China, Japan, and the East China Sea Territorial Dispute:
A Systems Approach to Conflict Transformation

Tatsushi Arai

School for International Training (SIT) Graduate Institute, USA

tatsushi.arai@sit.edu

Abstract

The territorial dispute between China and Japan over the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands in the East China Sea poses a serious security threat to the region. It involves not only these two primary parties, but also the United States, Taiwan, the Okinawa community, and diverse other regional stakeholders. This article analyzes the interconnected nature of these stakeholders' relationships in which the Sino-Japanese territorial dispute is embedded. It applies multi-angled systems thinking to the analysis. It then builds on the systems analysis to explore alternative ways of managing and transforming the conflict. Proposed measures include a transitional framework for transcending the mutually exclusive nature of territorial sovereignty and prioritizing a practical and mutually beneficial use of the resources and maritime space in the East China Sea.

Key words: *China-Japan relations, East China Sea, conflict resolution, territorial dispute*

Introduction

The conflict over the East China Sea has deep historical roots in China-Japan relations. Recent incidents such as the collision of the Chinese and Japanese vessels off the coast of the Diaoyu (Chinese)/Senkaku (Japanese) Islands in September 2010 and Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda's announcement in July 2012 on his administration's plan to purchase the islands dramatically deepened the public concern and mistrust in the bilateral relations. (For a succinct summary of the basic facts and history of the dispute, see Yang in Arai, Goto, and Wang (2013), available online. Also see Figure 1 for a map of the region and Table 1 for a timeline of selected events, both in the Appendices)

Crises such as these carry a powerful impetus to confine the conflict parties' perspectives to a narrowly defined moment of imminent threats. These acute crises also reduce human

perceptions and relationships into an oversimplified image of "us" vs. "them," good vs. evil. The security crisis in the East China Sea has generated these effects. Costs of further escalation, up to military confrontation, are too devastating to contemplate. Despite the long-standing security, economic, and psychological obstacles to transform the existing tension between Japan and China, the two sides have no convincing alternative to changing the untenable status quo in favor of de-escalation.

What kind of thinking, then, would suggest a promising starting point to realize such a shift that simultaneously addresses the roots of the rising tension? Einstein's insight that one can never solve the problem with the same mindset that created it is instructive in this context. To answer this question, we need a different way of understanding the nature and roots of the territorial dispute in the East China Sea than before, for such an alternative perspective will provide an alternative basis of action.

The basic framework of analysis that will guide the present inquiry is systems thinking (Meadows 2008). When applied to the analysis of social conflict, systems thinking views conflict as a holistic social system. It explores the interconnected nature of conflict parties, their needs and goals at stake, and their relationships in a broader social environment in which they evolve. It calls for expanding the timeframe of analysis, from a crisis-driven focus on the immediate present toward a longer timescale that considers the continuity of the past, present, and future. It requires thinking in terms of decades to generations in addition to weeks to months. It also encourages a broader view of social space for relationship-building. Broadening our conception of social space suggests thinking expansively and holistically about who the parties are in that social space. Systems thinking requires paying attention to parties that would otherwise remain invisible and hidden from public attention.

In what follows, we will demonstrate how to apply systems thinking to the conflict over the East China Sea. We will then explore what implications and possible plans of action systems analysis helps generate for a way forward.

Understanding the multi-faceted nature of the dispute

Looking at the whole system of the conflict from a bird's-eye perspective, we recognize that there are five conflict parties (self-coconscious, goal-seeking) or stakeholders (not necessarily self-conscious of well-articulated goals), either state or non-state actors. They are China, Taiwan, Japan, Okinawa, and the United States. A possible objection to counting Taiwan (in relation to Mainland China) and Okinawa (in relation to the Japanese mainland) as self-standing parties is duly noted. Their inclusion is needed and justified for conflict analysis, however, because

its purpose is to identify historical, cultural, and political communities that have consistently sought to attain their own goals and needs at stake in the conflict. In this analytical process, neither these communities' status as non-state actors nor the stark power asymmetry that exists in their relationships disqualifies them as conflict parties. The underlying rationale of this analytical method is that if deep-rooted needs of these entities remain unmet, they will continue to advocate for their voices to be heard, as demonstrated by the decades of protest movements in Okinawa against the dominant influence by Tokyo and Washington.

Table 2 below summarizes the most salient needs and goals that each of the five parties seeks. For analytical clarity and coherence, we follow a version of basic human needs theory postulated by peace researcher Johang Galtung (1990) and divide the needs and goals into the following four categories:

- Freedom (of movement and expression, overcoming repression), a form of *political* needs
- Welfare (manifest in the form of physiological and resource needs, away from exploitation), a form of *economic* needs
- Survival (driven by a desire to overcome threats to life), a form of *security* needs
- Identity and meaning (in favor of self-actualization and bonding, away from alienation), a form of *cultural* needs

Boundaries between these four theoretical categories of needs are porous. In reality, they overlap significantly. However, the suggested typology of needs offers a useful framework of thinking that systematically identifies and categories diverse goals that motivate conflict parties and stakeholders to act. To construct Table 2, a four-by-five matrix summarizing the four categories of needs that each of the five parties and stakeholders seeks, the variable "highly salient" (HS) is used to indicate that the particular category of needs is deprived most severely for the given party due to the East China See territorial dispute. Likewise, the variable "salient" (S) indicates the presence of needs deprivation whose extent is not as severe as HS. Each of the table entries is tentative, suggestive only, and subject to further empirical examination. The integrated image of the table, however, presents one possible application of systems thinking to conflict analysis. Such a systematic bird's-eye view is what is largely missing yet needed in the ongoing policy discussion on this dispute.

Table 2: The Conflict Parties and their Goals at Stake in the East China Sea Territorial Dispute

Needs and goals at stake	China (Beijing)	Taiwan (Taipei, plus the eastern coastal region)	Japan (Tokyo)	Okinawa (Home to the disputed islands)	USA (Washington)
Freedom (Political Need)				**HS** (resisting rule by Tokyo and Washington)	
Welfare (Economic Need)	S (prospect of oil/gas for development)	S (securing fishery, trade, & tourism; prospect of oil/gas)	S (securing fishery; prospect of oil/gas to meet future energy needs)	**HS** (securing fishery, trade, & tourism; oil/gas revenues if possible)	S (regional economic stability, esp. through investment, production & trade with China)
Survival (Security Need)	**HS** (security in maritime & airspace, esp. in the Taiwan Strait, against the US-Japan alliance)	**HS** (resisting militarization & outbreaks of crisis/war)	**HS** (fearing Chinese attacks and regional domino effect)	**HS** (resisting militarization & state-led aggression that uses Okinawa's territory as battleground)	**HS** (regional stability, especially across the Taiwan Strait)
Identity & meaning (Cultural Need)	**HS** (for national and territorial integrity, remembering historical humiliation)	**HS** (pronouncing distinct Taiwanese identity internationally, using crisis as opportunity?)	S (conservatives concerned with Chinese attacks on national identity)	**HS** (restoring a sphere of livelihood, resisting national sovereignty as domination)	

HS = highly significant; S = significant

Table 2 cogently illustrates that the territorial dispute over the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands represents only a tip of an expansive iceberg comprised of inter- and intra-national relations that have generated and sustained the dispute. Resolution of the dispute requires transforming these relationships.

Two lessons are derived from this table. First, the threat to security is highly salient for all five parties and stakeholders. The Diaoyu/Senkaku issue is therefore a security issue first and foremost. Second, the conflict most directly affects all the four categories of Okinawa's basic needs. In other words, Okinawa, as the most powerless, voiceless stakeholder, is arguably worst hit despite its inability to express its voice internationally. Okinawa is therefore a highly marginalized and victimized theater of the unfolding security crisis, the status assigned to it by deep-rooted historical, structural inequity (Arasaki 2012). These two lessons suggest possible areas of priority for conflict resolution.

To make conflict analysis more multi-angled and to deepen it, we can supplement the above table of basic human needs with yet another application of systems thinking. This alternative approach views conflict as an interrelated set of relationships, not as a set of distinct parties and needs. In the context of protracted social conflict, many of these relationships are contradictory in nature, for conflict by definition is a contradiction between multiple parties, each seeking a different set of goals whose attainment is obstructed by their adversaries' goal-seeking behavior.

With this perspective on relationship-centered analysis in mind, we postulate the following six sets of relationships shaping and reshaping the system of social conflicts over the East China Sea. (For a visual illustration, see Figure 2, which focuses on the first five sets of relationships, all bilateral in nature.)

1. *US-China relations* over the interconnected nature of these two global powers' deepening bilateral economic ties and their security needs across the Taiwan Strait, on the Korean Peninsula, and in the Asia-Pacific region as a whole

2. *China-Japan relations* over the interconnected nature of historical reconciliation, maritime security, and economic ties

3. *US-Japan relations* over the future of their bilateral and regional security cooperation in general and the nature of US military deployment in Okinawa in particular

4. *Relationships between the Japanese mainland and Okinawa* over the future status of the Okinawa-based US military bases, as well as the disproportionate burden that Okinawa has historically shouldered for the maintenance of the security alliance between Tokyo and Washington

5. *Relationships between Mainland China and Taiwan* over the inherent tension between their shared emerging need to sustain cross-Strait détente, on the one hand, and their undiminished fear of deteriorating cross-Strait relations exacerbated by the long-standing US involvement in cross-Strait security, on the other.

Integrated relationship among the above five sets of bilateral relationships within the broader Asia-Pacific regional context (comprised of the Association for Southeast Asian Nations, North and South Koreas, and Russia, among other stakeholders), as well as the global context of international relations in which Asia's influence continuously grows.

Figure 2: Five Sets of Bilateral Relationships Contextualizing the Diaoyu/Senkaku Dispute
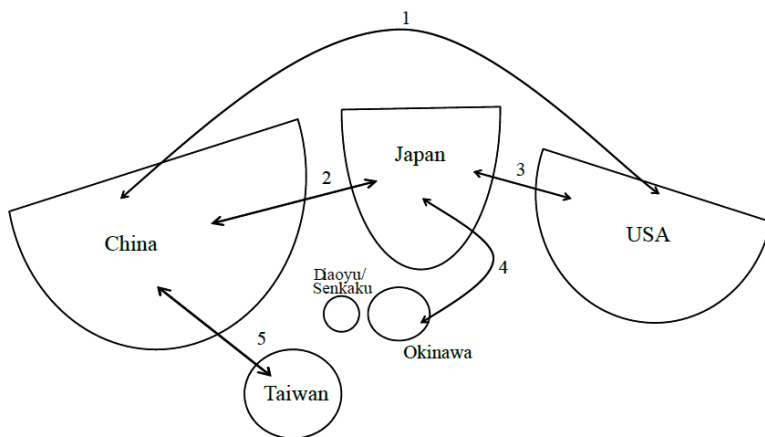
This last element – the relationships between the relationships – is the focus of a much-needed process of macro social change that can systematically prevent the recurrence of crisis in the East China Sea. However, for the moment, we will pay close attention to Japan-China relations, the immediate geographic and social context of the security crisis, as we seek to identify and explore ways to cope with its underlying conflict. While we define the immediate focus of analysis accordingly, we will remain attentive to the larger social context in which China-Japan relations unfolds. We will thus address China-Japan relations in the foreground and the rest of the interconnected relationships in the background to stay focused on systems analysis.

Exploring a way forward

The conflict analysis outlined above suggests two principles that will help devise an effective response to the present crisis. The first of these is that the conflict over the East China Sea is a social system comprised of the five major parties and stakeholders, each seeking to fulfill its needs at stake. Transformation of the conflict, therefore, requires creating an alternative system of relationships and restoring existing ones that will enable these parties to meet the seemingly contradictory needs through nonviolent means. This principle advocates a departure from a single-minded commitment to creating a balance of power. It is informed by the observation that one party's effort to strengthen military deterrence against the other necessarily suppresses their unfulfilled needs, deepens the unresolved contradictions, and escalates their conflict.

The second principle derived from the above analysis is that conflict resolution requires transcending the contradictions embedded in the relationships and discovering interdependence underlying the contradictions. The mutually exclusive Chinese and Japanese claims over the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands, for example, contradict one another. Paradoxically, however, this contradiction implies the tacit consent between the two sides on the seemingly nonnegotiable value of the same islands, albeit for different reasons. What this tacit consent illustrates is that China's fulfillment of her territorial claim depends on the Japanese behavior, and vice versa. In other words, the two sides are inadvertently *interdependent*. Recognizing the inherent oneness of interdependence and contradiction – a phenomenon that echoes the reciprocal relationship between yin (darkness) and yang (light) in Daoism – conflict resolution proactively discovers and activates interdependence inherent in contradiction, and simultaneously deactivates destructive potential.

With these guiding principles in mind, we will explore the following five areas of activities aimed at mitigating the existing tension and transforming the underlying conflict in the long run:

- Establish a transitional framework designed to transcend the mutually exclusive nature of the Chinese and Japanese claims over territorial sovereignty.
- Initiate a sustained US-China-Japan security dialogue with active Okinawa and Taiwanese participation.
- Introduce and expand alternative channels of dialogue, with emphasis on civil society's participation.
- Launch a high-level multi-lateral council on the East China Sea that will coordinate alternative channels of dialogue.
- Create a multi-functional experimental zone of Asia-Pacific partnership in the East China Sea.

The above list starts with short-term measures first and then proceeds to longer-term visions. We will elaborate on each in what follows:

A transitional framework to transcend the mutually exclusive nature of territorial sovereignty

In the context of the present crisis, there is a seemingly insurmountable obstacle that Tokyo and Beijing need to overcome immediately, as a prerequisite to the rest of the steps to be taken. This prerequisite concerns how to reconcile the Japanese denial of the presence of a territorial dispute with the Chinese exclusive claim over the same territory. This dilemma came to surface most conspicuously in the summer of 2012, when the nationwide Chinese protests spread in response to Prime Minister Noda's plan to purchase the islands. The Chinese protests were driven in part by the widespread public concern that Noda's announcement demonstrated Japan's unilateral action to suddenly renege on what China had long viewed as consensus established between the two sides in the 1970s to shelve the territorial dispute (see Yang in Arai, Goto, and Wang 2013).

To transcend this dilemma, the Japanese and Chinese governments can jointly issue a memorandum of understanding that acknowledges that the two sides *agree to disagree*, without accepting the other side's stated position as final and legitimate. A possible content of the proposed memorandum consists of the following three points:

1. The Japanese government affirms its belief in the Japanese sovereignty over the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands. It also acknowledges the Chinese government's belief in its sovereignty over these islands.

2. The Chinese government affirms its belief in the Chinese sovereignty over the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands. It also acknowledges the Japanese government's belief in its sovereignty over these islands.

3. While the two sides acknowledge a difference between their positions on the ownership of the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands, they affirm their shared commitment to work together toward a mutually acceptable solution by peaceful means.

It must be stated clearly that this memorandum does *not* require a revision to the official Japanese view that there exists no territorial dispute over these islands. The first two points merely acknowledge that the Japanese side has heard and understood the Chinese position clearly. In return, the Chinese government should be able to recognize the same effect of this memorandum in relation to its own domestic constituents.

As an alternative to reaching an explicit agreement, the two sides can develop tacit consensus through cumulative, reciprocal exchanges of ideas and gestures that gradually foster a shared understanding of the three suggested principles. Tacit consensus has the disadvantage of possible misunderstanding, ambiguity, and uncertainty. Tacit consensus, however, can remain politically low-key and sensitive to the deeply-wounded national identities that categorically reject a political settlement. In East Asia, precedents of such tacit arrangements include the 1992 consensus on the political status of Taiwan. This consensus illustrates an ambiguous yet useful understanding that Taipei and Beijing had reached in 1992 to accept the one-China principle (Bush 2005: 27-80). Their acceptance took the form of highly pragmatic, tactical choices that the two sides made to tolerate their divergent interpretations of Beijing's one-China principle. Despite their unresolved tension and the ambiguity that ensued, both Beijing and Taipei accepted the 1992 consensus as a useful basis for launching direct talks at the administrative level. To build confidence, China and Japan can learn from the 1992 consensus and other precedents in East Asia.

The United States government, as an influential stakeholder, must see its long-term national interest best served by supporting such bilateral confidence-building measures. Washington must place equal value on both the Chinese and Japanese efforts to carry out bilateral dialogues despite the US-Japan security alliance.

As senior Chinese and Japanese officials carry out dialogues on the contested territorial claims based on the memorandum or an alternative tacit arrangement, they may purposefully choose not to highlight their axiomatic commitments to exclusive territorial sovereignty, a concept that these two East Asian nations had historically inherited from the Western experience of modernization and state-making in the nineteenth century. They must shift their focus of attention from exclusive *ownership* to a shared *use* of the maritime space and resources. The historical precedent in the creative reframing of contested sovereignty claims, in such contexts as the Swedish-Finnish conflict over the Åland Islands after the First World War (which unpacked multiple functions of territorial sovereignty) and the Peru-Ecuador border dispute in the late 1990s (which combined an innovative transitional "border zone" with a more conventional borderline), may be instructive (Arai 2009).

Both China and Japan will benefit from complementing international law with shared East Asian traditions that support their conflict resolution practice. These traditions include Daoism (yang in yin, opportunity in crisis), Buddhism (a worldview of co-arising and interdependence, accepting sufferings and contradictions as a basis of spiritual growth), Confucianism (harmony based on social responsibility and ethics), and indigenous cultural beliefs common to Taiwanese and Okinawa communities (symbiosis between humanity and nature). Ultimately the Chinese and Japanese societies will need to make their mutually exclusive claims over the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands as unimportant as possible over time so that the coming generations in both societies can remember this dispute as politically insignificant. The Swedish and Finnish memory of their historical dispute over the Åland Islands, which they no longer see as a dispute, is instructive in this respect.

US-China-Japan security dialogue with Taiwanese and Okinawa participation

Beyond this preliminary step to address the contested sovereignty claims, a sustained multi-lateral dialogue is needed to carry out a joint conflict analysis and resolution among high-level representatives of China, Japan, and the United States. The dialogue must adopt a systemic view of the underlying causes of their mistrust and insecurity that make the territorial dispute in the East China Sea intractable. Such a trilateral dialogue series will benefit greatly from well-respected and informed Taiwanese and Okinawa participants. These participants will be invited to introduce alternative views on the history of the conflict and unexplored possibilities of both the ownership and the use of the disputed maritime space. International observers from ASEAN and Korea may also be invited whenever appropriate for regional confidence-building.

Public opinion, at least in Japan and the United States, supports comprehensive US-China-Japan dialogues. For example, a bi-national survey conducted jointly by the Japanese *Asahi Shimbun* newspaper and its American partner on December 4 and 5, 2010, shows US and Japanese views on their bilateral security treaty and their relationship with China as summarized in Table 3.

Table 3: A US-Japan Survey Result, 2010

Question to Japanese respondents: Which of the two approaches do you prefer in China-Japan relations?	
Strengthen the US-Japan alliance and then face China.	31%
Japan, the United States, and China should deepen cooperation in economic and other areas.	64%
Question to American respondents: Which of the two approaches do you support to promote peace and security in the Asia-Pacific region that includes Japan and China?	
Strengthen the US-Japan alliance and then face China.	18%
The United States, Japan, and China should deepen cooperation in economic and other areas.	70%

Adopted and translated from the Japanese text in Arasaki (2012: 120-121), based on a US-Japanese binational opinion survey conducted by the *Asahi Shimbun* newspaper on December 24-25, 2010.

These findings demonstrate that in both the United States and Japan, approximately two thirds of the respondents support collaboration among the three countries as a way of working with China, while a significantly smaller number of respondents prefer an adversarial approach to China. It is significant that this survey result that favors a collaborative approach to China came out three months *after* the collision of the Chinese and Japanese ships near the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands in September 2010. Although a Chinese version of such opinion polls is unavailable, there is a compelling reason to suggest that there exists broad-based public support for trilateral dialogue and collaboration despite the seemingly irresolvable conflict at the intergovernmental level.

Alternative channels of dialogue

As it is essential to open official channels of intergovernmental dialogue, either bilateral or trilateral, it is no less important to initiate and strengthen a broader range of alternative channels of dialogue. In China-Japan relations, each of these alternative channels should bring together a bi-national group of defense professionals, companies and industry groups (especially those engaged in fishing, resource and energy development, maritime transportation, tourism, and environment), civil society organizations (including youth and women's groups), journalists, artists, scholars, educators, and municipal governments. Examples of such alternative channels include the cumulative efforts that the municipalities in Okinawa and Taiwan's eastern costal region

have made together to create a bi-communal zone of commerce and tourism. In April 2009, these communities went as far as issuing a joint declaration to strive for their shared vision of sustained inter-communal collaboration (Arasaki 2012).

These alternative channels, if well organized, can diversify participants in discussion, transcend the inherent limitations of closed-door official negotiations, broaden the cultural meanings of the East China Sea in the conflict parties' collective consciousness, and make China-Japan relations more community-oriented and people-centered.

A high-level multi-national council on the East China Sea

To coordinate the multiple channels of dialogue coherently and effectively, it is useful to establish a high-level multi-national council on the East China Sea. The council will be comprised of respected Chinese and Japanese opinion leaders of diverse professional and communal backgrounds. Members of the council must include Taiwanese and Okinawa citizens. The primary functions of the council consist of orchestrating mutually beneficial interactions between the multiple channels of dialogue, disseminating the findings from these dialogues to the public on both sides through major media outlets and other appropriate means, and setting an authoritative tone in public to promote a socially responsible manner in which these diverse, decentralized channels of dialogue can address sensitive issues of mutual concern. In addition, the council may express its own independent opinions, interpretations, and recommendations when there is a need to prevent potential crises over the East China Sea – and closely related aspects of China-Japan relations – from escalating into serious international disputes. While the proposed council must enjoy a high level of autonomy from the governments, it must coordinate closely with the government-led negotiations for the purpose of disseminating and exchanging lessons learned.

Short-term reciprocal visits for systematic grassroots exchange

While the essential role of joint China-Japan initiatives that bring the two nations together must be recognized, it is also important to acknowledge that many of the psychological, economic, and political roots of the dispute deepen *within* each of the two societies as a consequence and reflection of their distinct historical experiences and social systems (see Fujihira and Wan in Arai, Goto, and Wang 2013). Arguably, different forms of international interaction will have only limited impact on transforming these domestic roots of the East China Sea dispute. Each of the two societies must earnestly work on its own internal causes through self-reflective efforts toward historical reconciliation and community-based healing.

To this end, both the Japanese government and civil society must recognize that the frequent use and abuse of anti-China rhetoric in public discourse and the expansion of deterrence capacities will only exacerbate the rising anti-Japanese sentiment in China (Takaraha in Arai, Goto, and Wang 2013). Conversely, the Chinese government and civil society must acknowledge that their pursuit of national unity and development through patriotic education does not necessarily require a common enemy outside its territory, accepting that national unity and international cooperation can complement one another[1].

Both sides will gain significantly by realizing that their internal social dynamics are partly responsible for generating the enemy image of one another.

One of the concrete steps that the two societies can take *together* to assist in each society's inner-directed efforts to reduce adversarial images is to launch a series of mutual visits, for example, one hundred of them to start with, by citizens' groups of one side going to the other. The goal of these short-term visits for grassroots exchange is to humanize mutual images and reduce uninformed prejudices that unnecessarily escalate fear and resentment against each other. Each of the visitors' groups may consist of prominent opinion leaders of diverse civil society backgrounds. The visitors may go to selected towns and cities, large and small, and have a series of town hall meetings about China-Japan relations in general and the East China Sea issue in particular. The visitors will be selected based on the social positions, influence, and credibility that they have established in the respective societies so that their constituent communities will pay serious attention to the public forums, media appearances, and reports that these visitors will generate upon returning home. Active participation of Taiwanese and Okinawa citizens as members of the visiting groups is both desirable and necessary to diversify perspectives on the East China Sea, as well as on China-Japan relations at large.

The proposed initiative for reciprocal visits is distinguished from the sustained multi-channel dialogue outlined earlier, for the primary purpose of these one-time visits is to help remove stereotypes among ordinary citizens at the grassroots level.

The East China Sea as an experimental zone of Asia-Pacific partnership

Finally, it is worth exploring a long-term aspirational vision of regional partnership over the East China Sea as a possible culmination of the aforementioned initiatives. At the heart of this long-term vision is the realization that China, Japan, and other regional stakeholders in the East China Sea can reverse the recurring patterns of crisis if, and only if, they succeed in constructing a robust, sustainable infrastructure of interdependent relationships that continuously facilitate the resolution of their conflicts. A preliminary step to build such

an infrastructure of relationships is to develop an experimental zone of partnership in the East China Sea, with a long-term view toward building a much broader scope of Asia-Pacific confidence-building. Concretely, the proposed vision consists of the following seven components. These components are divided into the three categories of security, economy, and culture/identity:

Security

1. *Introduce a joint Chinese-Japanese exercise of international peacekeeping* in the maritime space surrounding the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands, possibly under the United Nations flag. The exercise may invite Taiwanese and Okinawa participants as appropriate. One approach to realize this is to routinize and institutionalize regular joint peacekeeping activities, and simultaneously phase out the Chinese and Japanese unilateral exercises that deepen mistrust. ASEAN, Korean, US, and other international observers may be invited if the two sides consider their presence as conducive to regional confidence-building. The proposed initiative in regional peacekeeping may be modelled after relevant aspects of the joint Israel-Palestine police patrols in the Oslo peace process and the peacekeeping activities in the previously disputed Peru-Ecuador border area, both in the 1990s. Joint peacekeeping exercises of this nature, if realized, will cogently demonstrate the collective commitment of Japan and China as active contributors to global peace and security.

2. *Negotiate a US-China-Japan agreement on the demilitarization of the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands and their adjacent maritime space, with active Taiwanese participation.* The demilitarization zone in the Åland archipelago between Sweden and Finland, an arrangement that had grown out of the Second World War and the Cold War (Arai 2009: 8-15), suggests a possible model to build on. Successful implementation of such an arrangement would pave the way toward a gradual expansion of similar arrangements in the East China Sea, from Okinawa to the Taiwan Strait.

Economy

3. *Establish a comprehensive multi-national mechanism of oil and gas development* that builds on the existing agreements and previous high-level discussions relevant to this subject. In this process, China, Japan, and other regional stakeholders will need to redefine how they view the existing obstacles to their previous attempts. Such a redefinition of the obstacles will become possible when these parties reflect together on the coming age of greater energy dependence of the whole of East Asia

on energy supplies from the Middle East, Africa, and Central Asia. Such global thinking must be informed by the observation that by 2030, some eighty percent of Chinese oil will be imported from abroad, primarily from the Middle East and that Japan and Korea will most possibly follow suit (Taniguchi 2004: 143-155). Inevitable resistance to the idea of joint resource development may be overcome when all sides of the dispute come face to face with the painful fact that their mutually exclusive claims over resources have so far kept them in an impossible situation in which no party could economically benefit.

4. *Develop and expand a multi-national zone of fishing* based on the 2000 China-Japan agreement that defines the two sides' access to part of the East China Sea. In search of new principles for resolving the current stalemate on the question of fishery, the best practices of fishery use by Okinawa and Taiwanese fishermen, who have traditionally used this maritime space as an inter-communal sphere of livelihood (Arasaki 2012: 78-112), will introduce potentially useful insights. To this end, deliberate politicization of fishery use, as exemplified by the Abe administration's forceful approach to sign an agreement in April 2013 with Taipei to establish a shared Japanese-Taiwanese fishing zone, must be avoided.

5. *Develop a special zone of international tourism* in the Diaoyu/Senkaku area, or in the East China Sea as a whole, with emphasis on eco-tourism. The proposed zone may be modelled after the aforementioned inter-city networks of tourism between Okinawa and Taiwan's eastern costal region.

Culture and identity

6. *Establish a multi-national, multi-lingual memorial site on the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands*, with a monument of East Asian reconciliation and eternal friendship at the heart of it. A joint China-Japan working group, open to recognized opinion leaders from other countries and communities surrounding the East China Sea, should take lead in the design and construction of the site. The memorial will symbolize a collective resolve of the participating nations to foster lasting friendship and peace in the Asia-Pacific region and never to repeat the unspeakable tragedy of war. The Cornerstone of Peace, an Okinawa-based memorial site established in 1995 to remember the civilians and soldiers of all nationalities killed in Okinawa during World War II, suggests one concrete image to build on. Preparatory dialogues for this purpose will necessarily face much opposition on all sides, given the long history of nationalistic activists' forceful landings on the islands to erect landmarks

and monuments. However, the goal of the proposed initiative is not to compete with these opponents, but to launch deep multinational dialogues on the national identities and historical memories that drive these opponents and concerned others to keep their emotional dispute intact.

7. *Designate the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands as a site for a multi-purpose facility* dedicated to Asia-Pacific youth dialogue, intensive language training in Chinese and Japanese, cross-cultural art and music exchange, wedding and other ceremonies, marine biological research, spiritual retreats, and business meetings, especially for fishing industries.

While the precise details of the multi-functional zone of Asia-Pacific partnership must be debated rigorously and refined continuously, the basic rationale of the proposed vision is to demonstrate essential principles of conflict resolution, including a tenacious search for interdependence underlying contradictions in relationships. Such a joint effort to expand the humanizing social space of interdependence must be guided by a firm commitment to turn a new page in the history of East Asia. The past decades of deepening partnership that France and Germany, two of the worst historical enemies in Europe, have built as co-leaders of European reconciliation and integration suggest the potential of what visionary leadership and hard work can achieve in the Asia-Pacific region.

Endnote

(1) A view inspired by Wang (2012).

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Appendix I

Figure 1: Map of the East China Sea

Ryuku refers to Okinawa.

Adopted from: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Senkaku_Diaoyu_Tiaoyu_Islands.png

Appendix II

Table 1: Timeline of China-Japan Relations and the East China Sea Territorial Dispute

1621	A map produced under the Ming Dynasty for coastal defense indicated the Diaoyu islands as part of China's maritime territory, according to China's White Paper.
April 1895	The Treaty of Maguan (Chinese) or Shimonoseki (Japanese) concluded the First China-Japan War (1894-95). The treaty ceded Taiwan and some of its adjacent islands from the Qing Dynasty to the Empire of Japan.
August 1945	World War II ended. Japan returned Taiwan and its neighboring islands to China. The US military took control of the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands.
October 1949	The People's Republic of China (PRC) was established.
August 1968	The United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East discovered potential oil and gas reserves in the vicinity of the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands.
October 1971	The Taiwan-based Republic of China (ROC) lost its seat at the United Nations to the People's Republic of China (PRC).
September 1972	Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai received Japanese Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka in Beijing. The two sides issued a joint communique for the normalization of bilateral relations.
August 1975	China and Japan agreed on their responsibilities for fishery use and for the operations of their fishing boats in the East China Sea and the Yellow Sea.
October 1978	During his visit to Japan, Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping proposed shelving the dispute over the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands in favor of furthering bilateral relations.
January 1979	The United States and PRC established diplomatic relations.

February 1992	The National People's Congress in China passed a resolution that affirmed the Chinese sovereignty over the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands.
February 2000	A new China-Japan fishery agreement came into effect. As a temporary arrangement, the agreement ensures the right of both countries' fishing boats to operate in the north of the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands.
June 2008	China and Japan agreed to jointly develop four gas fields in the East China Sea while halting development in other contested parts of the region.
September 2010	A Chinese trawler collided with two Japan Coast Guard ships in the waters near the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands. Japan arrested the Chinese captain but later released him under Chinese pressure.
April 2012	During his visit to Washington DC, then-Tokyo Governor Shintaro Ishihara publicly stated his desire for Tokyo to purchase the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands from their current private owner.
July 2012	Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda announced the Japanese government's plan to purchase the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands. (The national government completed the purchase in September.)
August-September 2012	Anti-Japanese demonstrations spread in approximately 100 Chinese cities.
November 2012	Xi Jinping succeeded Hu Jintao as General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party.
December 2012	The Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) defeated the ruling Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) in a general election and won an absolute majority. LDP's Shinzo Abe became Prime Minister.
January 2013	Japan's New Komeito Party Leader Natsuo Yamaguchi visited China as a member of Japan's ruling coalition and met with the Chinese leader Xi Jinping.
April 2013	Tokyo and Taipei agreed to designate a shared fishing zone in the previously contested area of the East China Sea to meet Taiwan's long-standing request. Okinawa's mayor, its fishermen, and the Chinese government all protested.

November 2013	The Chinese government announced the establishment of an East China Sea Air Defense Identification Zone, making it mandatory for aircraft of other nationalities to notify Chinese authorities before entering the designated airspace. Washington and Tokyo protested.

The above timeline, up to January 2013, was adopted from pp. 113-5 in Arai, Goto, and Zheng (2013). The rest is added.