

POLITICUS 

JOURNAL

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 1



ASUS

WINTER
2015

Staff



Co-Managing Editors
Michael Oshell & Wudassie Semaneh-Tamrat

Editorial Board

Chris Caffrey
Emily Gervais
Andrew Goddard
Jessica Gryś
Emma Jones
Tarini Pahwa
Beth Solomon
Abdul Wahab
Kiran Waterhouse

Copy Editors

Lawren Fisher
Meghan Harris

Layout Editor

Daniel Adessky

Management Board

Eddie Kim,
Workshops &
Lectures Coordinator

Rachel Kane,
Student Liaison

Mia Folkins,
Marketing &
Volunteer Coordinator

Mary Grace Morris,
Finance Director

Copyright © 2015 *Politicus Journal*. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form without the express written consent of *Politicus Journal*.

Views expressed in this journal are solely those of the authors themselves and do not necessarily represent those of the editorial board, faculty advisors, or Queen's University.

Editors' Letters

Now in our second year of operations, we are proud to publish the second issue of *Politicus Journal*! During this year, we have worked hard to grow and expand the publication to reach new heights and continue encouraging critical academic debate at Queen's University alongside our engaging public lecture series.

We would first like to take this opportunity to thank our hardworking and dedicated team for the continued success of this publication. Without their steadfast commitment to improving this organization, *Politicus* could not continue to exist. It is hard to imagine how much work goes into maintaining this type of organization, and we could not feel more fortunate to have you on our team, or more proud of the work that you do. Given all that we have managed to achieve with this team thus far, we know there are still many successes to be had and we cannot wait to pursue them.

We would also like to thank the Arts & Science Undergraduate Society and the Department of Political Studies. With their continued support and guidance, *Politicus* has become an important fixture of academic development at Queen's University. We would like to thank Adam Grotsky, Blake Butler, Emily Graham and Professor Grant Amyot, whose support has been crucial to the success of *Politicus*.

We look forward to new projects and challenges in the coming years and we hope to maintain the continued support of the student body of this incredible university.

Best,

Michael Oshell & Wudassie Semaneh-Tamrat
Co-Managing Editors, 2014-2015

Content

Offshore Balancing as the Weapon of Choice: An Analysis of the Syrian Uprising through a Realist Lens Lucia Guerrero	4
An Analysis of Censorship in Contemporary China: Are there Signs of Political Liberalization in the CCP? Matthew Smith	13
Three Currents Converged: A Brief Critical Analysis of the Senkaku/Diaoyu Territorial Dispute Lucia Guerrero	25

Offshore Balancing as the Weapon of Choice: An Analysis of the Syrian Uprising through a Realist Lens

Lucia Guerrero

Since 9/11, the Middle East has been the focal point of American and Western national defense policies. The Arab Spring further added to this, giving rise to the opportunity for regime change in the Middle East, as well as the opportunity for Western countries to gain a foothold in this region that they did not have before. This paper will examine the Syrian case in particular, and engage in a critical analysis of the conflict by examining the uprising through a realist lens. After a brief discussion regarding regional politics and the balance of power, different American foreign policy options will be suggested that could establish the path to peace in Syria.

Our modern global system is a delicate structure, built upon complex alliances between states that seek to maximize their national interests in the form of economic and political benefits. These ties have brought the world closer together than ever before, creating a worldwide network of states balancing against one another in the search for long-lasting, universal stability. Nevertheless, these global relationships are not always evenly matched, resulting in the rise of different adversaries. Consequently, rational states within the global structure are forced to react in order to maintain the integrity of our multinational framework. Although there are different paradigms that are often used to interpret and provide solutions for these security threats, arguably the most influential and predominant approach is realism. Realist theories “attempt to understand states’ choices and international outcomes by employing a general framework that abstracts away from the details of specific states and the international system”.¹ Realism serves as a lens that can be applied throughout history to any matter of war, peace, and state security up to our most contemporary world issues today. Perhaps the most significant security dilemmas faced by states currently are the different uprisings and enfeebled states stemming from the Arab Spring in the Middle East. At the forefront of guiding international policy towards the Middle East, beginning with its “War on Terror”, the United States has played a major role in attempting

Lucia Guerrero is a fourth year student studying Political Studies at Queen’s University.

to stabilize the region. The United States uses its tremendous power throughout the area in order to secure its own interests. Presently, the American eye has shifted towards Syria, questioning the different options available to address this ongoing security threat. By examining the volatility of the Syrian state, how it is in the United States' national interest to get involved, and the need for American involvement in regional politics as an offshore balancer by supporting Turkish intervention, it will ultimately be concluded that the offensive realist approach best outlines what American foreign policy options are required to establish peace and stability in Syria.

I. The Offensive Realist Approach

There are several bedrock assumptions that connect the realist family of theories and arguments. First, realists emphasize that the international system is anarchic, since there is no overarching international authority to establish stability.² Within this anarchical system, states are the key actors and have to engage in self-help strategies in order to ensure their own security and survival, by acquiring offensive capabilities and seeking greater power.^{3 4} Second, realists describe states as rational, unitary actors that make decisions based on their best interest "given the constraints imposed by their capabilities and the uncertainties they face about other states' capabilities and motives".⁵ Third, the realist approach is best described by its final assumption that power determines outcomes and conflict and instability must be resolved by balancing against states whose powers become too great in order to maintain stability.⁶

Beyond these fundamental assumptions, the realist approach can be divided into several sub-branches. The first divide is between those who stress the importance of the international system and those who emphasize the importance of states' motives and goals.⁷ For the purpose of this paper, we will focus on structural realism (also known as neorealism), which argues that the structure of the international system is what drives states to pursue power and dictates how they behave.⁸ The question of how much power a state should aim to have divides structural realists even further into defensive realists and offensive realists. Kenneth Waltz, a defensive realist, argues that states must limit their pursuit of power so that other states do not align and try to balance against it.⁹ Offensive realists, like John Mearsheimer, disagree with this approach, arguing that the international system is more competitive than a defensive realist assumes and, as such, states must maximize their power and pursue hegemony in order to guarantee their survival whenever possible.¹⁰

Power maximization is a key part of the offensive realist approach. According to offensive realists, not only is a state uncertain about the intentions and capacities of other states, but they should also assume the worst.¹¹ Consequently, states must maximize their power in order to be able to best defend themselves.¹² The ultimate goal of states seeking to maximize their power is hegemony.¹³ Mearsheimer defines a hegemon as “a state that is so powerful it dominates all other states in the system”.¹⁴ Although states pursue global hegemony, Mearsheimer argues, “there has never been a global hegemon, and there is not likely to be one anytime soon” since states face the difficulty of projecting power across the world’s oceans.¹⁵ As a result, states can only achieve regional hegemony: a state that dominates a distinct geographical area, for example the United States.¹⁶ If a state were able to achieve regional hegemony and exist as the only regional hegemon in the world, it would then become a status quo state. Status quo states are states that would go through great lengths in order to maintain the existing global distribution of power and “seek to prevent great powers in other regions from duplicating their feat”.¹⁷ States that dominate their own regions become “offshore balancers”, first by “buck-passing” and allowing local powers to balance against a potential regional hegemon, then intervening if these local powers fail.¹⁸ Many neorealists today argue that the United States should adopt an offshore balancing strategy in the Middle East, in order to separate potential alliances directed against the United States and help ease Middle Eastern opposition against American policies.¹⁹ This foreign policy option will be suggested as the best course of action for the United States regarding the Syrian uprising.

II. The Syrian Case and American National Interest

In November of 1970, Hafez al-Assad overthrew the Syrian president Nur al-Din al-Atasi, marking the beginning of an Assad dynasty that exists today.²⁰ Hafez al-Assad was a powerful autocratic ruler whose despotic power brought Syria into a period of stability after experiencing twenty years of coup d’états and insecurity.²¹ When Hafez al-Assad died in 2000 and his son Bashar al-Assad assumed power, many believed the tyrannical rule would continue.²² Although Bashar al-Assad has continued many of the same policies as his father—namely in terms of foreign policy—several events, including the fall of the Ba’ath regime in Iraq and American

policy of democratization in the Arab world, coupled with “the perception that Bashar is less politically adept than his father”, all raise questions about the future of the regime.^{23 24}

Syrians have also begun to resist the regime. This resistance started in March 2011, in Deraa, when a group of teenagers, who had painted revolutionary phrases on a school wall, were arrested and tortured.²⁵ Demonstrators took to the streets in protest and were quickly met with open fire from national security forces, precipitating nationwide protests demanding the resignation of Bashar al-Assad.²⁶ Since the beginning of the civil war, the government has initiated large-scale offensives that have been unsuccessful in halting the uprising.²⁷

Drawing upon Jackson’s discussion on regime security, he outlines several characteristics that are often attributed to weak states: “institutional weakness and inability to provide law and order; political instability; centralization of political power in a single individual or small elite who run the state in their own interest; structural weakness; and ongoing crisis of legitimacy for both the government and the institutions of the state”.²⁸ Failing to resolve the internal turmoil has weakened Syria significantly, and now the state is arguably on the path towards becoming a failed state, according to Jackson’s criteria. The destabilization of Syria could have serious repercussions, not just for the states in the Middle East, but for American national interests as well.

Morgenthau, a classical realist theorist, argues that in order for the United States to intervene in any matter—in this case, Syria—it must be in their national interest to do so.²⁹ Thus, before entering into a discussion about American foreign policy options in Syria, it must first be shown that stability in the region is in the United States’ national interest. Syria’s support for Iran during the First Persian Gulf War in 1980 marked the beginning of friendly relations between the two states, conceivably leading to Syria becoming Iran’s major ally in the Arab world today.³⁰ Syria has only become closer with Iran since Bashar al-Assad came to power, both directly and indirectly, including strengthening the relationship between Bashar al-Assad and the leader of Hezbollah, Hassan Nasrallah.³¹

Given the antagonistic relations between the United States and Iran and the emergence of Iran as a growing regional actor in the Middle East, it would be in the United States’ interest to balance against Iran by removing Bashar al-Assad from power. This would effectively eliminate a major source of support for Hezbollah and maintain the status quo and existing distributions of power in the Middle East, thus weakening Iran’s overall influence.³² How the United States

chooses to balance against Iran through Syria and stabilize the Middle East is important. The next section will argue that the United States should not use their power assets by invading Syria, but rather, take an offshore balancer approach and engage in regional politics by swinging their power behind Turkey.

III. Turkey, Syria, and the Offshore Balancer

Syro-Turkish relations have been tumultuous throughout history. During the Cold War, Syria saw Turkey as a threat, since it was a pro-American state, a member of the NATO alliance, and had relations with Israel.³³ Turkey also controls 78 percent of the water supply into Syria through the Euphrates River, which has previously been a major source of contention since Syria has accused Turkey of depriving it of access to water.³⁴ Relations began to ease, however, the last few years of Hafez al-Assad's rule and strengthened under Bashar al-Assad. Between 2006 and 2010, Turkish exports to Syria quadrupled, travel visa requirements were eradicated, and joint cabinet meetings were held between the two states.³⁵ For Turkey, Syria was a window into the Arab world, increasing its trading partners and allies.³⁶ When the Syrian uprising began, Turkey was at a crossroads between appeasing both Syria and the United States, ultimately siding with the United States and urging for reform in the Assad regime.³⁷ Although the Bush administration considered Turkey's ties with Syria as a threat, President Obama perceives Syro-Turkish relations as an asset, "reducing the danger that Turkey's relationship with Damascus will be an irritant between Ankara and Washington".³⁸ If the United States maintains relations with Turkey, this would give the United States an opportunity to play regional politics and balance against Syria if the local powers fail to eliminate this destabilizing, security threat.

Offshore balancing is a realist strategy because it rejects the idea of invading a region to spread democratization, it defines American interests in terms of what is essential, it balances ends and means, and it is "based on prudence and self-restraint in the conduct of American strategy".³⁹ Many neorealists, like Christopher Layne, suggest that invasion in the Middle East is not an appropriate response to turmoil in the Arab world, but instead, the United States should engage in buck-passing and monitor the emergence of regional powers to ensure the status quo of the international system.⁴⁰ Although there are different foreign policy options available to the United States with regards to Syria, offshore balancing is the best possible approach in order to

maintain national interests and ensure the defeat of a potential adversary. If the United States successfully acts as an offshore balancer in Syria, it would divert the focus of other states' security policies away from itself, weaken regional actors in the Middle East—as they try to fight against the growing regional power—and maintain American hegemonic power.⁴¹

In the case that local powers fail to balance against Syria and remove Bashar al-Assad from power, the United States could then get involved by endorsing a Turkish intervention in Syria backed by American military and economic capabilities. Previously, Turkey has been successful in balancing against Syrian destabilization. In the late 1990s, the Turkish government threatened to invade Syria if it continued to support the Kurdistan Worker's Party (who was fighting against the Turkish state for Kurdish independence), going as far as placing Turkish troops on the Syro-Turkish border as a warning.⁴² Turkey's threat of force "proved to be a credible and effective tactic against Syria" since they quickly disbanded the bases upon which the Kurdistan Worker's Party had established themselves and banished the head of the party from their territory.⁴³ This is an example of coercive diplomacy, which is defined as "the use of threats and limited force to influence an adversary to stop or undo the consequences of actions already taken".⁴⁴ Since Turkish coercive diplomacy has proven to be an effective use of power against Syria in the past, perhaps it is in the United States' interest to push for another Turkish coercive diplomatic approach with the support of American power in order to stabilize Syria and the Middle East.

IV. Conclusion

The Syrian uprising presents a threat that could disrupt the Middle East, and thus, the United States must keep a watchful eye over the situation in order to guarantee that it is able to secure its national interests and maintain the status quo of power distributions within the region. By assuming the role of an offshore balancer, the United States would be able to use its power wisely in order to stabilize Syria and balance against Iran, an emerging regional power that threatens the United States' hegemonic control. This paper has adopted a realist approach and outlined the best foreign policy options available to the United States with reference to Syria. Any other courses of action may plunge the Middle East into anarchy and instability,

jeopardizing both American interests and dominance, and potentially disintegrating the international system as we know it now.

¹ Charles L. Glaser, “Realism” in *Contemporary Security Studies*, Ed. Alan Collins (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013): 16.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁴ Glenn H. Snyder, “Mearsheimer’s World- Offensive Realism and the Struggle for Security: A Review Essay”, *International Security* 27(1): 151.

⁵ Glaser, 17.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 19.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ John J. Mearsheimer, “Structural Realism” in *International Relations Theories: Discipline and Diversity*, Ed. T. Dunne, M. Kurki, and S. Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010): 80.

⁹ Glaser, 20.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 21.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ Snyder, 165.

¹⁴ John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company Inc., 2001): 40.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 42.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 41.

¹⁸ Christopher Layne, “America’s Middle East grand strategy after Iraq: the moment for offshore balancing has arrived”, *Review of International Studies* 35(1): 6.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 9.

²⁰ British Broadcasting Corporation, 2013. *Syria Profile*. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-14703995>.

²¹ Shmuel Bar, “Bashar’s Syria: The Regime and its Strategic Worldview”, *Comparative Strategy* 25(5): 355.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*, 353.

²⁴ Najib Ghadbia, “The New Asad: Dynamics of Continuity and Change in Syria”, *Middle East Journal* 55(4): 626.

²⁵ British Broadcasting Corporation, 2012. *Syria: The Story of the Conflict*. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-19331551>.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ Richard Jackson, “Regime Security” in *Contemporary Security Studies*, Ed. Alan Collins (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013): 188.

²⁹ Hans J. Morgenthau, “The Mainsprings of American Foreign Policy: The National Interest vs. Moral Abstractions”, *The American Political Science Review* 44(4): 835.

³⁰ Bar, 400.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² Meliha Altunisik and Ozle Tur, “From Distant Neighbours to Partners? Changing Syrian-Turkish Relations”, *Security Dialogue* 37(2): 253.

³³ Bar, 407.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ Christopher Phillips, “Turkey’s Syria Problem” *Public Policy Research* 19(2): 137.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 138.

³⁸ Stephen Larrabee, “Turkey’s New Geopolitics” *Survival* 52(2): 166.

³⁹ Layne, 8.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *Ibid*, 10.

⁴² NCAFP Roundtable, “The Middle East: In Search of a New Balance of Power” *American Foreign Policy Interests* 30(6): 416.

⁴³ *Ibid*, 417.

⁴⁴ Peter Viggo Jakobsen, “Coercive Diplomacy” in *Contemporary Security Studies*, Ed. Alan Collins (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013): 279.

Bibliography

- Altunisik, Meliha and Ozle, Tur, 2006. From Distant Neighbours to Partners? Changing Syrian-Turkish Relations. *Security Dialogue*, 37(2): 229-248.
- Bar, Shmuel, 2006. Bashar's Syria: The Regime and its Strategic Worldview. *Comparative Strategy* 25(5): 353-445.
- British Broadcasting Corporation, 2012. *Syria: The Story of the Conflict*. [online]. Available at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-19331551>.
- British Broadcasting Corporation, 2013. *Syria Profile*. [online] Available at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-14703995>.
- Ghadbia, Najib, 2001. The New Asad: Dynamics of Continuity and Change in Syria. *Middle East Journal* 55(4): 624-41.
- Glaser, Charles L. 2003. "Realism". In *Contemporary Security Studies* Ed. Alan Collins. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Jackson, Richard. 2003. "Regime Security". In *Contemporary Security Studies* Ed. Alan Collins. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Jakobsen, Peter Viggo. 2003. "Coercive Diplomacy". In *Contemporary Security Studies* Ed. Alan Collins. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Larrabee, Stephen F., 2010. Turkey's New Geopolitics. *Survival*, 52(2): 157-180.
- Layne, Christopher, 2009. America's Middle East grand strategy after Iraq: the moment for offshore balancing has arrived. *Review of International Studies*, 35(1): 5-25.
- Mearsheimer, John J., 2001. *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.
- Mearsheimer, John J. 2010. Structural Realism. In: T. Dunne, M. Kurki, and S. Smith, eds. 2010. *International Relations Theories: Discipline and Diversity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Morgenthau, Hans J., 1950. The Mainsprings of American Foreign Policy: The National Interest vs. Moral Abstractions. *The American Political Science Review*, 44(4): 833-54.
- NCAFP Roundtable, 2008. The Middle East: In Search of a New Balance of Power. *American Foreign Policy Interests*, 30(6): 414-431.
- Phillips, Christopher, 2012. Turkey's Syria Problem. *Public Policy Research*, 19(2): 137-140.
- Snyder, Glenn H., 2002. Mearsheimer's World-Offensive Realism and the Struggle for Security: A Review Essay. *International Security*, 27(1): 149-173.

An Analysis of Censorship in Contemporary China: Are there Signs of Political Liberalization in the CCP?

Matthew Smith

The People's Republic of China has drawn criticism from the international community for its limits on its citizens' freedoms. The desire to insulate Chinese society from external or disruptive influences is one element of Maoist China that survives to this day. In the 21st century context, the Chinese Communist Party's systematic censorship of Chinese society—especially its online manifestations—reflects poorly on the nation's commitment to protecting the rights and freedoms of Chinese citizens. Is wider Chinese political liberalization a fantasy, undermined by this persistent censorship? Or are the levels of censorship decreasing, indicating that liberalization is taking place? This paper is a study of China's domestic politics, where two competing interpretations of Chinese censorship are outlined, and *Sina Weibo*—China's social media site of choice—is used as a case study to analyze Chinese political liberalization. It will be argued that both interpretations have merit, as China's political liberalization is not uniform, and the factional nature of the Chinese Communist Party is of paramount importance.

I. Introduction

This essay will present an analysis of censorship in the contemporary People's Republic of China (PRC), focusing on the growing online censorship conducted by the ruling Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Mainland China has had a turbulent political history for more than a century, and this insecurity culminated in the consolidation of an oppressive regime by 1949; Mao Zedong's CCP. With this authoritarian, communist regime came a great deal of censorship in politics, the press, public discourse, and the arts. It is generally held to be self-evident that this¹ censorship has lessened with time, and the 21st century has heralded new openness from the CCP government. This essay assumes that—from Maoist China to the present day—the severity of censorship has decreased overall, but will pursue the following question: does the state of

Matthew Smith is a fourth year student studying Political Studies at Queen's University.

censorship in China indicate political reform and liberalization? In order to present an analysis of this issue, this paper will first discuss its own interpretive framework and method of analysis. Following this discussion, a historical overview of Chinese censorship will be presented in brief, followed by two interpretations of contemporary Internet censorship in China. The first interpretation will present the argument for Chinese censorship being a demonstration of ongoing political authoritarianism in China, while the second interpretation will counter this view, arguing that CCP censorship demonstrates increasing political liberalization in the ruling-party. Finally, this essay will present the popular Chinese social media site *Sina Weibo* as a case study to further analyze Chinese censorship.

II. Consideration of Interpretive Frameworks & Methods of Analysis:

This section will briefly outline the interpretive frameworks and methods of analysis that guide this work. This discussion is informed by William A. Joseph's first chapter in Politics in China, and by Emily Hill's lectures on Chinese Politics. This paper holds that analyses of any state must always be multi-faceted; one should not, for example, focus on tensions between the political centre and the periphery while ignoring factional politics within the central state apparatus. However, it is clear that an analysis of contemporary Chinese censorship is best understood by analyzing state-society interactions. There are limitations to this approach; the state-society method has difficulty with the lack of CCP transparency and its vertical transmission of authority. Despite these limitations, this essay suggests that contemporary China is in the midst of a state-society negotiation over what is acceptable public discourse, especially online. In this sense, content posted online represents inputs to government, while the government responses to these inputs—arrests, new regulations, or inaction—are the outputs. Therefore, the method of analysis most utilized in this essay will be analysis of official policies and regulations. These are often reactions to the inputs of the Chinese populace, and they demonstrate how severe CCP censorship is at a given time, and what interests they value enough to protect with censorship. This paper will now move to the historical overview of Chinese censorship, in order to contextualize the censorship found in the present day.

III. Historical Overview of Chinese Censorship

In order to present a historical overview of Chinese censorship, a beginning time period must be selected: should censorship in the Imperial period be addressed? While significant to Chinese cultural development, analysis of Imperial censorship reveals little about the political liberalization of the modern CCP. Therefore, this brief overview will begin with the year that Mao could first hope to exert comprehensive control and censorship across mainland China—the year of the CCP’s victory over its nationalist enemy in 1949. As described by Isabel Hilton, the pre-Mao years were characterized by a multiplicity of actors, associations and organizations existing in China. This diversity, however, is quashed by the CCP, as Hilton describes:

[The CCP] had established its dominance of everything that moved, thought, spoke or acted in Mao’s China, and in the years since 1949 it had repeatedly directed its overwhelming firepower against any organization the Party did not control.¹

While this excerpt focuses on civil society associations, it is implicit that repression of associations is tantamount to repression of their ideas and voices—this is perhaps the most direct form of censorship. Mao’s CCP furthered this censorship in 1956 and 1957 by paradoxically inviting individuals to voice their criticisms of the government in the Hundred Flowers Campaign. It is accepted that “in early June [Mao] launched a systemic attack in the form of the Anti-Rightist campaign against those who had spoken out.”² This is a further, more brutal example of direct censorship conducted by the CCP—this time against individuals. As Hilton asserts, by the late 1960s, any “space for independent thought and civic action had been eliminated.”³

With Mao’s departure from the political stage, Deng Xiaoping conducted a program of ‘reforms and opening’ that lessened CCP repression and censorship. By the 1990s and 2000s, analysts hailed the political and economic transformation of China. For instance, many scholars note that the CCP recognized the “need for civil society organizations” and observed the “contribution they can make to Chinese modernization, environmental protection and sustainable development.”⁴ As Richard C. Kraus asserts, the decline of censorship has taken the form of a series of cycles, as the CCP loosened or tightened its cultural or political censorship; by the

2000s, Kraus states, there are simply too many cultural products in the Chinese market for them to be effectively controlled and censored.⁵ Thus, a shift of focus—from analog censorship to censorship of the digital—occurred inside the CCP, as Internet usage expanded in China. It is well known that Facebook and YouTube—two of the world’s most popular sites—are inaccessible to the average Chinese internet-user, and controversial searches such as ‘Dalai Lama’ can result in an encounter with the ‘Great Fire-wall of China’.⁶ William T. Dowell points out that Chinese human rights activists—opposed to CCP censorship—are distressed by the ease with which the CCP has “secured compliance from US [software] companies”. Western companies are a major source for the software used to constrain Chinese Internet access.⁷

Important features of the online censorship led by the CCP include the fact that most censorship is conducted by the websites themselves—under threat of government regulations—and all censorship in China is “post-publication censorship”. This means most undesirable ideas and information are transmitted online for some time before being removed.⁸ In terms of what is ‘undesirable’ for the CCP, there was a prevalence of political censorship circa 2009; for example, occurrences of dissent against China’s control of Tibet, or discussions of the Tiananmen Square incident, are both routinely censored.⁹ More recently, there has been a focus on censoring social media posts that “insult national honor, incite race hatred, spread cults or superstition, propagate obscenity or encourage gambling, drug abuse, violence or terror.”¹⁰

IV. Interpreting Recent Developments in Chinese Censorship

This essay must now pursue a more focused analysis of contemporary censorship of the internet in China: does it demonstrate ongoing authoritarianism, or is it evidence of the CCP’s political liberalization? Jinqi Zhao states that the CCP has been “guided by the principle of ‘guarded openness’”, a balance between openness towards “global information”, but guardedness against the threat the internet might pose to China’s “social values and national integrity.”¹¹ In these terms, this paper’s purpose is to discern which feature is more prevalent in the CCP: guardedness or openness?

a. Continuing Political Authoritarianism

To begin, evidence supporting continuing political authoritarianism shall be presented. As has already been addressed, globally popular sites such as Facebook and YouTube are inaccessible for Chinese residents, while online searches can be blocked by the ‘Great Fire-wall of China’. With the digitization of entertainment, the spheres of art, television, and film are all represented online, and thus the CCP’s Film Industry Promotion Law has a significant impact on internet users, as it bans 13 types of content in order to “maintain social stability.”¹² Additionally, there has been a government crackdown on internet-users’ freedom of speech, with the CCP claiming some users are guilty of “crimes such as defamation, creating disturbances, and illegal business operations.” While these seem to be innocuous and justified regulatory measures, these crimes have often been used to punish human rights activists in China.¹³ Further, as of 2013, CCP leadership appears to be pursuing a “campaign against online ‘rumourmongers’ and other putative purveyors of disorder.”¹⁴ One way in which CCP regulators have moved against ‘rumourmongers’ is with new regulations for online message boards and social media, put into practice in the fall of 2013. Freedom House—an international observer and proponent of democracy within states—reports on these regulatory changes:

The new document allows for a Chinese internet user to receive up to three years in prison for writings that are deemed false or defamatory if the circumstances are “serious.” The term “serious” is defined to include cases in which the post in question has been viewed more than 5,000 times or reposted more than 500 times. Chinese and international legal experts and activists criticized these thresholds as extremely low for such a severe punishment, especially given the size of China’s internet user population.¹⁵

While this government suppression of political criticism is not indicative of liberalization, several scholars believe the CCP is more concerned with atomizing the Chinese population, rather than avoiding public criticism. One study found—through analysis of censorship statistics—that the purpose of the censorship program is to “reduce the probability of collective action by clipping social ties whenever any collective movements are in evidence or expected.”¹⁶ This desired atomization is demonstrated by the CCP’s abhorrence of ‘swarming’; Dowell

defines this to be “the explosive phenomenon that takes place when communication creates an unexpected amplification of public response.”¹⁷

It is clear that CCP censorship is oriented towards crisis management, with “keyword barriers” going up on online search engines in order to mitigate these ‘swarming’ responses.¹⁸ In this way, the CCP suppresses the momentum of social movements and protests—including pro-liberalization protests—by robbing them of their ability to communicate to a wider audience. In any case, all of these incidences of online censorship seem to be at odds with the CCP’s statements regarding internet-users’ freedoms and rights. As Clifford Coonan reports, the “Beijing government said it ‘guarantees freedom of speech on the Internet’”, though how far these guarantees truly go is unclear.¹⁹

b. Increasing Political Liberalization

This paper will now present evidence supporting the view that lax CCP censorship online is actually demonstrative of political liberalization within the party. In China, incidences of censorship often involve state-society interactions, which seem compatible with political liberalization. For example, there is the case of middle school student Yang Zhong, who, during the Internet crackdown in the fall of 2013, was arrested for posting ‘defamatory content’ online. This spurred public outcry, which resulted in officials releasing Yang. This has been embraced as a “small but significant victory” for rights defenders and free-speech advocates, and seems to indicate that the terms of censorship are—in some ways—negotiable.²⁰ Another argument centres on the inefficacy of the CCP’s online censorship. Kraus asserts that “the ‘Great Fire-wall of China’ is erratic and porous (...) [as] computer restrictions are easily evaded by technically savvy citizens”. Furthermore, the CCP’s censorship is “reasonably effective towards the masses, and less so toward educated or politically connected elites.”²¹ In other words, online censorship in China is not as all-encompassing and effective as it could be if the CCP was willing to invest more resources into its online censorship efforts. The CCP’s unwillingness to restrain the internet completely may not be a ‘liberal’ trait in the eyes of the West, but compared to its Maoist heritage, this leniency is significant.

Another view suggesting that the CCP is, in fact, liberalizing focuses on the factional politics of the CCP. Freedom House suggests that the recent Internet crackdown does not mean the CCP and its leadership are against online freedom of speech. On the contrary, it is speculated “that the campaign reflects [President Xi Jinping]’s efforts to consolidate his grip on power ahead of an important party conclave in November (...) amid an atmosphere of internal party debate.”²² In other words, the bulwarked censorship of 2013 is not indicative of a long-term CCP commitment to authoritarianism over liberalism, but rather a short-term effort to reduce dissent so that Xi’s presidency can be consolidated more easily, and intra-party dissent may be avoided.

Finally, George Yeo and Eric X. Li articulate a more optimistic vision of China’s online landscape than many other scholars present. Yeo and Li report that, “on QQ and Sina, the two largest Weibo services, 200 million users are active—expressing their views on anything and everything from sex to official corruption. (...) Facebook and Twitter are banned while their domestic versions flourish.”²³ This assertion becomes more significant when considered alongside the study conducted by Elaine J. Yuan and her associates. Their study demonstrates that a meaningful discourse concerning Chinese citizens’ right to ‘privacy’ is occurring on *Sina Weibo*.²⁴ If one considers these two facts—widespread participation of Chinese citizens in online discussions, and these discussions including subjects such as human rights and freedoms—then one gains a clearer understanding of why the lax CCP censorship might be considered relatively ‘liberal’: it allows these discussions to take place. In sum, there are flourishing online dialogues within China’s Internet communities; the 200 million social media users may be limited in their ability to criticize the CCP’s hold on power, but their contributions to political discussions—such as discourses on privacy, corruption, and the environment—are meaningful and relatively free from censorship.

V. Case Study—Censorship on *Sina Weibo*

This paper will now analyze the censorship that occurs on China’s social media site, *Sina Weibo*. By calling on the work of several scholars interested in *Sina Weibo*, three ‘camps’ can be discerned regarding CCP censorship and liberalization. First, the pessimist view—with little hope for CCP liberalization—will be presented. Secondly, the optimistic view interprets

ensorship on *Sina Weibo* to be indicative of a liberalizing CCP. Finally, the reserved optimists borrow from both camps.

Beginning with the pessimistic view of censorship on *Sina Weibo*, these scholars and analysts observe several government crackdowns on the site. In May 2012, the social media giant was forced to adopt new regulations in the form of a Community Management Regulations Trial; according to Article 13 of these new rules, users have the right to publish information, but may not publish any information that:

1. Opposes the basic principles established by the constitution
2. Harms the unity, sovereignty, or territorial integrity of the nation
3. Reveals national secrets, endangers national security, or threatens the honor or interests of the nation
4. Incites ethnic hatred or ethnic discrimination, undermines ethnic unity, or harms ethnic traditions and customs
5. Promotes evil teachings and superstitions
6. Spreads rumors, disrupts social order, and destroys societal stability
7. Promotes illicit activity, gambling, violence, or calls for the committing of crimes
8. Calls for disruption of social order through illegal gatherings, formation of organizations, protests, demonstrations, mass gatherings and assemblies
9. Has other content which is forbidden by laws, administrative regulations and national regulations.²⁵

While superficially beneficial to the social media environment, these rules could be—and are—used to suppress freedom of speech within China; for example, innocuous but unsanctioned religions could be suppressed online under the fifth regulation. Furthermore, the recent

legislation against ‘rumourmongers’ has targeted “relatively moderate rights advocates, as well as some of the most popular voices on Weibo.”²⁶ To these analysts, the CCP’s bifocal approach—forcing companies to conduct internal regulation and censorship, followed by arrests conducted by the state—is a dire threat to online freedom of speech, and in no way indicative of CCP liberalization.

Moving now to the optimistic view, several analysts assert that lax censorship on *Sina Weibo* demonstrates political liberalization of China’s ruling-party. For instance, the government moved to implement a “real-name registration policy” for *Sina Weibo* users, but it was allowed to fail without further regulation or punishment for the company.²⁷ The CCP could have implemented a policy whereby all *Weibo* posts that are made by a user without a real-name are immediately censored, but it did not—some consider this to have been a more liberal decision than is typical for the CCP. Furthermore, Johan Lagerkvist and Gustav Sundqvist have conducted research on *Sina Weibo* indicating that anti-government dissent is consistently escaping censorship, so long as it is what they term ‘loyal dissent’. Loyal dissent occurs when posts criticize CCP policies “without directly challenging its leadership or the existing political system at large.”²⁸ In other words, the CCP allows criticism so long as it is constructive, rather than revolutionary. So long as its hold on power is not threatened, the CCP will allow critical posts to go uncensored. Some analysts take this permissiveness to indicate liberalization of attitudes and practices within the CCP, despite ongoing censorship.

Finally, this paper must address the position of ‘reserved optimism’. Lagerkvist and Sundqvist contribute to this position too, in that they do not wholly commit to CCP liberalization being constant within the party. Rather, they suggest that internet activists who post content critical of CCP policies help reformists within the CCP by providing them with ammunition and feedback.²⁹ As such, even online content that is censored can contribute to CCP liberalization by informing intra-party debate within the CCP; censored content is a contributor to reform, rather than lax censorship being an indicator of reform. Finally, it is worthwhile to address the work of Rebecca MacKinnon, who characterizes the Chinese state as demonstrating ‘networked authoritarianism’. Networked authoritarianism is a state where “the single ruling party remains in control while a wide range of conversations about the country’s problems nonetheless occur on websites and social-networking services.”³⁰ A networked authoritarian party-state—such as the

CCP—may not be aggressively liberalizing, but it certainly is on an expedited course towards political liberalism when compared with China’s past experiences with purely authoritarian Maoism.

VI. Conclusion

In order to conclude this paper, it is first expedient to restate its purpose. This essay sought to analyze online censorship executed by the CCP, in order to expose the extent to which this censorship indicates either ongoing authoritarianism or emerging liberalism within the party. This paper first discussed the analytical approach to be utilized, where it was decided that a state-society focus was necessary for this subject. Following this discussion, a historical overview of Chinese censorship—from Mao’s China to the present day—was presented. This paper then presented evidence of censorship indicating the ongoing political authoritarianism of the CCP, followed by evidence for the opposite—lax censorship and associated CCP liberalization. This culminated in a case study of *Sina Weibo*, where the pessimistic, optimistic, and reservedly optimistic views of censorship on *Sina Weibo* were presented. To conclude, no clear answer is available; however, there is compelling evidence that suggests the CCP is not unitary in its liberalism or authoritarianism, and ‘networked authoritarianism’ is an interesting model by which to analyze the Chinese party-state. In order to come closer to answering the question posed at this essay’s outset—whether lax censorship indicates CCP liberalization—further research and analysis of the factional nature of the CCP must be conducted.

¹ Isabel Hilton, “Return of Civil Society,” introduction in Sam Geall, China and the Environment: The Green Revolution, (New York: Zed Books, 2013): 2.

² Frederick Teiwes, “Mao Zedong in Power (1949-1976),” chapter 3 in William A. Joseph (ed.) Politics in China: An Introduction, (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2010): 75.

³ Hilton, 2.

⁴ Hilton, 5.

⁵ Richard C. Kraus, “Policy Case Study: The Arts,” chapter 10 in William A. Joseph (ed.) Politics in China: An Introduction, (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2010): 273.

⁶ Clifford Coonan, “China Defends Censorship,” *Daily Variety* 10 (2010): 6.

⁷ William T. Dowell, “The Internet, Censorship, and China,” *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs* 7, no. 2, (2006): 113-114.

⁸ Kraus, 273.

⁹ *Ibid*, 274.

¹⁰ Clifford Coonan, “China Tightens Censorship,” *Daily Variety* 16 (2011): 6.

¹¹ Jinqiu Zhao, “A Snapshot of Internet Regulation in Contemporary China: Censorship, Profitability and Responsibility,” chapter 8 in Friederike Assandri & Dora Martins (eds.) From Early Tang Court Debates to China’s Peaceful Rise, (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2009): 142.

¹² Coonan, “China Tightens Censorships,” (...) 6.

¹³ China’s New Leadership Declares War on Social Media, Freedom House, last modified September 23rd, 2013, <http://www.freedomhouse.org/blog/china%E2%80%99s-new-leadership-declares-war-social-media#.U0CnnLpOXIU>.

¹⁴ Andrew Jacobs, China’s Crackdown Prompts Outrage Over Boy’s Arrest, The New York Times, last modified September 23rd, 2013, http://www.nytimes.com/2013/09/24/world/asia/crackdown-on-dissent-in-china-meets-online-backlash-after-boys-arrest.html?_r=0.

¹⁵ China’s New Leadership (...), Freedom House.

¹⁶ Gary King, Jennifer Pan, Margaret E. Roberts, “How Censorship in China Allows Government Criticism but Silences Collective Expression,” *American Political Science Review* 107, no. 2, (2013): 1.

¹⁷ Dowell, 115.

¹⁸ George Yeo & Eric X. Li, “Yin and Yang: Sina Weibo and the Chinese State,” *New Perspectives Quarterly* 29, no. 2, (2012): 1.

¹⁹ Coonan, “China Defends Censorship,” (...) 6.

²⁰ Jacobs, China’s Crackdown (...) The New York Times.

²¹ Kraus, 274.

²² China’s New Leadership (...), Freedom House.

²³ Yeo & Li, 1.

²⁴ Elaine J. Yuan, Miao Feng & James A. Danowski, “‘Privacy’ in Semantic Networks on Chinese Social Media: The Case of Sina Weibo,” *Journal of Communication* 63, no. 6, (2013): 1011.

²⁵ Sina Weibo’s New Rules, China Digital Times, last modified May 9th, 2012. <http://chinadigitaltimes.net/2012/05/sina-weibos-new-rules/>.

²⁶ Jacobs, China’s Crackdown (...) The New York Times.

²⁷ Sina Weibo’s New Rules, China Digital Times.

²⁸ Johan Lagerkvist & Gustav Sundqvist, “Loyal Dissent in the Chinese Blogosphere: Sina Weibo Discourse on the Chinese Communist Party,” *Studies in Media and Communication* 1, no. 1, (2013): 140.

²⁹ Ibid, 142.

³⁰ Rebecca MacKinnon, “Flatter World and Thicker Walls?: Blogs, Censorship and Civic Discourse in China,” *Public Choice* 134, no. 1 & 2, (2008): 33.

Bibliography

- Dowell, William T. "The Internet, Censorship, and China." *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs* 7, no. 2, (2006): 111-119.
- China's New Leadership Declares War on Social Media. Freedom House. Last modified September 23rd, 2013. <http://www.freedomhouse.org/blog/china%E2%80%99s-new-leadership-declares-war-social-media#.U0CnnLpOXIU>.
- Coonan, Clifford. "China Tightens Censorship." *Daily Variety* 16 (2011): 6.
- Coonan, Clifford. "China Defends Censorship." *Daily Variety* 10 (2010): 6.
- Hilton, Isabel. "Return of Civil Society." Introduction in Sam Geall, China and the Environment: The Green Revolution. (New York: Zed Books, 2013).
- Jacobs, Andrew. China's Crackdown Prompts Outrage Over Boy's Arrest. The New York Times. Last modified September 23rd, 2013. http://www.nytimes.com/2013/09/24/world/asia/crackdown-on-dissent-in-china-meets-online-backlash-after-boys-arrest.html?_r=0.
- King, Gary; Jennifer Pan; Margaret E. Roberts. "How Censorship in China Allows Government Criticism but Silences Collective Expression." *American Political Science Review* 107, no. 2, (2013): 326-343.
- Kraus, Richard C. "Policy Case Study: The Arts." Chapter 10 in William A. Joseph (ed.) Politics in China: An Introduction. (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2010): 269-277.
- Lagerkvist, Johan & Gustav Sundqvist. "Loyal Dissent in the Chinese Blogosphere: Sina Weibo Discourse on the Chinese Communist Party." *Studies in Media and Communication* 1, no. 1, (2013): 140-149.
- MacKinnon, Rebecca. "Flatter World and Thicker Walls?: Blogs, Censorship and Civic Discourse in China." *Public Choice* 134, no. 1 & 2, (2008): 31-46.
- Sina Weibo's New Rules. China Digital Times. Last modified May 9th, 2012. <http://chinadigitaltimes.net/2012/05/sina-weibos-new-rules/>.
- Teiwes, Frederick. "Mao Zedong in Power (1949-1976)." Chapter 3 in William A. Joseph (ed.) Politics in China: An Introduction. (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2010): 63-102.
- Yeo, George & Eric X. Li. "Yin and Yang: Sina Weibo and the Chinese State." *New Perspectives Quarterly* 29, no. 2, (2012): 7-9.
- Yuan, Elaine J., Miao Feng & James A. Danowski. "'Privacy' in Semantic Networks on Chinese Social Media: The Case of Sina Weibo." *Journal of Communication* 63, no. 6, (2013): 1011-1031.
- Zhao, Jinqiu. "A Snapshot of Internet Regulation in Contemporary China: Censorship, Profitability and Responsibility." Chapter 8 in Friederike Assandri & Dora Martins (eds.) From Early Tang Court Debates to China's Peaceful Rise. (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2009): 141-152.

Three Currents Converged: A Brief Critical Analysis of the Senkaku/Diaoyu Territorial Dispute

“Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it”

Lucia Guerrero

The Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands territorial dispute between Japan and China is an age-old conflict. Although it may seem like these islands are small and uninhabitable, they are at the centre of a conflict between an emerging superpower on the one hand and an aging superpower on the other. This paper will examine the different historical currents that fuel Chinese and Japanese national identities, as well as how these currents have pitted the two sides against one another. Following this critical analysis, this essay will provide some policy recommendations for establishing a meaningful path to peace and long-lasting reconciliation between China and Japan in regards to the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands.

Shifted, shaped, and continually redefined, the global economy stands on the fragile balance between states and their interactions. These relationships are the glue that holds together a complex system of alliances that are based upon national interests in the form of economic, political, and social benefits. Naturally, these relationships have been formed over long periods of time, cumulating to shape the worldwide, connected body we have today. Often, however, historical events have converged to form quite the opposite: a discrepancy of interests resulting in antagonistic relations. Perhaps one of the best modern examples is embodied by the Sino-Japanese territorial dispute over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands.¹ This chain of uninhabited islands laying in the East China Sea amongst jagged rocks and shark-infested waters, having a total area of 7 square kilometers, may seem insignificant at first glance, but to Japan and China these islands are the recent outcome of a long history that continues to inhibit them from securing a strong alliance with one another. This paper will examine different historical currents that have led up to this debate, including the importance of the Islands as shipping routes, historical grievances from events in the past, and the role of the United States in shaping the dispute throughout the Second World War. Through this critical analysis, it will ultimately be concluded¹

Lucia Guerrero is a fourth year student studying Political Studies at Queen’s University.

that these specific currents have joined and cumulated to shape the intense clash between Japan and China over the Senkaku Islands today.

Before the late 1960s, China had raised no objection to national sovereignty over the Senkaku Islands, even in 1960 when then US-Japan Security Treaty was signed that placed the Islands under American administration.² Both Japan and China's activity with regards to the Senkaku Islands changed, however, when in 1968 the Committee for the Co-ordination of Joint Prospecting for Mineral Resources in Asian Offshore Areas issued a report claiming that there were estimates of 100 billion barrels of oil deposits beneath the continental shelf, including the Islands.³ Sparking intense national interests, these islands now became the focus of competing claims by both states concerning the rightful owner based on which state had historical presence on the Senkaku Islands first. China's ancestral claims stem from evidence of imperial envoys' travel records from the Ming Dynasty, who traced maps of the East China Sea including the Islands dating back to 1372, suggesting that the Chinese were the first to discover the Senkaku Islands.⁴ The Japanese, however, hold that in 1884, agencies of the Okinawa district conducted a survey of the islands for 10 years to observe if the Senkaku Islands had any inhabitants or if any state had claimed ownership of them.⁵ Having concluded that there were no traces of any government control, and with no protest from the Chinese government, on January 15, 1895 the Japanese Cabinet decided to annex the Islands and manifest national sovereignty over them.⁶ Granted, the year 1895 also symbolizes the end of the First Sino-Japanese War with the Treaty of Shimonoseki, where in a point of weakness by the Chinese, the Japanese took advantage and stole the Senkaku Islands.⁷ The Chinese point to this when rebutting Japanese claims. Evidently, these historical claims have been sparked by the importance that the Senkaku Islands to both parties, especially in the form of global power from an economic and political standpoint.

Japan has been a great superpower in East Asia for centuries, manifesting all kinds of economic, political, and social authority over its immense sphere of influence in Asia. Beginning in the 1970s however, China has risen as an immense superpower, overshadowing Japan in size, capacity, international influence, and authority in Asia—in only a relatively short time.⁸ China's sphere of influence has swept across East Asia and spread to regions all around the world, emerging as one of the most important economies to date. In 2010, 11 of the top 20 containerized shipping trade routes had Greater China as either their destination of shipments or as their origin.⁹ This same year China was the top exporter of containerized cargo in the world, shipping in 31.3

million TEUS, in contrast to Japan, which only exported 5.7 TEUS.¹⁰ As shown, China relies heavily on their routes through the East China Sea to stimulate the economy, since 90 percent of China's foreign trade travels by sea.¹¹ China's ports in Shanghai, Qingdao, Ningbo, Fuzhou and Wenzhou gives them access to the Pacific Ocean, but only by passing through the Senkaku Islands.¹² Naturally, China has considerable interests in securing the chain of Senkaku Islands to eliminate any barriers to its shipping routes and continue strengthening its naval power, which has been a Chinese foreign policy goal for decades.¹³

Between 1949 and 1969, China was mainly concerned about gaining its strength as a country and focusing on the territories within its immediate borders.¹⁴ In the 1970s however, Chinese policy began to change as it looked to expand its foreign influence, recognizing the value of strengthening the maritime areas around its coast.¹⁵ The early 1970s also marks the time when Beijing first made its official claim to the Senkaku Islands.¹⁶ Since then, every Five Year Plan that China has released has made a reference to China's need to develop its influence in maritime resources.¹⁷ China's interest for an expansion of its naval influence is part of its greater plan to continue its rise as a superpower, providing great reason for their involvement in the Senkaku Island dispute.

On the other hand, assuring the Senkaku Islands for Japan is not important in terms of gaining greater foreign influence and security, but rather as a means to assert its power in East Asia, which, in the face of China's power, is dwindling.¹⁸ For Japan, global commerce relies heavily on its ability to transport goods by its waterways; a goal which has intensified significantly and gained more importance since the shift from global interest in Japan to China.¹⁹ Perhaps this concept is best described by Admiral Takei Tomohisa who wrote, "Japan's national survival relies on unimpeded economic activities via sea lines of communications...[and] mitigating factors such as maritime terrorism, piracy, and constant global climate compound the security problems surrounding maritime interests".²⁰ Thus, securing the Senkaku Islands is a feat that is detrimental to Japan's perseverance.

However, an examination of a deeper current that spans Sino-Japanese history may provide greater insight into the importance of the Senkaku Islands. Tensions between Chinese and Japanese relations are not a modern phenomenon; rather, numerous incidents in the past have caused China and Japan to adopt a hostile attitude towards each other, often impeding the ability to become close political allies. Throughout history, Japan has led several conquests to invade

China, recognizing its value as a new foreign market.²¹ As early as the 16th century, Japanese daimyo Toyoyomi Hideyoshi invaded China through Korea.²² Although the Japanese did not succeed, Hideyoshi's invasion resulted in long-term economic decline for the Ming Dynasty and ultimately contributed to the fall of the Ming.²³ Although these ancient events may not continue to resound in today's animosity between both nations, it certainly serves as insight to the evolution of aggressive conquests that the Japanese later embarked on.

This evolution of Japanese conquest began its peak at the turn of the twentieth century. On January 18, 1915, Japan released its Twenty-One Demands; a list of claims made by the Japanese government to special privileges in China during the First World War.²⁴ These official claims were to fulfill the Japanese agenda of heightening control over China, and included political, social, and economic concessions, such as Japanese control of mining bases in China and Japanese control through advisors of Chinese financial, political, and official affairs.²⁵ Japan's Twenty-One Demands marked only the beginning of what was soon to become a series of intense political policies followed by grievous military aggression.

Following the Great Depression in the 1930s, with Japanese exports deteriorating, Japanese leaders began to sense hostility and entrapment by Western powers.²⁶ Under a new sense of political danger, Japan viewed the conquest of China as pivotal to defining its relationship with the West, as well as the inevitable solution to mitigate national anxiety.²⁷ As Japan began to search for possible regions of interest in China, the territory of Manchuria in northeast China "became so important that many economic and military planners linked its preservation to the survival of Japan itself".²⁸ Following this mentality, on September 18, 1931 an explosion on the Japanese South Manchurian Railway resulted in the beginning of an "endless war" symbolized by Japan's "ruthless conquest [of Manchuria] that violated national sovereignty and international laws".²⁹ The Manchurian Incident was blamed on the Chinese Army, giving the Japanese Kwantung Army a justification for invading Manchuria systematically and eliminating "the existing Chinese regional state, [replacing it] with a political organization of its own design".³⁰ To this day, contradictions regarding who was responsible for this incident are highly contested.³¹ In a trial in Moscow, Chief of Staff of the Kwantung Army Miyake Mitsuharu admitted that when he learnt of the explosions in Manchuria, he "suspected it was done by Japanese disguised in Chinese army uniform, and Commander Honjo agreed with [him]", which is only one testimony amongst several others in the Kwantung Army that suggested the explosion

of the railway was a deliberate action of the Japanese.³² For the Chinese, this has caused a great sense of injustice towards their nation, especially when accounting for the atrocities committed by the Japanese throughout the Fifteen-Year War (1937-1945), for which the Manchurian Incident served as a pre-text.³³

One of the most heinous occurrences during the Fifteen-Year War was the Rape of Nanking, which Iris Chang describes as “the forgotten Holocaust of the Second World War”.³⁴ The Rape of Nanking began in December 1937 when Japanese soldiers invaded the capital of the Republic of China, embarking on a wave of violence and terror.³⁵ Throughout the massacre, soldiers were “urged to commit gang rape in the city and make sure to dispose of the women after to eliminate evidence of the crime.” The streets of the city “were heaped with corpses and reeked with the smell of rotting human flesh”, and ultimately resulted in the mass killing of Chinese citizens with numbers estimating that more than 260,000 noncombatants were slaughtered at the hands of the Japanese army in less than eight weeks.³⁶ Although the Rape of Nanking is a dark shadow on Sino-Japanese relations, perhaps even more damaging is the fact that some Japanese intellectuals continue to deny that the Rape of Nanking ever happened. For example, Japanese author Tanaka Masaaki wrote that the “Chinese may derive pleasure from sexual assaults where as the Japanese have never found such acts amusing,” as well as Ishihara Shinato, a leading member of Japan’s Liberal Democratic Party in 1990, who commented, “People say that the Japanese made a holocaust there [in Nanking], but that is not true. It is a story made up by the Chinese. It has tarnished the image of Japan, but it is a lie”.^{37 38} The denial by some Japanese of what occurred in Nanking has led to outrage throughout China, leading to the hatred of each state at an ethnonational level, where the Chinese have created a national identity in which the odium created by Japanese efforts to eliminate Chinese identity in previous decades continues to resonate.³⁹

Through a critical analysis of historical grievances between Japan and China, it can be concluded that Sino-Japanese tensions over the Senkaku Islands do not stem solely from a dispute over an infinitesimal territory. Instead, the Senkaku Islands represent a modern day example of the deep-rooted historical currents that have led to difficulties between Beijing and Tokyo to negotiate with each other on unprejudiced grounds. With regards to the Islands, it is a possibility that China has taken such a strong stance on the matter because it recognizes that it is more powerful now than ever before, and thus, is using this territorial dispute to ensure that it

does not back down to the oppression of Japan, which it has been a victim of several times before. On the other hand, it is possible that Japan wants to continue its traditional pattern of dominance over China, which leaves no room for negotiation or compromise in terms of which state has rightful sovereignty over the Senkaku Islands. Adding to its declaration over the Senkaku Islands, Japan also asserts that in the realm of international politics, the Islands have rightfully been assumed and assigned to their jurisdiction by several other states.

Throughout the era of the Second World War, while Japan was heightening its policies of foreign territorial conquest, the United States was increasing its influence, peaking after Russia's decline, which left the United States as the only superpower in East Asia.⁴⁰ After the Second World War, the United States made several concessions to gain Japan as an ally, but today, the United States also has substantial economic interdependence with China.⁴¹ Thus, although the United States claims to have taken a "strongly neutral position towards Chinese and Japanese claims to the [Senkaku] Islands," a deeper historical analysis of their role in the territorial dispute reveals the opposite.⁴²

The United States' involvement in the Senkaku Islands began on June 21, 1945 when they assumed full control of the Japanese mainland after Japan surrendered at the end of the Second World War.⁴³ Here, the United States made it clear that the Senkaku Islands were included in the territory that was now under their administration, because under their intentions of expanding their naval sphere of influence they believed that if they lost the Senkaku Islands, they would then "go down a slippery slope and eventually lose some key islands like Okinawa".⁴⁴ These interests intensified in 1948 when the Republic of China called for the return of the Ryūkyū Islands (which the Senkaku Islands are a part of) to China and the United States realized that if China fell to the Soviet Union, then there would be nearby danger to the United States Pacific naval base system.⁴⁵ ⁴⁶ The American Joints Chiefs of Staff reacted quickly and in 1950 issued a directive stating that the United States was an "occupying power" until "such a time as the ultimate international status of the islands [was to be] determined...It [was] the policy of the United States to retain the Ryūkyū Islands on a long-term basis by reason of their importance to the security of the United States".⁴⁷

In efforts to maintain friendly relations with Japan, the United States processed a number of concessions that began with giving Japan residual sovereignty over the Islands in 1951 and ultimately led to the 1960 Security Treaty between the two parties.⁴⁸ The 1960 Security Treaty

meant that the United States had the legal obligation to defend the Senkaku Islands if there was ever a threat of a military attack.⁴⁹ This appeased both parties because on the one hand, the United States was able to secure its ability to defend its naval influence in the Pacific if necessary, and on the other hand it began to give Japan more political administration and influence over these islands. The final step came in 1971, when an agreement between the United States and Japan expressively gave Japan control over the Senkaku Islands.⁵⁰

This brief examination of the historical role of the United States in the dispute over the Senkaku Islands demonstrates that perhaps the United States is not as “neutral” as it presents itself to be. Through different legal agreements and political concessions, Japan has been given sovereignty over the Senkaku Islands in the eyes of the world’s biggest superpower. Regardless of China’s position, this gives great strength to the Japanese argument of its hold on the Islands. Moreover, it is in the United States’ interest that China and Japan do not engage in military aggression, since the 1960 Security Treaty would force them to defend Japan, but would also put a strain on Sino-American relations. This could be critical for American foreign markets and their economic stability. Jean-Marc F. Blanchard suggests that the United States should recognize its historical role in Sino-Japanese relations, and as such assume a more active role in alleviating the dispute.⁵¹ Evidently, the role of the United States in the Senkaku Islands territorial dispute is not that of a mere bystander and has contributed to the inflexible nature of the discussions between Japan and China.

The path to peace is certainly a difficult one. The Japanese and Chinese historical narratives regarding the Senkaku Islands are deeply intertwined, creating hostilities between which state has the most legitimate and justified claim and proves the rights of one nation over the other. This essay will suggest two policy recommendations, which may help de-escalate the clash between Japan and China to a level where negotiations between the two parties may begin. First, an autonomous council should be created between the two parties.⁵² This council would consist of both Chinese and Japanese leaders of different backgrounds (ex. scholars, economists, and politicians). The purpose of this council would be to establish channels of communication where a peaceful dialogue can take place. By analyzing the different historical narratives involved in the dispute, the council can help create a shared vision for a peaceful future between China and Japan. Second, in order mitigate public distrust, “national leaders of each side should meet with overseas community members of the other side and receive government and civil

society delegations from the other nation”.⁵³ Publicly and peacefully acknowledging the other party is a symbolic gesture towards the Chinese and Japanese public that communication and co-existence is possible. Moreover, it serves to “restore a human connection between China and Japan” that may help restore peace talks.⁵⁴

After unpacking the different layers to the Senkaku Islands territorial dispute, it is clear that this small chain of unoccupied, uninhabitable islands symbolizes a great deal to both Japan and China. The Senkaku Islands dispute stands at the crossroads of long and somber Sino-Japanese history. Beginning centuries ago, historical currents and events have cumulated and interwoven to shape the relations between both nations, making them what they are today. The most important currents that have shaped the Senkaku Islands dispute are their importance for shipping routes, historical grievances throughout history, and the role of the United States forming the conflict. A product of these converging currents—the Senkaku Islands dispute—highlights the severity and pernicious aspects of Sino-Japanese relations with one another. This analysis through a historical discourse is not just a timeline of events, but rather, presents a new perspective on how to solve the dispute. If both parties acknowledge their antagonisms brought upon by centuries of clashes, perhaps it will ease tensions and allow them to begin unprejudiced negotiation.

¹ From this point onwards, the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands will be referred to as the Senkaku Islands for simplicity but is not to reflect any bias to one country over the other.

² Lee Seokwoo, “Territorial Disputes among Japan, China and Taiwan Concerning the Senkaku Islands”, *International Boundaries Research Unit: Boundaries and Territory Briefing 3*: 2.

³ Jean-Marc F. Blanchard, “The U.S. Role in the Sino-Japanese Dispute over the Diaoyu (Senkaku) Islands, 1945-1971”, *The China Quarterly* 161: 98.

⁴ *Ibid*, 99.

⁵ Seokwoo, 10.

⁶ Blanchard, 101.

⁷ *Ibid*.

⁸ Lai To Lee, *China and the South China Sea Dialogues* (Westport: Praeger, 1999): 27.

⁹ World Shipping Council: Partners in Trade. 2012. *About the Industry: Trade Routes and Statistics*. <http://www.worldshipping.org/about-the-industry/global-trade/trade-routes> (October 20, 2012).

¹⁰ *Ibid*.

¹¹ Daniel M. Hartnett, “China’s Evolving Interests and Activities in the East China Sea.” *Center for Naval Analyses Report on East China and the Yellow Seas*: 84.

¹² Bonnie S. Glaser, “Potential Flashpoints in the East China Sea”, *Center for Naval Analyses Report on East China and the Yellow Seas*: 55.

¹³ *Ibid*.

¹⁴ Hartnett, 85.

¹⁵ *Ibid*.

¹⁶ Blanchard, 102.

-
- ¹⁷ Hartnett, 86.
- ¹⁸ Glaser, 61.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*
- ²⁰ Takei Tomohisa, "Japan Maritime Self Defense Force in the New Maritime Era." *Hatou*: 4.
- ²¹ David M. Gordon, "Historiographical Essay: The China-Japan War, 1931-1945." *The Journal of Military History* 70: 140.
- ²² Donald N. Clark, "Sino-Korean Tributary Relations Under the Ming." *The Cambridge History of China* 8: 274.
- ²³ *Ibid.*
- ²⁴ Encyclopædia Britannica. 2012. *Twenty-one Demands*. Encyclopædia Britannica Inc. <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/611026/Twenty-one-Demands> (October 20, 2012).
- ²⁵ *Ibid.*
- ²⁶ Gordon, 154.
- ²⁷ Yoshihisa Tak Matususaka, *The Making of Japanese Manchuria, 1904-1932* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003): 46.
- ²⁸ Gordon, 141.
- ²⁹ *Ibid*, 141-2.
- ³⁰ Matususaka, 389.
- ³¹ Ching-ch'un Liang, 1969. *The Sinister Face of the Mukden Incident* (New York: St. John's University Press, 1969): 9.
- ³² *Ibid*, 14.
- ³³ S. Lautenschlager, "The Sino-Japanese Controversy", *The Australian Quarterly* 4: 104.
- ³⁴ Iris Chang, *The Rape of Nanking: The Forgotten Holocaust of World War II* (New York: BasicBooks, 1997): 1.
- ³⁵ Timothy Brook, "The Tokyo Judgment and the Rape of Nanking," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 60: 677.
- ³⁶ Chang, 4, 50.
- ³⁷ Brook, 673.
- ³⁸ Chang, 201.
- ³⁹ John McGarry and Brendan O'Leary, "The Political Regulation of National and Ethnic Conflict", *Parliamentary Affairs: A Journal of Comparative Politics* 37: 100.
- ⁴⁰ Lee, 50.
- ⁴¹ *Ibid.*
- ⁴² Blanchard, 96.
- ⁴³ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 104.
- ⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 105.
- ⁴⁶ Lee, 37.
- ⁴⁷ Blanchard, 106.
- ⁴⁸ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 107.
- ⁵⁰ *Ibid*, 109.
- ⁵¹ *Ibid*, 120-1.
- ⁵² Zheng Wang, "The Diaoyu/Senkaku Dispute as an Identity-Based Conflict: Toward Sino-Japan Reconciliation" *Clash of National Identities: China, Japan and the East China Sea Territorial Dispute (with Tatsushi Arai)*, Ed. Tatsushi Arai, Shihoko Goto and Zheng Wang, (Washington D.C.: The Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2013): 103.
- ⁵³ Wang, 100.
- ⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

Bibliography

- Blanchard, Jean-Marc F. 2000. "The U.S. Role in the Sino-Japanese Dispute over the Diaoyu (Senkaku) Islands, 1945-1971." *The China Quarterly* 161: 95-123.
- Brook, Timothy. 2001. "The Tokyo Judgment and the Rape of Nanking." *The Journal of Asian Studies* 60: 673-700.
- Chang, Iris. 1997. *The Rape of Nanking: The Forgotten Holocaust of World War II*. New York: BasicBooks.
- Clark, Donald N. 1998. "Sino-Korean Tributary Relations Under the Ming." *The Cambridge History of China* 8: 272-300.
- Encyclopædia Britannica. 2012. *Twenty-one Demands*. Encyclopædia Britannica Inc. <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/611026/Twenty-one-Demands> (October 20, 2012).
- Glaser, Bonnie S. 2012. "Potential Flashpoints in the East China Sea." *Center for Naval Analyses Report on East China and the Yellow Seas* 53-69.
- Gordon, David M. 2006. "Historiographical Essay: The China-Japan War, 1931-1945." *The Journal of Military History* 70: 137-182.
- Hartnett, Daniel M. "China's Evolving Interests and Activities in the East China Sea." *Center for Naval Analyses Report on East China and the Yellow Seas* 81-95.
- Lautenschlager, S. 1932. "The Sino-Japanese Controversy." *The Australian Quarterly* 4: 101-112.
- Lee, Lai To. 1999. *China and the South China Sea Dialogues*. Westport: Praeger.
- Liang, Ching-ch'un. 1969. *The Sinister Face of the Mukden Incident*. New York: St. John's University Press.
- McGarry, John and Brendon O'Leary. 1994. "The Political Regulation of National and Ethnic Conflict." *Parliamentary Affairs: A Journal of Comparative Politics* 37: 94-115.
- Matusaka, Yoshihisa Tak. 2003. *The Making of Japanese Manchuria, 1904-1932*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Seokwoo, Lee. 2002. "Territorial Disputes among Japan, China and Taiwan Concerning the Senkaku Islands." *International Boundaries Research Unit: Boundary and Territory Briefing* 3: 1-37.
- Tomohisa, Takei. 2008. "Japan Maritime Self Defense Force in the New Maritime Era." *Hatou* 34: 1-23.
- Wang, Zheng. "The Diaoyu/Senkaku Dispute as an Identity-Based Conflict: Toward Sino-Japan Reconciliation" *Clash of National Identities: China, Japan and the East China Sea Territorial Dispute (with Tatsushi Arai)*. Ed. Tatsushi Arai, Shihoko Goto and Zheng Wang. Washington D.C.: The Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2013.
- World Shipping Council: Partners in Trade. 2012. *About the Industry: Trade Routes and Statistics*. <http://www.worldshipping.org/about-the-industry/global-trade/trade-routes> (October 20, 2012).

