

JAPAN'S CHANGING POLICY TO SOUTHEAST ASIA THROUGH ASEAN

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ABSTRACT

Japan's involvement in Southeast Asia under economic cooperation has been going on since the end of World War 2 and it was continued throughout the Cold War period. In the end of the Cold War period, however, Japan started to show its intention to have more involvement in the security cooperation with Southeast Asia. This can be identified from Japan's involvement in the multilateral cooperation on security under ASEAN like ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and ASEAN Defense Ministerial Meeting (ADMM). This paper tries to answer the question of how Japan's changing strategy to Southeast Asia can be analyzed and what is the background of that changing strategy.

Keywords: ASEAN, Southeast Asia, Regionalism, Security

Keterlibatan Jepang dalam hubungan kerjasama ekonomi dengan Asia Tenggara telah terjalin sejak berakhirnya Perang Dunia II dan terus berlangsung pada periode Perang Dingin. Namun, beberapa waktu setelah berakhirnya Perang Dingin, Jepang mulai menunjukkan peran aktif dalam kerjasama dengan Asia Tenggara di bidang keamanan. Salah satu bukti dari dimulainya peran aktif Jepang di bidang keamanan dapat terlihat dari keterlibatan Jepang dalam kerjasama multilateral di bidang keamanan yang berada dibawah naungan ASEAN seperti ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) dan ASEAN Defense Ministerial Meeting (ADMM). Paper ini berusaha menjawab pertanyaan yang berkisar pada bagaimana perubahan kebijakan Jepang terhadap Asia Tenggara dapat dianalisa dan apa latar belakang dari perubahan kebijakan tersebut.

Kata Kunci: ASEAN, Asia Tenggara, Regionalisme, Isu Keamanan

Introduction

One big change to Japan's policy to Southeast Asia in early 1990s is Japan's involvement in security issues. Since the end of World War II and throughout the Cold War period, it had been well known that Japan had been heavily involved in economic issues. This can be seen from the huge amount of Official Development Assistant (ODA) and investment this country invested in the region. Starting in early 1990s, Japan started to take wider role by not only focusing in economic issues but also in security issues. Two prominent things that proved Japan's strategic role in Southeast Asia is Japan's involvement in ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and ASEAN Defense Ministerial Meeting Plus (ADMM+). This change of policy to Southeast Asia created a question 'why did Japan change its policy from centering on economic issues to broader strategic issue concerning security in Southeast Asia?' which became a research question for this paper.

There are two hypothesis presented in this paper. Firstly, the reason why Japan change its policy to Southeast Asia is driven by Japan's move from commercial liberalism to defensive realism in order to have a more independent policy beyond its alliance with the United States. Alliance with the United States push Japan to move from commercial liberalism to defensive realism. After the end of the Cold War, Southeast Asia was a good region for Japan to demonstrate its aim for more independent policy because the decrease of the United States' influence in the region gave Japan a chance to take a wider role. Secondly, Japan's changing policy to Southeast Asia can be seen from Japan's involvement in security multilateral framework such as ARF and ADMM. Japan shows its Southeast Asian's policy change through security multilateral framework because it can serve Japan two functions: as a place for dialogue with China and to show China that independent Japan will not lead Japan to military build-up.

The method used for this paper is case study. This paper is divided into four sections. The first section describes theoretical perspectives used for testing the hypothesis. The second part discusses the reason behind Japan's changing policy to Southeast Asia, what factor that influenced such changes also mentioned in this section. The third section discusses Japan's involvement in multilateral arrangement. And finally the fourth section is the conclusion of discussion from previous three sections.

Theory

Two theories presented in this paper are commercial liberalism and defensive realism. These two theories discussed in this section need to be understood in order to see policy implication to Japan's strategy to Southeast Asia in post-Cold War which shifting to take wider role in the region.

Commercial Liberalism

The logic of commercial liberalism is that country will choose less costly way to maximize gain. Despite seemingly emphasizing on economic, this theory has an impact on security in a sense that because trade is generally a less costly means to accumulate wealth than war then the government are likely to only focus foreign policy on economic affairs (Moravcsik 1997). This is what Japan did throughout the Cold War period based on Yoshida Doctrine which caused Japan to give total focus on accumulating gain and fully relied on the United States for military and political role. It is important to consider this theory to understand why Japan did not engage itself in military and political role.

Defensive Realism

Realism is a theory that focuses its analysis on Great Power in an anarchic international system. Anarchic international system means that there is no central government among states. This condition created a self-help system where states worry about their survival and that worry influence their action (Waltz 1979). States will do any means that will secure their country for the sake of survival. The occurrence of security dilemma, a condition when a state increase their power for defense purpose but it is perceived by other state as a power to attack which then led the other state to increase its power as well and likely to cause a war, is high under anarchy (Snyder 1984). There are two neorealism views that discuss a state behavior to achieve security and survival: offensive realism and defensive realism. This section will only discuss defensive realism as this theory is used to see Japan's changing strategy to Southeast Asia.

Defensive realism, as discussed by Kenneth Waltz, analyzing the structure of international system by seeing how states act under anarchic condition using three level of analysis on the cause of war: man, separate states, and state system (Singer 1960). While offensive realism focuses more on maximizing power and chance of expansion under anarchy, defensive realism argues that anarchy gives a chance for mutually beneficial cooperation and for a state to pursue moderate

strategies as the best route to security (Taliaferro 2001). State under defensive realism consider to pursue moderate strategies because domestic politics can limit the efficiency of a state's response to the external environment. Robert Jervis, Jack Snyder, and Stephen Van Evera support defensive realism by focusing attention on a structural concept known as the offense-defense balance and maintain that military power can be served as offense or defense power depending on a clear advantage that can be gained, if a gain from defense is bigger than offense then a state better stay on defense to protect what they already have (Mearsheimer 2001).

Moving from Economic to Wider Regional Role

This section discusses Japan's shift toward defensive realism which was influenced by alliance with the United States and domestic politics influence. It is important to understand the development of Japan's foreign policy as it has huge influence on how Japan composes its security strategy to Southeast Asia and finally decided to join multilateral security framework that will be discussed later in the next section.

Alliance with the United States

Japan's foreign policy in Southeast Asia had been heavily influenced by Yoshida Doctrine throughout the Cold War period. The principle of commercial liberalism and Japan's own mercantile power was premised in this doctrine (Green 1999). It can be noted from Yoshida Doctrine which led Japan to entrust its military protection and political role to the United States while focusing on earning incomes by increasing export and protecting home market (Ming Wan 1995). Consequently, the way Japan conducted its foreign policy was always on the goal to create economic relations with countries in the region until early 1970s, when anti-Japanese demonstrations happened in several countries in Southeast Asia such as Thailand and Indonesia. Those demonstration led to the emergence of new doctrine called Fukuda Doctrine that made a little shift in Japan's foreign policy to Southeast Asia. Despite the fact that it was still heavily based on economic relations, this doctrine brought new perspective for Japan's policy to Southeast Asia.

Fukuda's doctrine was expressed in the form of three principles which would guide Japan's Southeast Asian policy: (1) Japan would not become military power; (2) Japan would promote closer economic, social, political, and cultural

ties with ASEAN members; and (3) Japan would pursue constructive relations with the three Communist regimes in Indochina, particularly Vietnam, as well as encourage coexistence rather than conflict between ASEAN and Indochina (Khamchoo 1991). The relations between Japan-ASEAN driven by the implementation of Fukuda Doctrine also widely known as heart-to-heart relationship. In pursuing Fukuda Doctrine, Japan began to expand its Southeast Asian regional policy to security area too. Japan's involvement in Southeast Asian security issues also intensified by the declining United States influence in the region.

The little shift in Japan's foreign policy did not alter Japan's focus from its economic intention. Relations with the United States through the alliance also hold an important effect to Japan's need for more independent policy. As mentioned earlier in the previous paragraph, Yoshida approach was manifested in Japan's foreign policy so Japan fully relied its military and political role to the United States. However, Japan got pressure to also take security role in the region inwhen 1975 the United States and Japan began negotiating Guidelines for Defense Cooperation that would establish a framework for the first deliberate military planning between the two countries which then became an important element in US global strategy as Soviet military capabilities began to expand in the Far East (Green 1999). Moreover, as the situation changed after the end of Cold War, Japan began to re-evaluate its security role in the region. Soviet fall and rising China brought new perception of threat in Asia. That situation made Japan's formula for contributing to the United States global strategy only by increasing capabilities for the defense of Japan (and not regional security) lost its credibility (Green 1999).

Domestic Influence

Furthermore, domestic influence also contributed to Japan's development of foreign policy. The combination of highly activist neo-mercantilist economic policies and the generally cautious and reactive approach to the outside world that characterized much of Japan's foreign policy may be said to be anchored in the structure of its government and politics which continuously ruled by Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) since its formation in 1955 (Yahuda 1995). This conservative faction relied much on the alliance with the United States. However, the alliance with the United States created the dilemma between the entrapment and abandonment. Entrapment is a condition where the smaller state allows the

larger state to dictate its internal and international affairs, while abandonment is a condition occurs when the smaller state tries too hard to maintain distance and therefore loses utility as an ally (Green 2001). Thus, Japan began to show the need for more independent policy to escape this dilemma by taking wider role in the region, particularly through its relation with Southeast Asia.

Japan's Involvement in Multilateral Arrangement

ARF

Japan's first biggest involvement in security issue in the region can be seen from its role in ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). To see Japan's shift from commercial liberalism to defensive realism, it is important to discuss factors behind the establishment of ARF. Initiative to form this forum came from Japan. There were two factors that influenced Japan to formulate initiative to form ARF through Nakayama proposal: (1) Japan's growing aspiration for more active role in the region; (2) Japan's new way of thinking to approach to Asia-Pacific security which stresses the need to pursue regional economic cooperation, efforts to settle ongoing disputes and conflicts at the sub-regional level, maintenance of existing security arrangements, and enhancement of the level of mutual reassurance among regional countries (Cooperative Security n.d).

Japan's growing aspiration for more active role in the region was caused by its need for independence policy beyond its alliance with the United States. Japan expected ARF to become a mean that would be able to move forward from transparency measures, to actual policy coordination, and finally to collective action (Green 2001). This expectation was in accordance with ARF concept paper which states ARF objectives to pursue the development of Preventive Diplomacy for peaceful settlement of disputes through measurements for immediate future and long term (Yuzawa 2006).

Japan's expectation of ARF seemed to be implausible considering the composition of ARF which consist of ASEAN member countries that work under consensus and China whose relation with Japan was deteriorating in 1990s. Moreover, one of measures mentioned in the annex A of the concept paper - 'promoting the principles of the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC) and its provision for the settlement of disputes in the Pacific (Yuzawa 2006) – would be difficult to be implemented because only ASEAN member countries acceded this treaty. Other countries outside ASEAN member countries acceded this treaty in

different times. Japan acceded this treaty in December 2003, China, India, South Korea in 2004, and the United States just declared its accession to this treaty in 2009 (Susumu 2013).

The second meeting in Brunei in 1995 suggested that Japan's expectation might be achievable because after pressure from ASEAN and Japan in that meeting, China agreed to soften its position on the territorial dispute over the Spratly Islands by following UNCLOS rules and international law in resolving the dispute (Green 2001). China's agreement to soften its position on the Spratly Island dispute did not mean that the dispute had finally been resolved. Despite agreeing to soften its position, China opposed to bring the discussion further because this country was unwilling to internationalize the issue and preferring to discuss only with other claimants (Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei, and Taiwan) bilaterally behind closed doors (Chung 2013). From that point, the discussion related to South China Sea under ARF had been moving so slowly if not considered as stagnant.

ASEAN Defense Ministerial Meetings (ADMM)

ASEAN Defense Ministerial Meeting is a new arrangement under ASEAN that was introduced in 2006. It intended to provide defense ministers of ASEAN countries with a regular venue to gather, talk, and cooperate on defense and security-related issues while the ADMM Plus, composed of ASEAN member countries and its eight dialogue partners including Japan, has been embarking on implementing effective security cooperation in nontraditional areas (Shoji n.d). From the intention, this framework is obviously a sign of Japan's seriousness in maintaining security relations with Southeast Asia which can be considered as another step that is big enough for development of Japan's aim to take wider role in Southeast Asia.

Other than ARF and ADMM, it also must be noted that Japan has already implemented its security relations and military contacts with Southeast Asian countries in order to maintain security in the region. For example, Japan together with the Indonesian government and the UN Regional Center for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, cosponsored the Jakarta seminar on Illicit Trafficking in Small Arms and Light Weapons in May 2000; and Japan also hosted a preparatory conference in Tokyo on peace and reconstruction in Aceh to

demonstrate the support of the international community for peaceful resolution (Masashi 2003).

Moreover, Japan also has military contacts and confidence-building programs with ASEAN. It is shown by the increasing levels of military-to-military (MM) contact which aims at building mutual trust through several activities as mentioned below (Masashi 2003):

- Since 1994, Japan has sponsored the annual Asia-Pacific Security Seminar.
- In 1996, Japan instituted the annual Forum for Defense Authorities of the Asia-Pacific Region which includes most of the ASEAN countries.
- In 2002, the National Institute for Defense Studies under the Defense Agency, hosted the annual meeting of the heads of defense colleges of member nations as one of the activities of ARF.
- There are also regular exchanges of visits at the defense minister level that has been held since 1997 known as MM talks that discuss regional and international security environment.

Conclusion

From discussion above, it can be concluded that Japan's changing policy to Southeast Asia is driven by Japan's shift from commercial liberalism to defensive realism. It can be seen from the different approach Japan did during the Cold War period and the end of Cold War period. During Cold War, Japan focused more on economic relations with Southeast Asia. However, after the end of Cold War, Japan began to show its intention to take wider role by joining multilateral arrangement such as ARF and ADMM albeit the move can be seen as quite reluctant. It is the sign that Japan's shift from commercial liberalism to defensive realism gave implication to Japan's policy to Southeast Asia.

Related to the second hypothesis, multilateral arrangement proven to serve two functions for Japan's China policy: as a place for dialogue and to show China that independent Japan will not lead Japan to military build-up. Firstly, ARF may have not been able to accommodate conflict in South China Sea well enough to bring a resolution for it or making China more transparent on its defense policy or budget but the existence of ARF still useable for dialogue purpose. Secondly, despite China's worry on Japan's military defense, at least, Japan was able to show China that independent Japan will not lead Japan to military build-up.

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