

In U.S. security policy, as would be expected, adversaries pose the greatest challenge. Whether with respect to the Soviet Union during the cold war or Iran, North Korea, or nonstate actors today, the relative paucity of information and absence of open channels of communication make it difficult to gauge the other side's intentions and underlying motivations. The temptation to read the worst into an adversary's capabilities and how it uses them is strong.

But there is a lesser though still significant challenge. It involves groups of countries with which the United States seeks to maintain good relations but that cannot get along with one another. The enduring conflict between Israel and the Arab states is one case; the dispute between China and Taiwan is another. Here, Washington has at least two options: one is to play its friends off against each other in order to get them to exercise mutual restraint; the other is to recognize that the countries may not be able to avoid conflict and that the United States might have to intervene militarily to defend one of the parties and its own credibility. Generally, the United States has chosen to minimize the chance of conflict rather than feed it.

The evolving security relationship between China and Japan creates another such dilemma for the United States. China's power in Asia is growing, and China's economy will soon pass Japan's as the leading economy in Asia. Although the capabilities of Japan's military, the Self-Defense Forces (SDF), are not trivial, those of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) are growing steadily. The PLA's budget grows by double digits each year, while the SDF's is essentially flat. Moreover, in China's modernization of its military, the emphasis is on power projection: the ability of its air and naval forces to stretch their reach to the east, encroaching on Japan. Japanese

regard the PLA's growth and focus with deep ambivalence. How should they respond? With hopeful conciliation? With a military buildup of their own? Or—the traditional postwar answer—by relying on Japan's alliance with the United States?

Of course, current developments have a historical context. Japan invaded and occupied China in the 1930s, causing both human suffering and physical devastation. More than any other country, Imperial Japan exposed and exploited China's weakness, fostering a deep sense of victimization among the Chinese and leaving scars on the Chinese psyche. Those scars cause pain even today, as China returns to national health and its former status as a great power. In spite of joint efforts to reduce and manage tensions, China doubts that Japan will accommodate its expansion. For the Chinese, the shadow of the past darkens the future. Chapter 2 looks at a dimension of that tragic history, the military conflict between Japan and China in the 1930s.

Given that background, a good understanding of the strategic context of current relations between Japan and China is necessary. That understanding begins with the recognition that the two nations are caught in a security dilemma in spite of their positive interaction when it comes to economics and trade. That is, neither really wishes the other ill, but the steps that one side takes to promote its own security leave the other with a growing sense of vulnerability, which in turn causes it to take steps in response, and so on. This template for interpreting relations between the two is useful, but it does not appear to explain everything that is going on between China and Japan. So, in chapter 4, after reviewing postwar China-Japan relations in chapter 3, I seek to broaden the concept to make it more applicable. In particular, I argue that the conclusions that a country draws about another's intentions are based not only on the capabilities that the other acquires but also on their mutual interactions on sensitive issues.

This volume does not address the totality of Japan-China security relations, which is a large and complex subject. Instead it focuses on the nations' interaction in the East China Sea. The presence of the navy, air force, and law enforcement units of the People's Republic of China (PRC) is expanding toward the east, thereby moving into Japan's area of operations—and also that of the United States. Chapter 5 describes the growing interaction between Beijing and Tokyo in the East China Sea and explores why both regard it as strategically important.

There are, moreover, particular points of friction that, like magnets, draw the military forces of the two countries into close proximity. Specifically, they dispute ownership of the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands north and east of

Taiwan, which are controlled by Japan. They argue over rights to exploit maritime oil and gas fields east of Shanghai, and they have competing views on the extent of China's undersea continental shelf and on the extent of their respective exclusive economic zones.

Finally, if the political dispute between Taiwan and China were to erupt in conflict and the United States were to come to Taiwan's defense, Japan, as a U.S. ally, could end up in a war with China. Since the chances of a Taiwan-China conflict have declined significantly since the 2008 change of government in Taiwan, the first two issues, which create some possibility of an accidental clash between Chinese and Japanese ships and planes in the East China Sea, are more worrisome. These issues are addressed in chapter 6.

As units of the two countries operate closer to each other, a number of institutional factors come into play that can increase or decrease the probability of a clash and affect the immediate aftermath. Those factors, which are discussed in chapter 7, include the autonomy that the nations' military and law enforcement units have vis-à-vis their civilian authorities, the degree of centralization of their command-and-control systems, and their views concerning the use of force. The discussion of civil-military relations exposes a contrast. In China, military officers adhere to norms that are quite consistent with those of the ruling Communist Party, but they both weigh in on policy issues that touch on their domain and enjoy broad discretion in implementing the policies adopted. In Japan, by contrast, officers appear to be more independent with respect to values and norms, but they are under relatively tight civilian control when it comes to policy and operations—though not necessarily in the East China Sea. Although military and law-enforcement organizations from both countries are tempted to operate independently and somewhat aggressively to carry out their missions, the problem is greater on the Chinese side.

Should there be a clash between Japanese and Chinese naval or air forces, civilian leaders and institutions would come into play. At issue would be whether those leaders and institutions have the skill and capacity to ensure that the clash did not become a crisis. To probe that question, it is necessary first to know more about how the Chinese and Japanese governments are structured, how they function in routine situations, and whether they have accurate information and analysis at their disposal. Chapter 8 looks at China and chapter 9 at Japan. The picture that emerges is of two systems in which leaders make tough decisions on a collective basis but often do not have the sort of information that they need; in which line agencies such as foreign and defense ministries put too much emphasis on protecting their

turf and therefore are often ineffective in working together to shape coherent policy responses; and in which policy-coordination mechanisms do not always work well. These similarities in crisis response exist in spite of the differences in the political systems of the two nations: Japan is a special kind of democracy and China is an authoritarian regime. The discussion examines the points at which civilian officials and military officers, defense policy and operations, and security policy and domestic politics all come together and interact.

Complicating matters is the impact of domestic politics. Again, despite the differences between systems, the public in each country shapes the environment in which the leaders make decisions. Although Japanese opinion is not favorably disposed to China and competitive mass media can make that disposition even less favorable, ironically it is in nondemocratic but Internet-friendly China that a hard-edged, anti-Japanese nationalism is a vocal and influential force. Chinese leaders and officials are often reluctant to swim against that tide. To make matters worse, some members of the public have the ability to do damage in Japan through cyber warfare. Chapters 10 and 11 discuss those issues.

If decisionmaking is not necessarily effective in either country during times of routine interaction; if civil-military relations in China grant the PLA substantial policy and operational autonomy; and if domestic politics restricts civilian leaders, then the chances of the two governments responding to sudden tensions between them in a measured way are not great. That is the subject of chapter 12.

The book then returns to the question with which this discussion began: the consequences of the relationship between Japan and China for the United States, which seeks good relations with both and which must maintain its reputation for credibility. The United States is, after all, a treaty ally of Japan with a responsibility to come to Japan's defense in the event of external attack. The bedrock of that alliance is Japan's confidence that it will not be abandoned. On the other hand, how the two allies address the revival of China as a great power is a complex matter. Chapter 13 considers the implications of security interaction between Beijing and Tokyo for Washington.

I do not assume that conflict between a reviving China and a defensive Japan is inevitable. Far from it. Nor do I assume that either Tokyo or Beijing would deliberately seek war with the other. The leaders of both countries understand the interests that they share, particularly economic interests, and they know the costs of conflict. Recent Japanese governments—particularly the new Democratic Party of Japan government elected in August

2009—have pursued moderately accommodating policies toward China. But just because the probability of war is not very high does not mean that it is zero. Moreover, if a clash occurs, it is far from certain that the two nations could automatically avoid sliding off the cliff of conflict. In addition, the chance of conflict is not likely to decline as time goes on. The strategic reality in the East China Sea is unlikely to change; nor will domestic politics moderate in the short term. It is certain that although the possibility of conflict may be low, the consequences would be catastrophic for both countries.

For all those reasons, it is incumbent on China, Japan, and the United States to take steps to reduce the odds of clash and conflict; to achieve that end, chapter 14 offers a set of recommendations. It concludes that Tokyo and Beijing should start small with steps to restrain their forces in the East China Sea by creating a conflict-avoidance regime. Thereafter, they should pursue measures that address aspects of their security dilemma, institutions, and domestic politics. None of that will be easy. Nothing will happen without political leadership. But the results will have the salutary result of reducing the perils of proximity.