, the US, out of the region.

Table 3. Comparison of the number of ships of the Chinese People's Liberation Army Navy for 2013–2022

Naval forces	Total of ships	Ships of offensive nature	Aircraft carriers
2013	270	185	1
2022	430	242	3
Change +/-	+160	+57	+2

Source: Compiled by the author based on (Department of Defence, 2013; Global Fire Power, 2022; World Directory of Modern Military Warships, 2022).

China's air force is the largest in the region and the third largest in the world (Global Fire Power, 2022). Based on data from the US Department of Defence, it can be said that over the past 9 years, China has taken care of modernising aircraft, improving flexibility and mobility in its vast territory, and developing new platforms for carrying nuclear weapons.

Table 4. Comparison of aircraft numbers of the Chinese People's Liberation Army Air Force for 2013–2022

Air forces	Total of aircrafts	Aircrafts of offensive nature
2013	2775	2300
2022	3285	2200
Change +/-	+510	-100

Source: Compiled by the author based on (Department of Defence, 2013; Department of Defence, 2021; Global Fire Power, 2022).

Due to the secrecy of data on missiles, it is difficult to determine the real number; however, in 9 years China's missile force has increased by at least a third, and China is currently increasing the process of missile development and production even more (see Table 5). Particular attention is paid to nuclear forces, which must ensure the deterrence of an external force but, at the same time, increase global and regional tensions due to excessive armaments.

Table 5. Comparison of the number of missiles of the Chinese People's Liberation Army Missile Force for 2013–2022

Rocket forces	Total rockets	Short-range missiles (up to 1,000 km)	Medium-range missiles (1,000 – 5,500 km)	Intercontinental missiles (>5,500 km)	Nuclear warheads
2013	1336	1,100	140	96	190
2022	2250	1000	600	150	>200
Change +/-	+914	-100	+460	+54	+10

Source: Compiled by the author based on (Department of Defence, 2013; Department of Defence, 2021; International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2014; Hans M. Kristensen, 2013).

3.4. Threatening China's Intentions towards Japan in Japan's Defence Policy

Alongside actual military capabilities, it is important to understand and assess the fourth component of the threat — China's intentions. In analysing China's intentions towards Japan, Japan's National Security Strategy, National Security Guidelines, the White Paper "Defence of Japan" and "Overview of China's Activities in the East China Sea, the Pacific Ocean, and the Sea of Japan" were used.

In Japan's 2013 National Security Strategy, China is primarily identified in the international context as a rising economic power that has a significant impact on global governance (see Annex 1). This is to draw attention to China and its rise in power, which threatens Japan through cold interstate relations, China's military budget and capacity building, and violations of sea and airspace around the Senkaku Islands. Japan highlights that such actions by China are a concern not only for Japan but also for the entire international community. In the national security strategy of 2013, Japan encouraged China to jointly ensure peace and stability in the region and refrain from further escalation of the situation. Japan's new National Security Strategy released in December 2022 describes China as the world's second largest power, expresses serious concern about the country, and highlights that the country is an unprecedented and greatest strategic challenge in order to ensure peace and stability in Japan and the international community (National Security Council, 2022). Japan indicates that any illegal aggression by China will be responded to with the full force of national power and existing allies. The National Security Strategy of 2022 issued an ultimatum to China regarding the use of force, indicating a deterioration in interstate relations and an increase in China's threat through its decisions, intentions, military power and other activities.

The National Defence Guidelines of 2013 are based on Japan's National Defence Strategy, and there is little difference in content between the two documents. It is worth noting that the Guidelines of 2013 indicate more precise goals for China's military capacity building, which is to secure absolute military superiority in the region (see Annex 2). The document indicates that China is beginning to expand its military power not only in the region but also in the entire Pacific Ocean, and taking into account the "heating" situation, Japan will create mechanisms to help avoid unexpected situations. The content of the National Defence Guidelines of 2018 fundamentally changes the tone. When writing about the security situation, it is indicated that not only the balance of power is changing, but there is uncertainty about

the existing order itself — Japan feels insecure. A new chapter that describes the security situation by country and region highlights that Japan's main ally, the US, has a new strategic rival — China. This not only recognises China's global power but also tries to draw the attention of the US to strengthening China, which aims to create a world-class force by the middle of the 21st century. The newest branch of China's military is the Space Force. China is investing in and experimenting with anti-satellite weapons. It is stated that of all of its military fields, China is improving missile and amphibious forces the most. Amphibious forces are clearly directed not against land neighbours but against countries that are separated by sea from China, such as Japan. In summary, it can be said that over the past 5 years, China has become more aggressive towards Japan: it has begun to increase not only the capabilities of the main military areas but also cyber and space initiatives, and part of the civilian sector has become integrated into the military industry, and the creation of artificial islands in the South China Sea has begun. China has not stopped violating Japan's territorial waters and airspace, expanding its military presence in the Pacific Ocean.

Another important document is the White Paper "Defence of Japan". This publication is intended to provide concise information on the security situation in Japan and the region and to describe Japan's strategy for addressing security issues. China is mentioned 565 times in the Japanese defence publication in 2013, and 1,471 times in the document in 2022 – that is almost three times more. "Defence of Japan" is published every year, but this study analyses only the latest version of the document, published in 2022 (see Annex 3). Japan's Defence White Paper begins by mentioning China, describing its threats in the East China and South China Seas, and drawing attention to China's rapid development of military capabilities (see Annex 3). One of the reasons for concern is the activities of Chinese coast guard ships, which often violate international law, norms and Japanese territorial waters around the Senkaku Islands. In the entire year of 2021, Chinese coast guard vessels violated Japanese territorial waters for 40 days. As in all defence-related publications, Japan mentions China's growing non-transparent defence budget, but the lack of transparency of China's military activities and policies in 2022 is cited as a matter of grave concern. This means that China's military capabilities have become one of the most sensitive security issues in the region. In order to reduce tensions, Japan states, as in every security publication, that China is expected to cooperate and refrain from further tension-raising actions. In addition to the tension-raising factors (increasing missile and naval forces), the increase of the air force has contributed, and China's cyber and space capabilities, which were mentioned in 2013, are today indicated as the

most superior in the region.

Another publication that shows that Japan feels a real threat from China is the annual “Review of China’s Activities in the East China Sea, the Pacific Ocean and the Sea of Japan” by the Japanese Ministry of Defence. In 2022, this publication stated that China is creating a force that has the capability to conduct operations in more distant waters and airspace, with a particular focus on maritime activities, both qualitatively and quantitatively (Ministry of Defense, 2022). China’s military budget, which supports extensive military buildup, is believed to be 1.1 to 2 times larger than official sources report. The document indicates that not only Chinese coast guard vessels but also warships intrude into Japan’s territorial waters, and Chinese air force flights are mostly conducted to Japan’s southwestern and Senkaku islands. In the Sea of Japan in 2016 and 2017, “Confrontation Exercises” were conducted, which trained practical actions for confrontation with Japan, and China-Russia joint naval exercises in 2013, 2015, 2017 and 2021, also in the Sea of Japan showed the intentions of both countries to sail around the entire territory of Japan during the 2021 exercise. The detailed tracking, analysis and results of China’s military actions show that Japan is not only concerned about China’s great military power but also has reason to believe that this military power is being created for future confrontation.

Comparing the Japanese security documents of 2013 with the most recent documents shows a narrative of China’s increasing threat, which is supported by official data – the growth of China’s military forces and budget, military exercises directed against Japan, more frequent violations of territorial waters and airspace in Japan, and the technologies announced in 2013 in which China is investing (cyber, electromagnetic capabilities, space militarisation) are indicated in 2021 as posing the greatest threat in the region. In 2013, Japan’s tone that China was a rising economic and military power, which must be observed, changed to “serious concern” in 2022.

Chinese policy experts Dr. Richard Q. Turcsanyi and Dr. Martin Lavička believe that China’s main foreign policy direction is to become a regional power, which is hindered by the Japan-US alliance. M. Lavička expands this idea by pointing out that in order to achieve this goal, China must become the strongest in the military sense. It already has the most powerful navy, and with its help, it will seek to become a local hegemon. One way to break the US-Japan “encirclement” is to resolve the issue of Taiwan or the Senkaku Islands. According to R. Q. Turcsanyi, Japan is not the target of Chinese aggression, and there is no need to expect military action, while M. Lavička points out that such a scenario is possible in the Senkaku Islands. The US will not go to war over these islands; therefore, Japan is worried

and is trying to allocate more money to the defence budget to be active and independent.

Based on the 5 threat components and interviews with Chinese political experts, China's threat to Japan is real. China, whose combined power rivals the US, which can reach Japan in half a day by ship or in a few minutes by missile, which is one of the largest military powers with the strongest navy in the world, which by both verbal and practical actions shows hostility and aggressive intentions towards Japan and which poses a hybrid threat through economic means and Strategic Support Forces can be referred as the greatest threat to Japan's national security. Such a regional threat cannot be ignored. Approaching this power would mean defeat and, in the long run, the loss of sovereignty. It would be necessary to give up Western support and democratic values; therefore, Japan has chosen a balancing strategy to control this threat, which is characterised not only by internal but also external balancing measures.

4. Japan's Defence Policy in 2013–2022

This chapter provides an analysis of Japan's defence policy. The research analysis covers the period from 2013 to 2022. The first subsection of this chapter presents the assumptions behind the change in Japanese defence policy. The second subsection analyses Japan's military capabilities, their composition and change since 2013. The third subsection describes US-Japan defence cooperation and analyses the significance of this alliance.

4.1. Assumptions of Changes in Japan's Defence Policy

Several aspects influenced the change in Japanese defence policy. First of all, it is the Constitution, Article 9, which limits the country's military power. In accordance with the provisions of the Constitution, institutional structures of defence were created in Japan, which changed over time – the Japanese Defence Agency became the Ministry of Defence, new units were created, and the powers of the Ministry of Defence were expanded to operate not only on the territory of Japan but also abroad. According to Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution, “the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign nation's right and the threat or use of force as a means of settling international disputes” (The Constitution of Japan, 1947). This provision of the Constitution does not allow the country to have military forces or take any military action.

However, this article of the Constitution was interpreted differently by various governments, and in 1954, after the Korean War, the Japanese Self-Defence Forces were created, which, in order not to violate the provisions of Article 9, could only have defence-oriented weapons (they could not operate strategic bombers, aircraft carriers, intercontinental ballistic missiles) and conduct operations only within the territory of their own country (Institute for Security & Development Policy, 2018). In the event of a war, Japan has the ability to fight only on its territory; it cannot make a preemptive strike, so these restrictions, although supported by other Asian countries, do not guarantee security in the region for Japan itself.

Tensions in East Asia (North Korea's missile tests, China's growing power, and its aggressive actions in the East China Sea) have led to debates about the interpretation of Article 9 and even a change attempted by Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (Institute for Security & Development Policy, 2018). In 2007, the Japan Defence Agency received full ministry status, which gave the new Japanese Ministry of Defence a seat in the government and a say in the decision-making process regarding: Japan's security and defence, defence budget allocations, deployment of friendly forces on Japanese territory, fulfillment of Japan-US defence alliance commitments, defence forces and the expansion and supply of military infrastructure and the development of new military technologies ((Act on the Establishment of the Ministry of Defence, 2022). In 2014, Shinzo Abe's cabinet passed a resolution that further expanded Japan's military capabilities by lifting the ban on collective self-defence or aid to a friendly country under attack (Linda Sieg, 2014). This means that Japanese soldiers will be able to be sent to United Nations peacekeeping missions. Shinzo Abe emphasised that this resolution was a reaction to the increasingly complex security environment – the changing balance of power in the region and the strengthening of China (Linda Sieg, 2014). In 2015, the Ministry of Defence of Japan added the Acquisition, Technology and Logistics Agency (*ATLA*), which, due to the tightening security environment, must ensure Japan's technological superiority (Acquisition Technology & Logistics Agency, n.d.). The Japanese government at the time did not consider these measures sufficient to ensure the country's security, and in 2017, Shinzo Abe stated in his political speech at the 195th session of the seimas that "currently the security environment surrounding Japan is the most complex in the entire post-war history" and that he is confident that progress will be made due to Constitutional reform (amendment of Article 9), but no amendment of the Constitution took place until 2022 (Abe, 2017). Japan gradually developed its own independent defence structure, the Self-Defence Forces, the Ministry of Defence, and simultaneously, a defence policy reflected in the periodicals

of the Ministry of Defence. The change in Japan's defence policy was mainly influenced by the changing security environment in the region, namely the aggression of North Korea and China, which increased over the years. Uncertainty in US defence is worth building and improving its military forces, looking for new defence partners whose main task is to prevent China from gaining ground in the region. These political decisions allowed for the creation of internal counterbalances to the threat: military forces that must be equipped with the most modern weapons. Based on the periodicals of the Ministry of Defence of Japan in the period from 2013 to 2022, 3 signs of external balancing can also be discerned: the public expression of a preoccupation with security, manifested in the frequent mention of China in reviews of threats in the region, the sending of warning signals, well illustrated by Japan's strong declarations that it will resist any change to the *status quo* in the region, and the deterioration of diplomatic relations by declaring that China is the unprecedented and greatest strategic challenge to ensure the peace and stability of Japan and the international community.

4.2. Japan's Military Capabilities

Analysing Japan's economic situation from 2013 to 2022, an increase of almost US\$3 billion in Japan's defence budget is observed in 2022, which was not due to an increase in the value of the gross domestic product but due to political will, with the government prioritising security and increasing defence spending as a percentage of GDP (see Figure 5) (Ministry of Defence, 2022). As Japan's neighbours increase military spending and capabilities (such as in the case of China), Japan has no choice but to respond to the changes and increase its own military capabilities.

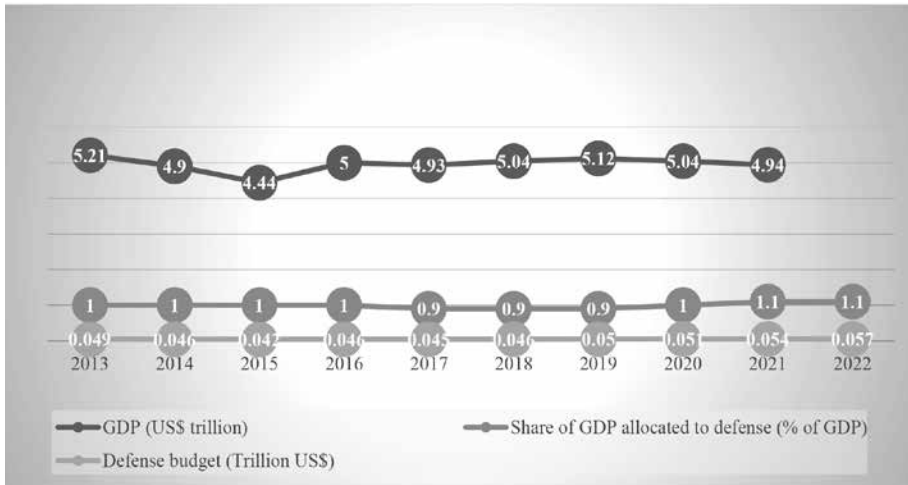


Figure 5. **Overview of Japan's economic situation and defence budget in the period from 2013 to 2022.**

Source: Compiled by the author based on (The World Bank, 2022; Ministry of Defence, 2022; The World Bank, 2022; Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2021).

The basis of Japan's defence capabilities is its human resources. In 2021, the total number of Japanese soldiers did not change, but a change in internal structures is visible: the central staff increased by 800 soldiers, and the militarised forces increased by almost 2,000 soldiers (see Table 6). The increase in the central personnel can be attributed to the increase of capabilities in space (the Space Operations Group was established, the Space Situational Information System became operational), cyber (the Cyber Defence Command was established) and electromagnetic (at least 4 electronic warfare units were established in the last year), and the militarised forces increased due to increased unrest in the East China Sea (Ministry of Defence, 2022). The militarised forces consist of the coast guard, which directly confronts China's aggression – frequent incursions into Japanese territorial waters, unrest near the Senkaku Islands, constant patrolling of military forces along the sea border and provocations. An increase of almost 2,000 troops in the militarised forces since 2013 shows the growing threat from China.

Table 6. Comparison of Active Duty Soldiers in Japan's Self-Defence Forces and Militarised Forces in 2013-2021

Active duty soldiers	Total	Ground forces	Naval forces	Air Force	Central staff	Militarised forces
2013	247,150	151,050	45,500	47,100	3,500	12,650
2021	247,150	150,700	45,300	46,950	4,300	14,350
Change +/-	0	-350	-200	-150	+800	+1700

Source: Compiled by the author based on (International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2014; International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2022).

Over the course of 8 years, Japan modernised part of its military capabilities (Type-10 and Type-16 tanks integrated into the forces, 155 mm howitzers were purchased) to meet the highest standards, carried out acquisitions for the rapid deployment of forces by air and water (AAV-7 amphibious vehicles were purchased), developed and invested in more modern missile defence systems (e.g. land-sea Type-12 missile systems). The reason for new acquisitions, tests and modernisation is usually referred to as Chinese aggression (new acquisitions are focused on mobile defence not only on the main island of Japan but also on remote smaller islands where territorial disputes with China and various provocations are taking place).

Table 7. Comparison of the amount of equipment of the Japanese g forces in 2013–2021

Ground forces	Tanks	Armored vehicles	Artillery	Helicopters			Missile launch systems	
				attacks	intelligence	transport	land – air*	land – sea
2013 m.	777	1023	1803	109	80	238	700	90
2021 m.	702	1035	1674	99	0	256	311	92
Change +/-	-75	+12	-129	-10	-80	+18	-389	+2

Source: Compiled by the author based on (International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2014; International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2022).¹

Japan's naval forces, which are supposed to provide the first line of defence, decreased in 2021; however, the loss of anti-mine ships, which had the biggest impact, did not significantly affect the country's defence capabilities (see Table 8). For example, Japan's increase in submarines designed to destroy sea targets shows that Japan's threat from the sea is increasing and that it needs new weapons, which is why the test launch of the new generation

¹ Table 7 shows that the reduction in surface-to-air missile launch systems is imprecise due to missing data on portable anti-aircraft defense systems.

Taigei-class Japanese submarine in 2022 (World Directory of Modern Military Warships, 2022). The main battleships were supplemented by 2 Izumo-class helicopter carriers, which deepened Japan's defence lines beyond the reach of the Air Self-Defence Forces. It is believed that these helicopter carriers can become offensive weapons – aircraft carriers. In 2018, Japan began upgrades that would allow F-35B fighter jets to land on Izumo-class ships (Archus, 2021). Considering the new capabilities, it can be concluded that Japan has not only strengthened its defence capabilities in the naval force but also increased its defence depth.

Table 8. Comparison of the number of ships of the Japanese Navy in 2013–2021

Naval forces	Total ships	Submarines	Main battleships	Patrol ships	Anti-mine ships	Amphibious ships
2013	111	18	47	6	36	4
2021	102	22	49	6	22	3
Change +/-	-9	+4	+2	0	-14	-1

Source: Compiled by the author based on (International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2014; International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2022).

In Japan's main air force, the modernisation of 45 F-15 fighters and the purchase of 25 F-35A fighters took place in 8 years (International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2022). Although the Japanese Air Self-Defence Force has decreased in 2021 (see Table 13), it can be concluded from the acquisitions and modernisation projects that this force is one of Japan's priorities – the Japanese Air Force is ranked 6th in the world (Global Fire Power, 2022). These are disproportionately large capabilities intended not only for air defence but also for offensive operations.

Table 9. Comparison of the number of aircraft of the Japanese Air Force in 2013–2021

Air Force	Total aircraft	Combat capacity aircraft	Helicopters	Anti-aircraft systems <i>Patriot</i>
2013	608	552	56	120
2021	568	514	54	146+
Change +/-	-40	-38	-2	+26

Source: Compiled by the author based on (International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2014; International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2022).

Japan's militarised forces, which are responsible for protecting the coast, drastically reduced the number of small patrol boats over the past 8 years and invested in large patrol boats with helipads and guns of various

sizes. In 8 years, Japan's coast guard has not only been armed with new ships with greater combat power but also with aircraft that perform intelligence and electronic warfare functions – it is obvious that the security situation in the country's territorial waters has worsened and, accordingly, the capabilities are being modernised and increased to ensure border protection (see Table 10).

Table 10. Comparison of the amount of equipment of the Japanese militarised forces in 2013–2021

Militarised forces	Patrol and combat ships	Helicopters	Aircraft
2013	389	46	25
2021	383	53	34
Change +/-	-7	+7	+9

Source: Compiled by the author based on (International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2014; International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2022).

Based on the analysis of Japan's defence capabilities, it can be said that Japan has been modernising and increasing its defence capabilities in all areas. Create new capabilities in electronic warfare, space and electromagnetic fields. These areas are also a priority for China's offensive capability development. A lot of weapons are imported from the US – in 2021, American weapons exports to Japan totalled \$546.2 million, an increase of almost 80% compared to 2020 (Office of Technology Evaluation, 2021). This was greatly influenced by former US President Donald Trump, who stated that he would not defend Japan unless the country significantly armed itself, which led to Japan's arms purchases from the US (Cohen, 2019). Originally designed to deter North Korea, Japan's defence capabilities are now focused on trying to stop China from making any changes to the *status quo* in the region. China's enormous and still growing military power poses a real threat to Japan, and the direction of ongoing reforms, acquisitions and modernisation projects in the Japan Self-Defence Forces only proves the extent of China's threat to Japan's national security. In recent years, Japan's economy has stagnated (see Figure 5), and the country has no chance to balance China's economic measures, but even as the country's overall budget decreases, defence spending is growing. Military capacity building, modernisation, and the development and acquisition of new weapons are other internal balancing measures that must deter China and reduce the gap in its military power. Unfortunately, Japan's military capabilities have limits due to Constitutional and international obligations and are insufficient to counter China. When the country's internal balancing measures are insufficient, external balancing is used.

4.3. Cooperation between Japan and the US in the Field of Defence

On 7 January 2022, Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced that at the Joint Security Consultative Committee Meeting with the US (2+2), Japan pledged to increase its capabilities to strengthen national defence; the US emphasised its commitment to defend Japan, including the Senkaku Islands, with all its capabilities and both countries reaffirmed their commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific region (under the concept of Free and Open Indo-Pacific) (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2022). Unlike the meeting of the Committee in 2013, the latest statement begins by identifying the specific threat posed by China to the regional and international order, the strong solidarity of the countries against any move to change the *status quo* in the Senkaku Islands, and the strong opposition to China's militarisation of the South China Sea. Japan indicates that a new National Security Strategy (adopted in 2022), National Defence Program Guidelines (adopted in 2018), and Medium-term Defence Program (adopted in 2018) will be prepared. It can be concluded that China's threat has forced Japan to update all of the country's most important defence documents so that they inform about the real threat, and the defence methods they specify deter China from any change to the *status quo* in the region. The meeting of 2022 also discussed cooperation in space and cyberspace as one of the most important areas of defence. In both the 2013 and 2022 Joint Security Consultative Committee 2+2 meetings, the positions of Japan and the US on security issues did not change, but in 2022, China's threat was highlighted, which poses political, economic, military and technological challenges. The US side has made it clear to China that any change in the *status quo* in the Senkaku Islands will result in the reaction of the entire Alliance, and Japan will not be left to fight alone. With the growing threat from China, Japan indicated in 2022 that it will not only rely on US protection but also increase its national defence capabilities to strengthen the Alliance. This shows not only China's power, which poses a threat to Japan's national security, but also mistrust of the US, as its protection may not be sufficient to deter China, or aid may not arrive in time (some US capabilities are redeployed from the island of Okinawa to the island of Guam, 2,300 km to the southeast from the main islands of Japan).

Despite Japan's doubts about US protection, the number of US troops stationed on Japanese soil is greater than that of any other nation (International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2022). According to an analysis by the International Institute for Strategic Studies (2022), the number of US troops stationed in Japan increased to 55,600 in 2021 (comprising 2,600 ground

troops, 20,000 naval troops, 13,000 air force troops and 20,000 marines). This is an increase of almost 20,000 troops in 8 years, which shows that tensions in the region are increasing. The vast majority of US forces are concentrated on the island of Okinawa; therefore, the increase in warships, fighter jets, intelligence aircraft and marine forces (which are expeditionary forces designed to conduct amphibious operations) shows that these forces are intended to fight, not against North Korea's missile tests, but against Chinese aggression, and in the event of war, these forces must be able to quickly deploy to any Japanese island.

To increase the security of Japan, the readiness of the Alliance forces, cooperation, and to reduce the reaction time to emerging threats, Japan and the US often conduct joint military exercises. In 2021–2022, the number of joint military exercises increased: 3 joint general exercises, 8 ground forces exercise, 54 naval exercises and 21 air force exercises took place (Ministry of Defence, 2022). The most obvious change in 8 years is the number of joint naval exercises, which has increased almost 7 times. This increase in naval exercises may not only be a reason for deterrence strategy or preparation for wartime tasks but also a desire to demonstrate to East Asian countries the power and strong position of the US.

Next to the alliance with the US, the previously mentioned concept of a Free and Open Indo-Pacific region, in which the US and other countries are actively involved, should be reviewed in more detail. This concept covers 2 continents (Asia and Africa) and 2 oceans (Pacific and Indian). Japan points out that the region faces piracy, terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, natural disasters and, most pressingly for Japan itself, attempts to change the *status quo* (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2022). Japan seeks to promote peace, stability and prosperity in the region by ensuring a rules-based international order, freedom of navigation and overflight, peaceful dispute settlement practices and the promotion of free trade (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2022). According to Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the states supporting this idea must adhere to 3 basic principles: the rule of law, free navigation, the promotion and consolidation of trade, the pursuit of economic prosperity, and a commitment to peace and stability. This concept has helped Japan establish economic and military ties (joint maritime patrol exercises) with many countries, including ASEAN members, Indonesia, Pakistan, Bangladesh, the Philippines, Vietnam, and India and also helped to include countries such as the United Kingdom, France in ensuring the security of the region, Australia, US and Canada (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2022). While this concept may initially appear to be a communal step to promote mutual economic development, aid and peaceful dispute resolution,

the biggest benefit comes from the initiator itself, as the countries contributing to the concept of a Free and Open Indo-Pacific region automatically condemn any attempts by China to change the *status quo* at the Senkaku Islands or to pressure Japan through other military, economic and political methods. This step by Japan is an example of external balancing, where a coalition is created against a threat with other countries in the region, characterised by the development of containment strategies. Now, it is much more difficult for China to expand its influence in the region because its security and economic well-being are ensured not only by the small countries of the region but also by such powers as the US, Australia and European countries.

Chinese political experts Dr Richard Q Turcsanyi and Dr Martin Lavička agree that Japan is the US's "shield" against China, and if it is no longer needed, the country will face security challenges; therefore, China is actively threatened to keep the US's attention because it is the only country, which can balance a power like China. According to M. Q. Turcsanyi, Japan's attempt to balance China with military alliances is unproductive and will not work because "China's foreign policy steps are much more cunning and manipulative" (for example, the construction of artificial islands in the South China Sea, which did not provoke any military response).

Thus, for the US, Japan has become a "fulcrum" to spread its influence in the East Asian region and, at the same time, a line of defence against China's possible aggression. Despite increasing Japan's national capabilities and seeking other security mechanisms, the US remains the key guarantor of Japan's security. To balance China, Japan chose an alliance with the power opposing the source of the threat, the US. It is the country's main external balancing tool that helps deter China because starting a war with Japan would automatically lead China to war against the US.

Conclusions

The decisions of states regarding the increase of economic and military power or the establishment of alliances are influenced by the assessment of the source of the threat: the state's overall power, the states' geographical proximity, offensive capabilities, hostile intentions and hybrid threats. According to the threat assessment criteria, the state chooses the most effective way of balancing the threat – internal and/or external balancing (taking into account interdependence). First of all, internal balancing is undertaken (armament, increasing the defence budget, economic development), and if this is not enough, external balancing is used (cooperation by military means with

the power opposing the threat or with other states in the region). A state can also choose not to balance the source of the threat but to slide it to preserve the peace or make a profit.

Japan's economic dependence on China may enable China to use coercion or other forms of pressure to influence Japan's policies and actions. Overall, Japan's economic dependence on China highlights the need for Japan to diversify its economic ties and reduce its vulnerability. Simultaneously, Japan must ensure that dependence on China does not have a significant impact on security policy and maintain a strong defensive posture that deters any potential threats.

Analysing China's overall power leads to the conclusion that China is a superpower that can use military force to secure the status of world hegemon. China is 603 km away from Japan. This distance would be covered by the Chinese Navy in half a day, by the Air Force in a few hours, and by missiles in a few minutes. China's offensive capabilities are being expanded in all directions: China has the world's largest navy, strengthening its airborne capabilities, increasing the number of conventional and nuclear missiles and modernising them, and its cyber and space capabilities are the most advanced in the region. This increase in military capabilities is considered by Japan as a preparation to take back disputed territories by force (such as the Senkaku Islands) and forces it to adopt deterrent measures. China also poses a hybrid threat by using Japan's economic dependence and its Strategic Support Force to destabilise Japan. The threat that China may attack (by military, economic or political means) forces Japan not only to seek new allies but also to find ways to increase the support of existing allies. Portraying China as the biggest strategic challenge that causes "serious concern" not only at the national but also at the regional level shows Japan's attempt to maintain and strengthen the support of the US and other countries, thereby balancing China externally.

China's own threat to Japan's national security increased from 2013 to 2022 and is identified as an unprecedented and greatest strategic challenge. Japan perceives China as the biggest threat in the region (Japan does not name China as a threat in official sources), which threatens many sectors of national security: military, cyber, economic, political and public.

The analysis found that Japan balances China with the following internal measures: firstly, by changing the interpretation of Article 9, which eventually allowed the country to establish the ATLA agency, an amphibious brigade, to upgrade, develop and purchase armaments not only for defence but also for offence, increase paramilitary forces and establish capabilities in electronic warfare, electromagnetic space and outer space. Despite China preparing for a large-scale military incursion into Japanese territory, some conventional

weapons are being upgraded to deter North Korea, which is often used as a cover to avoid openly provoking China due to interdependence. Japan's internal balancing is not enough to counter China's threat; therefore, the involvement of the US in Japan's defence plans is critical to the state's national security, and US defence policy and behaviour greatly influence Japan. First, a resolution issued by Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in 2014 repealed the ban on collective self-defence and sending troops to peacekeeping missions. This made it possible to establish relations with other foreign armies and intensify military, political and economic cooperation with the US; despite the US being China's main deterrent, Japan is trying to involve more interested nations in developing strategies to contain China and has strengthened cooperation with other countries in the region through the Free and Open Indo-Pacific concept. Thus, Japan applies both internal (armament, increasing the defence budget) and external balancing (alliance with a power opposing the source of the threat and cooperation with other countries in the region).

The research found that not all of Japan's defence policy changes were influenced by China. Japan's most important ally, the US, has not only encouraged Japan to increase its defence budget but also to purchase weapons from it in large quantities. Air defence systems and missiles being developed to counter the Chinese military threat may also be used to defend Japan against the threat of North Korea.

After evaluating Japan's internal and external balancing methods, it can be stated that Japan does not utilise all of its possibilities to balance China's threat. Due to the limited area and resources, Japan's internal balancing while increasing the defence budget will not be able to match China's military power in armaments; therefore, it is necessary to evaluate the opportunities for economic development and look for new trade partners. The alliance with the US is critically important for the country's defence; however, to further reduce China's military threat, it is necessary to more actively involve other regional powers in military cooperation (e.g. Australia, India).

References

Abe, S. (2017). Speeches and Statements by the Prime Minister. Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet. https://japan.kantei.go.jp/98_abe/statement/201711/_00006.html

Acquisition Technology & Logistics Agency. (n.d.). Missions of ATLA. https://www.mod.go.jp/atla/en/soubichou_gaiyou.html

Act on the Establishment of the Ministry of Defence. (2022). e-Gov Law

Search. <https://elaws.e-gov.go.jp/document?lawid=329AC0000000164>

Akiyama, S. (2018). Japan, China launch maritime-aerial communication mechanism. Mainichi Japan. <https://mainichi.jp/english/articles/20180608/p2a/00m/0na/002000c>

Archus, D. (2021). Izumo: A helicopter destroyer or an aircraft carrier? Naval Post. <https://navalpost.com/izumo-helo-destroyer-or-an-aircraft-carrier/>

Baciu, C. (2022). Interpolarity. Re-visiting security and the global order. *Defence Studies*, 22:4, 571-590. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14702436.2022.2110482>

Badri, A. (2022). *Quad and the Indo-Pacific: Examining the Balance of Interest Theory in Quad Coalition*. Accessed through Taylor&Francis: <https://www-tandfonline-com.ezproxy.lka.lt/doi/full/10.1080/09700161.2022.2149981>

Britannica. (2022). *Manufacturing of China*. Accessed through Britannica: <https://www.britannica.com/place/China/Manufacturing>

Brookings. (2020). *Global China: Technology*. Accessed through Brookings: <https://www.brookings.edu/research/global-china-technology/>

Burcu, O. (2022). *Chinese Nationalism through the Prism of the Sino-Japanese Dispute over the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands*. Accessed through Taylor&Francis: <https://www-tandfonline-com.ezproxy.lka.lt/doi/full/10.1080/10357823.2022.2040429>

CalcMaps. (2022). *MAP DISTANCE CALCULATOR*. Accessed through CalcMaps: <https://www.calcmaps.com/map-distance/>

Clempson, R. (2011). *Are Security Issues Most Effectively Addressed by a Neo-Realist IR Approach?* Accessed through E - International Relations: <https://www.e-ir.info/2011/07/31/are-security-issues-most-effectively-addressed-by-a-neo-realist-ir-approach/>

Cohen, Z. (2019). *Trump claims Japan 'doesn't have to help' if US is attacked*. Accessed through CNN: <https://edition.cnn.com/2019/06/26/politics/trump-japan-defense-commitments/index.html>

Davies, D. (2021). *Facial Recognition And Beyond: Journalist Ventures Inside China's 'Surveillance State'*. Accessed through NPR: <https://www.npr.org/2021/01/05/953515627/facial-recognition-and-beyond-journalist-ventures-inside-chinas-surveillance-sta>

Delabarre, M. (2021). *Interdependence Between States and Economies*. Accessed through HAL Open Science: <https://hal.science/hal-03334550/document>

Department of Defence. (2013). *Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2013*. Accessed through Annual Report to Congress: https://dod.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/2013_China_Report_FINAL.pdf

Department of Defence. (2021). *Military And Security Developments*

Involving The People's Republic Of China. Retrieved from Annual Report to Congress: <https://media.defense.gov/2021/Nov/03/2002885874/-1/-1/0/2021-CMPR-FINAL.PDF>

Dyson, T. (2013). *Balancing Threat, not Capabilities: European Defence Cooperation as Reformed Bandwagoning*. Accessed through Taylor&Francis: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13523260.2013.808073>

EU-Japan Centre for industrial cooperation. (2023). *Services to business*. Accessed through EU-Japan Centre for industrial cooperation: <https://www.eu-japan.eu/services-business>

Garamone, J. (2022). *U.S. Seeks to Build Network of Like-Minded Nations in Indo-Pacific*. Accessed through U.S. Department of Defence: <https://www.defense.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/3175237/us-seeks-to-build-network-of-like-minded-nations-in-indo-pacific/>

Geodatos. (2022). *Distance from Japan to China*. Accessed through Geodatos: <https://www.geodatos.net/en/distances/countries/from-japan-to-china>

Global Fire Power. (2022). *2022 China Military Strength*. Accessed through Global Fire Power: https://www.globalfirepower.com/country-military-strength-detail.php?country_id=china

Global Fire Power. (2022). *2022 Japan Military Strength*. Accessed through Global Fire Power: https://www.globalfirepower.com/country-military-strength-detail.php?country_id=japan

Grygiel, J. (2015). *Arming Our Allies: The Case for Offensive Capabilities*. Accessed through United States army war college press: <https://press.armywarcollege.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2741&context=parameters>

Grønning, B. E. (2014). *Japan's Shifting Military Priorities: Counterbalancing China's Rise*. Accessed through Taylor&Francis: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14799855.2013.870157>

Haglund, D. G. (2019). *Neorealism in international relations*. Accessed through Britannica: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/realism-political-and-social-science/Neorealism-in-international-relations>

Hans M. Kristensen, R. S. (2013). *Chinese nuclear forces, 2013*. Accessed through Bulletin of the atomic scientists: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0096340213508632>

Henneberg, A. B. (2013). *Why Balancing Fails*. Accessed through SSRN: https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2409228

Hiroshi, N. (1998). *Redefining Comprehensive Security in Japan*. Accessed through Japan centre for international exchange: https://www.jcie.org/researchpdfs/ChallengesChi_J_U/5_N%20Hiroshi.pdf

Hui, M. (2021). *Japan's global rare earths quest holds lessons for the US and*

Europe. Accessed through QUARTZ: <https://qz.com/emails/africa-weekly-brief/1849800316/ftx-s-collapse-hits-africa-s-crypto-community>

Ian, C. J. (2003). *Revisiting Responses To Power Preponderance: Going Beyond The Balancing-Bandwagoning Dichotomy*. Accessed through Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies Singapore: <https://www.rsis.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/rsis-pubs/WP54.pdf>

Yilmaz, E. I. (2022). *Strategic alignments and balancing of threats: military and political alliances in the South Caucasus (1991–2021)*. Accessed through Taylor&Francis: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/02634937.2021.2000940>

Institute for Security & Development Policy. (2018). *Amending Japan's Pacifist Constitution*. Accessed through Institute For Security & Development Policy: <https://isdpeu.org/content/uploads/2018/04/Amending-Japan%E2%80%99s-Pacifist-Constitution-2.pdf>

International Institute for Strategic Studies. (2014). *The Military Balance 2014*. Accessed through Taylor&Francis: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/04597222.2014.871879>

International Institute for Strategic Studies. (2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022). *The Military Balance*. Accessed through Taylor&Francis: <https://www-tandfonline-com.ezproxy.lka.lt/doi/pdf/10.1080/04597222.2022.2022931?needAccess=true>

International Institute for Strategic Studies. (2022). *The Military Balance 2022*. Accessed through Taylor&Francis: <https://www-tandfonline-com.ezproxy.lka.lt/doi/pdf/10.1080/04597222.2022.2022931?needAccess=true>

International Institute for Strategic Studies. (2022). *The Military Balance 2022 North America*. Accessed through Taylor&Francis: <https://www-tandfonline-com.ezproxy.lka.lt/doi/pdf/10.1080/04597222.2022.2022928?needAccess=true>

Japan-U.S. Security Treaty. (1960). Accessed through Ministry of Foreign Affairs Of Japan: <https://www.mofa.go.jp/region/n-america/us/q&a/ref/1.html>

Jasutis, G. (2011). *Karinio Aljanso Patvarumo Tyrimas: Rusijos ir Baltarusijos Atvejais*. Vilnius, Lietuva. Accessed through EPublications.

Jun, T. (2020). *Assessing Japan's Stance on Key East Asian Security Issues*. Accessed through TheDiplomat: <https://thediplomat.com/2022/02/assessing-japans-stance-on-key-east-asian-security-issues/>

Katagiri, N. (2018). *Between Structural Realism and Liberalism: Japan's Threat Perception and Response*. Accessed through International studies perspectives: <https://academic.oup.com/isp/article/19/4/325/5067634>

Kensei, Y. (2010). *Okinawa and Guam: In the Shadow of U.S. and Japanese "Global Defense Posture"*. Accessed through The Asia Pacific Journal: <https://>

apjff.org/-Yoshida-Kensei/3378/article.html

Khoo, N. (2014). *China's Policy toward Japan: Looking for a Great Power Peace in the Wrong Places*. Accessed through OTAGO: <https://www.otago.ac.nz/politics/otago253201.pdf>

Kim, J. H. (2022). *East Asia's strategic positioning toward China: identifying and accounting for intra-regional variations*. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1080/10357718.2022.2091514>

Lamont, C. (2015). *Research Methods in International Relations*. California: SAGE.

Linda Sieg, K. T. (2014). *Japan takes historic step from post-war pacifism, OKs fighting for allies*. Accessed through Reuters: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-japan-defense-idUSKBN0F52S120140701>

Lobo, J. S. (2021). *Balancing China: Indo-US relations and convergence of their interests in the Indo-Pacific*. Accessed through Taylor&Francis: <https://www.tandfonline-com.ezproxy.lka.lt/doi/full/10.1080/09733159.2021.1952618>

Lowy Institute. (2022). *Okinawa's vocal anti-US military base movement*. Accessed through The Interpreter: <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/okinawa-s-vocal-anti-us-military-base-movement>

Lowy Institute. (2022). *Ukraine war triggers debate on Japan's nuclear option*. Accessed through Lowy Institute: <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/ukraine-war-triggers-debate-japan-s-nuclear-option>

McKeown, T. (2019). *Neorealism*. Accessed through Oxford Bibliographies: <https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199743292/obo-9780199743292-0037.xml>

Micallef, S. (2016). *Is Obama's 'Pivot to Asia' enough to maintain US Influence in East Asia?* Accessed through EBSCO: <https://web-s-ebsohost-com.ezproxy.lka.lt/ehost/ebookviewer/ebook/ZTAwMHh3d19fMTQxMjQ0MF9fQU41?sid=84201f73-c867-4a55-bcb7-f8c2abdcf5a7@redis&vid=2&format=EB&rid=1>

Ministry of Defence. (2013). *Defense of Japan 2013*. Accessed through Global Security: https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/report/2013/defense-of-japan2013_35_part3_chapter1_sec1.pdf

Ministry of Defence. (2013). *Defense programs and budget of Japan*. Accessed through Ministry of Defence: https://www.mod.go.jp/en/d_act/d_budget/pdf/250516.pdf

Ministry of Defence. (2013). *National defense program guidelines for FY 2014 and beyond*. Accessed through Ministry of Defence: https://warp.da.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/11591426/www.mod.go.jp/j/approach/agenda/guideline/2014/pdf/20131217_e2.pdf

Ministry of Defence. (2013). *Toward a More Robust Alliance and Greater Shared Responsibilities*. Accessed through Ministry of Defence: <https://warp>.

da.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/11591426/www.mod.go.jp/e/d_act/us/anpo/pdf/js20131003_e.pdf

Ministry of Defence. (2014). *Defense of Japan 2014 Reference*. Accessed through Ministry of Defence: https://warp.da.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/11591426/www.mod.go.jp/e/publ/w_paper/pdf/2014/DOJ2014_reference_web_1031.pdf

Ministry of Defence. (2018). *National defense program guidelines for FY 2019 and beyond*. Accessed through Ministry of Defence: https://warp.da.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/11591426/www.mod.go.jp/j/approach/agenda/guideline/2019/pdf/20181218_e.pdf

Ministry of Defence. (2021). *Defense Minister Issues Instructions on the Procurement of a New Missile Defense System*. Accessed through Ministry of Defence: <https://www.mod.go.jp/en/jdf/no133/specialfeature.html>

Ministry of Defence. (2022). *Defence Of Japan 2022 Reference*. Accessed through Ministry of Defence: https://www.mod.go.jp/en/publ/w_paper/wp2022/DOJ2022_EN_Reference.pdf

Ministry of Defence. (2022). *Defense of Japan 2022*. Accessed through Ministry of Defence: https://www.mod.go.jp/en/publ/w_paper/wp2022/DOJ2022_EN_Full_02.pdf

Ministry of Defence. (2022). *Defense Programs and Budget of Japan 2022*. Accessed through Ministry of Defense: https://www.mod.go.jp/en/d_act/d_budget/pdf/20220420.pdf

Ministry of Defence. (2022). *Overview and Fundamental Concepts of National Defense*. Accessed through Ministry of Defence: https://www.mod.go.jp/en/d_act/d_policy/index.html

Ministry of Defence. (n.d.). *Significance of the Japan-U.S. Security Arrangements*. Accessed through Ministry of Defence: <https://www.mod.go.jp/en/j-us-alliance/security-arrangements/index.html>

Ministry of Defense. (2021). *Japan-U.S. Security Consultative Committee and Alliance*. Accessed through Ministry of Defense: https://www.mod.go.jp/en/d_act/us/index.html

Ministry of Defense. (2022). *China's Activities in East China Sea Pacific Ocean, and Sea of Japan*. Accessed through Ministry of Defense: https://www.mod.go.jp/en/d_act/sec_env/pdf/ch_d-act_a_e_220104.pdf

Ministry of Defense. (2022). *Defense of Japan 2022*. Accessed through Ministry of Defense: https://www.mod.go.jp/en/publ/w_paper/wp2022/DOJ2022_Digest_EN.pdf

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. (1992). *Japan-U.S. Cooperation in Equipment and Technology*. Accessed through Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan: <https://www.mofa.go.jp/region/n-america/us/q&a/ref/9.html>

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. (2018). *Prime Minister Abe Visits China*. Accessed through Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan: https://www.mofa.go.jp/a_o/c_m1/cn/page3e_000958.html

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. (2019). *Japan-China-Republic of Korea Free Trade Agreement*. Accessed through Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan: https://www.mofa.go.jp/ecm/ep/page23e_000337.html

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. (2022). *Free and Open Indo-Pacific*. Accessed through Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan: https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/page25e_000278.html

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. (2022). *Japan-China Summit Meeting*. Accessed through Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan: https://www.mofa.go.jp/a_o/c_m1/cn/page1e_000550.html

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. (2022). *Japan-U.S. Security Consultative Committee (Japan-U.S. "2+2")*. Accessed through Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan: https://www.mofa.go.jp/na/st/page4e_001197.html

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. (2022). *Overview of the International Situation and Outlook for Japan's Diplomacy*. Accessed through Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan: <https://www.mofa.go.jp/files/100387219.pdf>

National Security Council. (2022). *National Security Strategy of Japan*. Accessed through Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan: <https://www.cas.go.jp/jp/siryou/221216anzenhoshou/nss-e.pdf>

North Atlantic Treaty Organization. (2023). *Relations with Japan*. Accessed through NATO: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_50336.htm

Office of Technology Evaluation. (2021). *US Trade with Japan*. Accessed through Bureau of Industry and Security: <https://www.bis.doc.gov/index.php/documents/technology-evaluation/ote-data-portal/country-analysis/2982-2021-statistical-analysis-of-u-s-trade-with-japan-public-version-ote/file>

Office of the United States Trade Representative. (2022). *Countries&Regions*. Accessed through Office of the United States Trade Representative: <https://ustr.gov/countries-regions>

Okano-Heijmans, M. (2012). *Japan's Security Posture in Asia*. Accessed through ISPI: https://www.clingendael.org/sites/default/files/2016-02/20120700_art_okano-heijmans.pdf

Pajon, C. (2019). *Japan in South East Asia: Looking for a Balanced Indo-Pacific*. Accessed through ISPI: <https://www.ispionline.it/en/publicazione/japan-south-east-asia-looking-balanced-indo-pacific-24578>

Pletcher, K. (2021). *One-child policy*. Accessed through Britannica: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/one-child-policy>

Reynolds, I. (2019). *U.S. Military Says Japan Must Inform Public of China Threat*. Accessed through BNN Bloomberg: <https://www.bnnbloomberg.ca/u->

s-military-says-japan-must-inform-public-of-china-threat-1.1334538

Ross, S. (2022). *The 3 Industries Driving China's Economy*. Accessed through Investopedia: <https://www.investopedia.com/articles/investing/091515/3-industries-driving-chinas-economy.asp>

Satake, T. (2022). *Revisiting Japan's comprehensive security strategy*. Accessed through East Asia forum: <https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2022/12/27/revisiting-japans-comprehensive-security-strategy/>

Satake, T. (2022). *Revisiting Japan's comprehensive security strategy*. Accessed through East Asia Forum: <https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2022/12/27/revisiting-japans-comprehensive-security-strategy/>

Schweller, R. L. (1994). *Bandwagoning for Profit: Bringing the Revisionist State Back In*. Accessed through ResearchGate: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/245580359_Bandwagoning_for_Profit_Bringing_the_Revisionist_State_Back_In

Shimizu, K. (2022). *RCEP's Great Impact on Japan and East Asian Economies*. Accessed through The Japan Institute of International Affairs: https://www.jiia.or.jp/en/ajiss_commentary/rceps-great-impact-on-japan-and-east-asian-economies.html

Silver, C. (2021). *The Top 25 Economies in the World*. Accessed through Investopedia: <https://www.investopedia.com/insights/worlds-top-economies/>

Statista. (2021). *Distribution of the gross domestic product (GDP) across economic sectors in China from 2011 to 2021*. Accessed through Statista: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/270325/distribution-of-gross-domestic-product-gdp-across-economic-sectors-in-china/>

Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. (2021). *SIPRI Military Expenditure Database*. Accessed through SIPRI: <https://milex.sipri.org/sipri>

Stolberg, A. G. (2012). *THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM IN THE 21ST CENTURY*. Accessed through JSTOR: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/resrep12027.12.pdf>

Streeten, P. (2001). *Integration, Interdependence, and Globalization*. Accessed through International Monetary Fund: <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/fandd/2001/06/streeten.htm>

Ström, P. (2022). *Japan and China: The Ties That Bind*. Accessed through ISPI: <https://www.ispionline.it/en/publicazione/japan-and-china-ties-bind-36224>

Suzuki, S. &. (2018). *Explaining Japan's response to geopolitical vulnerability*. Accessed through EBSCO: <https://web-s-ebsochost-com.ezproxy.lka.lt/ehost/detail/detail?vid=3&sid=9b5891fc-f8ab-4df3-83c9-46fcef88100f%40redis&bdat a=JnNpdGU9ZWhvc3QtbGl2ZQ%3d%3d#AN=132316770&db=bsu>

Tan, K. J. (2022). *In search of a new security strategy for Japan*. Accessed

through East Asia Forum: <https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2022/09/23/in-search-of-a-new-security-strategy/>

Tan, T. W. (2021). *Balancing, bandwagoning or hedging: Taiwan's strategic choices in the era of a rising China*. Accessed through Taylor&Francis: <https://www.tandfonline-com.ezproxy.lka.lt/doi/full/10.1080/00323187.2021.1967765>

The Asahi Shimbun. (2012). *Defense Ministry studies Osprey use by Self-Defense Forces*. Accessed through THE ASAHI SHIMBUN: https://web.archive.org/web/20150509232430/http://ajw.asahi.com/article/behind_news/politics/AJ201212310084

The Constitution of Japan. (1947). Accessed through Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet: https://japan.kantei.go.jp/constitution_and_government_of_japan/constitution_e.html

The Government of Japan. (2013). *National Security Strategy of Japan*. Accessed through Ministry of Defense: https://www.cas.go.jp/jp/siryou/131217anzenhoshou/pamphlet_en.pdf

The Japan Times. (2021). *Chinese military seen behind Japan cyberattacks*. Accessed through The Japan Times: <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2021/04/20/national/chinese-military-japan-cyberattacks/>

The Sankei Shimbun. (2022). *Rising Threats: Japan Opts for Domestic Systems in its Defense*. Accessed through Japan Forward: <https://japan-forward.com/rising-threats-japan-opts-for-domestic-systems-in-its-defense/>

The World Bank. (2019). *Armed forces personnel, total*. Accessed through The World Bank: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/MS.MIL.TOTL.P1>

The World Bank. (2020). *Exports of goods and services*. Accessed through The World Bank: https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NE.EXP.GNFS.CD?most_recent_value_desc=true

The World Bank. (2020). *GDP - China*. Accessed through The World Bank: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD?end=2020&locations=CN&start=2013>

The World Bank. (2020). *GDP growth (annual %) - China*. Accessed through The World Bank: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG?end=2020&locations=CN&start=2013>

The World Bank. (2020). *Military expenditure (% of GDP) - China*. Accessed through TheWorld Bank: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/MS.MIL.XPND.GD.ZS?end=2020&locations=CN&start=2013>

The World Bank. (2020). *Military expenditure (current USD) - China*. Accessed through The World Bank: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/MS.MIL.XPND.CD?end=2020&locations=CN&start=2013>

The World Bank. (2020). *Population growth (annual %) - China*. Accessed through The World Bank: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP>

GROW?locations=CN&most_recent_year_desc=true

The World Bank. (2022). *GDP (current US\$) - Japan*. Accessed through The World Bank: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD?locations=JP>

The World Bank. (2022). *Military expenditure (% of GDP) - Japan*. Accessed through The World Bank: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/MS.MIL.XPND.GD.ZS?locations=JP>

The World Bank. (2022). *Military expenditure (current USD) - Japan*. Accessed through The World Bank: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/MS.MIL.XPND.CD?locations=JP>

TheWorldBank. (2019). *Armed forces personnel, total*. Accessed through TheWorldBank: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/MS.MIL.TOTL.P1>

TheWorldBank. (2020). *Military expenditure (% of GDP) - China*. Accessed through TheWorldBank: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/MS.MIL.XPND.GD.ZS?end=2020&locations=CN&start=2013>

TheWorldBank. (2020). *Military expenditure (current USD) - China*. Accessed through TheWorldBank: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/MS.MIL.XPND.CD?end=2020&locations=CN&start=2013>

Tian, X. L. (2023). *The proposed hike in Japan's military expenditure*. Accessed through STOCKHOLM INTERNATIONAL PEACE RESEARCH INSTITUTE: <https://www.sipri.org/commentary/topical-background/2023/proposed-hike-japans-military-expenditure>

Tidikis, R. (2003). *Socialinių mokslų tyrimų metodologija*. Vilnius: Lietuvos teisės universitetas.

Togashi, M. (2020). *Japan's Economic Security and the Role of the Private Sector*. Accessed through CSIS: <https://www.csis.org/blogs/new-perspectives-asia/japans-economic-security-and-role-private-sector>

Trading Economics. (2022). *Georgia Military Expenditure*. Accessed through Trading Economics: <https://tradingeconomics.com/georgia/military-expenditure>

Triolo, P. (2020). *China's 5G Strategy: Be First Out of the Gate and Ready to Innovate*. Accessed through JSTOR: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep22605.10?seq=1>

Varisco, A. E. (2013). *Towards a Multi-Polar International System: Which Prospects for Global Peace?* Accessed through E-International Relations: <https://www.e-ir.info/2013/06/03/towards-a-multi-polar-international-system-which-prospects-for-global-peace/>

Wallace, C. (2021). *Kishida's opportunity to shake up Japanese defence policy*. Accessed through East Asia Forum: <https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2021/11/11/kishidas-opportunity-to-shake-up-japanese-defence-policy/>

Walt, S. M. (1987). *The origins of alliances*. New York: Cornell University Press.

World Directory of Modern Military Warships. (2022). *Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (2022)*. Accessed through World Directory of Modern Military Warships: https://www.globalfirepower.com/country-military-strength-detail.php?country_id=japan

World Directory of Modern Military Warships. (2022). *People's Liberation Army Navy (2022)*. Accessed through World Directory of Modern Military Warships: <https://www.wdmmw.org/peoples-liberation-army-navy-china.php>

World Integrated Trade Solution. (2020). *Trade balance, exports and imports by country*. Accessed through WITS: <https://wits.worldbank.org/CountryProfile/en/Country/CHN/Year/2020/TradeFlow/EXPIMP/Partner/by-country>

Worldometer. (2022). *China Population*. Accessed through Worldometer: <https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/china-population/>

Worldometer. (2022). *Eastern Asia Population*. Accessed through Worldometer: <https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/eastern-asia-population/>

Zhao, X. (2017). *Japan-China Relations in East Asia: Great Power*. Accessed through EBSCO: <https://web-p-ebsohost-com.ezproxy.lka.lt/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=4&sid=31849763-db7a-4340-9ff0-234cf72b0e12%40redis>

ANNEXES

Appendix 1. Analysis of Japan's National Security Strategy (2013)

Context	Quote
A change in the balance of power and rapid advances in technological innovation.	"Emerging economies such as China have a major impact on global governance."
China's rapid rise and increased activity in the Asia-Pacific region.	"China is rapidly increasing its military capabilities in various areas due to an increased military budget that is not transparent enough. China is also trying to forcefully change the status quo in maritime and airspaces, including the East China Sea and the South China Sea, which is inconsistent with the existing order of international law".
China's rapid rise and intensified activities in various fields.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "China has rapidly expanded its activities in the sea and airspace around Japan, including incursions into Japan's territorial waters and airspace around the Senkaku Islands"; 2. China is trying to create "<...> its own "air defense identification zone" over the East China Sea"; 3. "Such external stance and military activities of China, together with the lack of transparency in its military and security policies, have become a pressing issue for the international community including Japan, and the Japanese government must closely monitor this situation".
Strengthening diplomatic and security cooperation with Japanese partners for peace and stability in the international community.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "A stable relationship between Japan and China is an essential factor for peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region"; 2. "<...>Japan will urge China to refrain and continue to respond firmly but calmly without escalating the situation".

Source: compiled by the author based on (The Government of Japan, 2013).

Annex 2. Analysis of Japan's 2013 and 2018 National Security Guidelines

Date	Context	Quote
2013	Security environment in Japan	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "The multipolarization of the world continues as a result of changes in the balance of power that result from the development of countries such as China and India<...>; 2. "China is believed to be making efforts to strengthen its asymmetric military capabilities to prevent military activities by other countries in the region by denying foreign troops access to China's vicinity". 3. "China is also expanding and intensifying its maritime and airspace activities further from its shores than before. For example, Chinese warships and aircraft regularly enter the Pacific Ocean and expand their operational areas to include areas north of Japan".
	Active promotion of cooperation in the field of security	"As China's activities have a significant impact on regional security, Japan will promote security dialogue and exchanges with China to enhance mutual understanding and develop confidence-building measures to avoid unexpected situations".
2018	Security environment in Japan	"<...> the continued growth of national powers in countries such as China is accelerating and complicating changes in the balance of power, increasing uncertainty about the existing order".
	Situations by country and region	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "Although the United States is still the world's largest national power, due to cross-border competition in various fields, the country has recognized that the strategic competition with China is a particularly important challenge <...>; 2. "In pursuit of a "world-class force" by the mid-21st century, China has maintained high levels of defense spending growth that continues to lack transparency"; 3. "China places importance on securing superiority in new domains: rapidly developing cyber and electromagnetic capabilities to disrupt an adversary's command and control, and continuing to strengthen space capabilities through the development and experimentation of anti-satellite weapons"; 4. "China is also developing missile defense penetration and amphibious warfare capabilities"; 5. "In addition, China promotes civil-military integration policies in national defense, science and technology, and industry, and actively develops and acquires cutting-edge technologies that can be useful for military use."; 6. "Around the Senkaku Islands, an integral part of Japanese territory, Chinese government vessels regularly violate Japanese territorial waters <...>; <p data-bbox="417 1463 1047 1543">"<...> China's military has made frequent forays into the Pacific in recent years, and its navigation routes and unit composition have become more diverse";</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. "In the South China Sea, China has carried out large-scale and rapid forcible occupation of maritime facilities, which are being converted into military bases. China is also expanding and intensifying its maritime and air activities in the South China Sea";

	<p>8. “Such Chinese military and other developments, coupled with a lack of transparency in defense policy and military power, have raised serious security concerns in the region, including for Japan and the international community”;</p> <p>9. “In order to avoid unexpected situations between the two countries, Japan will use the “Sea and Air Communication Mechanism between Japan and China’s Defense Institutions” in a way that will contribute to building a trust-based relationship between the two countries”.</p>
--	--

Annex 3. Analysis of “Defense of Japan: White Paper (2022)”

Context	Quote
The opening word of the document	<p>1. “China continues to unilaterally change or attempt to forcibly change the status quo in the East China Sea and South China Sea”.</p> <p>2. “China is strengthening civil-military fusion (combining military and civilian resources) and intelligence augmentation (use of artificial intelligence, etc.) to build a “world-class military”.</p> <p>3. “Such strategic competition is further complicated by factors such as China’s extensive and rapid military buildup”.</p>
Security environment in Japan	<p>1. “China’s military tendencies, together with insufficient transparency of China’s defense policy and military affairs, have become a grave concern in the region, including Japan and the international community”;</p> <p>2. “Joe Biden’s administration considers China as the “most serious competitor” that challenges US prosperity, security, and democratic values, and has made clear its position to contain China in cooperation with allies and partner countries”.</p> <p>3. “China has been increasing its military budget for more than 30 years, rapidly improving its military power in terms of quantity and quality, focusing on nuclear, missile, naval and air forces”.</p> <p>4. “Close to Japan, Russia has taken steps to strengthen cooperation with China, such as joint bomber flights and ship patrols involving Russian and Chinese militaries.”.</p> <p>5. “On the other hand, China, Russia and other countries are increasing their capabilities to interfere with other countries’ use of space, and these countries and their militaries are reportedly engaging in cyber attacks.”.</p> <p>6. “In 2021, it was confirmed that 110 Chinese coast guard vessels violated Japan’s territorial waters 40 times in the adjacent zone near the Senkaku Islands”.</p> <p>7. “For example, China is rapidly expanding its capabilities in the cyber field <...> and in the field of the electromagnetic spectrum”.</p>
US-Japan alliance	<p>“The leaders exchanged views on the impact of China’s actions on peace and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region and the world, and shared concerns about China’s actions being inconsistent with the rules-based international order”.</p>
Cooperation in the field of security	<p>1. “With regard to China, the MOD and the JSP seek to prevent unforeseen events and ensure Japan’s security by taking advantage of defence exchanges and conveying Japan’s concerns about intensified military activities and military expansion in Japan’s neighborhood to promote mutual understanding and trust”.</p>