

Chinese and japanese foreign policy interests the similarities and differences re...

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Chinese and Japanese Foreign Policy Interests: The Similarities and Differences

Throughout Asian history, China and Japan have consistently dominated several fields such as military, economics, politics and development. Both nations are separated by the East China Sea and can be considered similar in terms of its history, culture, and position in the Asian and World economy. However, despite these similarities, both nations have not seen eye to eye with regards to several issues, affecting their foreign relations with each other. Despite the fact both countries belong to different political spheres and hold different beliefs over the issue of territory, sovereignty and economy; the People's Republic of China and Japan have agreed upon several foreign issues that enabled both nations to become friends. This becomes visible when the two nations opened each other's doors to initiate collaborations and future projects. Nonetheless, the political ideologies of both nations, as well as the lingering tensions of both nations restrict both nations to cooperate with one another for the sake of international and regional cooperation.

Both Japan and China have different perceptions as to their foreign policies, considering what their ideologies dictate, influencing their position regarding organizations such as the United Nations and alliances with the United States. In the case of Japan, its foreign policy is concentrated on two spheres after the Second World War: UN centrism and the US-Japanese alliance. The UN-Centred policy is seen mostly with the revised Japanese constitution created after the war as it mostly supports international peace. At first, many

perceived that the US had influenced the recreation of the country's constitution after the Second World War. This influence is seen in Article 9 of the Japanese constitution, stating that Japan would forever renounce any war that comes into form and renounce the use of force to settle these types of disputes. This technically removed Japan's military strength. However, others, especially the Japanese see this revised constitution as a means to eliminate the misconception about the nation, enabling them to escape ostracism which could have affected their future. With Japan's UN-Centred foreign policy, the country now gives more leverage to the UN. Many have also noted that Japan in the UN would enable the country to recover, and the international community would accept its attempts to help in conflicts and develop its other fields. The UN would also serve as a leeway to Japan to ensure its security as it would no longer be a threat to any other country now that it has demilitarized. In the early years, Japan played a low profile role in the UN, following the US voting system so that they would not experience any conflict. However, Japan slowly realized that with them under the US sphere, they eventually became reluctant to see the UN as an important organization for international disputes. Nonetheless, they remained a member of the UN as they support the pacifist mentality that the Japanese have longed followed throughout history. Throughout the years, Japan became active in providing the UN human support and financial aid . By 9/11, Japan eventually became active in global security affairs and clung more to its UN-centric foreign policy to stray their thoughts to the growing threats in the region

With regards with the US-influence in the Japanese foreign policy, the Japanese government became active in strengthening the alliance between them and the United States as the United States can help Japan secure its borders and position in the ongoing conflicts in the region. Through the US, Japan can be protected by US troops based in the country like the US military facility kept in Okinawa. This also enables the Japanese-US alliance to become a deterrent for any threat in East Asia. The US-Japanese alliance is also visible in the Iraq crisis when Japan dispatched its Self-Defence Force in Iraq, signalling that the alliance is now becoming a global partnership. Japan's implementation of the Anti-Terrorism Special Measures Law supported by the US is also a sign of the growing partnership between the US and Japan. Japan has also made sure that both the US and the country have constant negotiations to ensure cooperation between their own governments. This continuous strengthening of the alliance has now been seen as one of the major pillars of Japanese foreign policy up to the present . Of course, there are costs and benefits to the alliance which remains to have a small influence to the growing partnership. Japan was safe from attacks, including nuclear warfare from the Soviet Union and a financial and technological aid from the US. Nowadays, the alliance serves as deterrent to threats from North Korea, China, and Russia; and access to US military intelligence. As far as the costs are concern, the alliance made Japan vulnerable to Soviet-US military conflict and eventually, a restriction to its political development overseas .

On the other end, China has been unclear as to its political ideology and standpoint with the Western powers and with the United Nations. Like Japan, China's foreign policy varies as it covers three pillars: China's view to sovereignty, China's approach to political power, and finally, China's political ideology after the time of Mao Zedong. Most of the premiers who led the Chinese government noted that China must have its own power to reach their goals and destiny, which is why China must have independence and capacity to sustain its goals while being part of a political organization such as the United Nations. While China has already taken away their flamboyant ideological fanaticism in Communism, many of its leaders still believe that their political belief is essential in their foreign policy. China's form of diplomacy is also seen as a hindrance to further cooperation with the international community as it is becoming more assertive and unclear as far as its intentions. With the adoption of the country's economic reform program in 1978, the Chinese foreign policy was concentrated in economic development. However, in recent years, national sovereignty and security was added to the list of the country's interests. The country has also never stressed its diplomatic strategy, especially its intentions in the international community. While it sees itself as an independent actor in the international arena, China sees the United Nations as an important medium to ensure its national interests are kept protected, even influencing the UN veto system to show its power as a budding nation. A similarity is seen in this end for both China and Japan as both nations tried to avoid choosing sides on sensitive topics and issues, especially when it comes to the developing countries. Nonetheless, China sided with other powers when it comes to attacking the

United States, as seen in the 2003 Iraq War as they saw that the operation itself was questionable. China also used its UN power to ensure that it can stop sanctions that could destroy their partnerships with nations such as those in Africa and North Korea. It was even able to moderate proposals for UN action against North Korea due to their repressive policies.

With regards to the United States, China sees the US is to dominate the Asian region, making it easier for the US to control the region's politics and make it a new market for the American economy. China also views the alliances such as the Japanese-US alliance and Japanese-Indian relations as a means to ensure China would remain in place and can easily be countered. The US influence in the Asian region has prevented China from recapturing Taiwan, especially in the March 1996 Taiwan Straits conflict, as well as influencing several skirmishes in the region. For China, the US is an arrogant country that tries to force its own legal and political systems to the rest of the globe an act that violates sovereignty and tolerance. Chinese citizens also perceive that the United States wants the Chinese to remain poor and weak. This is one of the major reasons as to why China is reluctant to create ties with the West, especially with the United States. In the 1997 report for the CCP Central Committee General Office and the State Council General Office, it is noted that China and the US would likely go to war due to this political difference. While the US can offer benefits to China such as an additional economic market to create trade agreements and partnerships, it also poses dangers as the US can use its diplomatic and military capacities to restrict China. Such examples are the 1989 Tiananmen sanctions, China's

disqualification from hosting the 2000 Olympics and the blocking of China's membership to the WTO .

Despite their differences in terms on how they perceive their foreign policy strategies and their perceptions over the UN and the US, both Japan and China share the same foreign policy interests in developing their nations, both economically and politically. In the case of China, its foreign policy is driven to transform the Chinese economic and political position, securing its sovereignty and national interest. The Chinese Communist Party aims to strengthen its legitimacy as the leading administration of the Chinese government by making China an influential player for the international community. China also aims to ensure that its economy can be able to catch up with leading powers, as seen in its foreign economic policy, which now covers internal and external variables. The internal variables cover the factions under the CCP and how they perceive China's foreign economic capacity. The external variable covers China's actions towards the world economy and how its partnerships with other regions constrain its development. In the case of Japan, its foreign economic policy also sustains its political and security interests like that of China, which also secures the country's national interest and sovereignty. Post-war leaders realize that Japan must have a powerful economic position internationally to have political power, thus aligning its foreign policy to enable foreign investment and trade to enter the country.

In a political standpoint, Japan and China are present that they are capable of sustaining agreements even with their rivals. In the case of Taiwan, both

Japan and China had a somewhat acceptable agreement as to how the nation should be seen. For China, it has continuously blocked the country's membership to the United Nations and to any other international organizations. Beijing even used its veto power as a permanent member of the Security Council to force other countries such as Guatemala in 1997 to reduce their support to Taiwan and with Macedonia in 1999 which stated diplomatic relations with Taiwan. While the Taiwanese government became moderately neutral to China, China was still reluctant to improve their relations with the country. The Japanese public were mostly inclined to support the Chinese government as opposed to Taiwan, especially in the time of Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka in 1972. Negotiations were done to establish Japan's position over the Chinese-Taiwanese issue. Three guidelines were established in 1971 regarding the issue: China is one entity and the legitimate government that represents the Chinese people, Taiwan is a part of China, and the 1952 Treaty between Japan and Taiwan is invalid. Japan also accepted the position of the Chinese government that Taiwan is a territory of China that cannot be alienated by Japan in lieu of Article 8 of the Potsdam Proclamation, noting that Japan only controls the islands of Honshu, Hokkaido, Kyushu and Shikoku, as well as minor islands. Both governments have sustained their agreements as seen in 1978 and the 1998 Japan-China Joint Declaration .

In the international aspect, both China and Japan aided in several peacekeeping operations, as well as backing the United Nations in terms of imposing sanctions and supporting tribunals against powerful opponents.

China supported tribunals against former leaders in Serbia and Rwanda and the war crimes of the Khmer Rouge regime from Cambodia despite its former position of supporting the regime. For Japan, its position in the United Nations plays mostly in peacekeeping activities, which may vary on how it is applied and what it covers. The country also plays a key role in humanitarian affairs and financial aid, as seen in their contributions like the Official Development Assistance (ODA) for countries who require financial aid for recovery. Regionally, both China and Japan serve as the influential actors in ensuring that peace, order and stability is retained in the East Asian region. Economically, they serve as a deterrent to ensure that the US would not be able to launch aggressive trade policy to Asian markets and stop the possible resurgence of Russia and other potential actors. While they still have political and territorial conflicts, both China and Japan help in moderating Western policies towards the region. Japan acts as an influence to American policies over China, as seen in the Tiananmen China sanctions, preventing aggression from China. China, on its end, allowed foreigners to visit their country and enact their Open-Door Policy.

It may seem to be far for both China and Japan to share a common understanding when it comes to their foreign policies as their regional conflicts and the outlook remains at conflict. China continues to see alliances and Western influence in the Asian region a threat to their economic and political development. Japan, on its end, would see China's ambiguous diplomatic and foreign policies as a means to throw the regional and international peace they are trying to protect. While they have differences in

terms of their foreign policy interests and perceptions over the UN and the US, both China and Japan believe that the Asian region has the capacity to become a powerful economy that even the US would not be able to comprehend. They also coincide in their position over the Taiwanese issue and UN peacekeeping operations. While it is possible that both China and Japan would still continue to find itself in conflict due to their regional disputes, as well as their alliances; they would often combine their efforts to sustain peace not just for the Asian region but also for the international community both politically and economically.

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