

## Shinzo Abe's Scheme of Staking Territorial Claims to Korea's Dokdo

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### Abstract

This paper analyzes how current Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe is promoting revisionist policies on education and security with the view toward staking a Japanese territorial claim to Korea's Dokdo. Abe's revisionism and rightwing nationalism can be seen in his artificial plan to solidify Japan's territorial claim to Dokdo. Abe's scheme, which follows a step-by-step pattern, is to politicize the Dokdo issue domestically and to bring global attention to Dokdo as a territorial dispute between South Korea and Japan. In the interim, Abe hopes to construct an artificial logic to explain the Japanese territorial claim to Dokdo, a rationalization that would fend off any Korean government objections, and that would accumulate evidence for a review by the International Court of Justice. Abe's longer-term goal is to use his education policy to whitewash Japan's imperial wartime history from textbooks and to socialize the Japanese people into a misguided sense of nationalism and erroneous ideas about Dokdo.

### Keywords

Dokdo, Shinzo Abe, territorial claim, Korea, Japan

## INTRODUCTION

As many scholars had predicted and the general public had early on expected, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has been pushing an ultra-nationalist policy agenda designed to boost a spirit of domestic cohesion in Japan. He has promulgated a revisionist perspective of Japanese wartime history that has unwittingly served to remind neighboring countries of the brutality of Japan's imperialistic past. The most serious aspect of Abe's revisionist historical viewpoint is his questioning the 1993 Kono Statement (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan 1993) on the use of comfort women and the 1995 Murayama Statement (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan 1995) on the need for Japan to apologize to the victims of its colonial past. Abe's revisionist view has been met by fierce global criticism and pressure from neighboring Asian countries and from the United States, which see Abe's denial of these two statements as undermining the Japanese peoples' sincere and deep remorse for Imperial Japan's past misdeeds during colonial rule. A number of widely-known historians and scholars have demanded that Abe and his cabinet correctly address Japan's colonial rule and wartime aggression (Hyashi 2015). In addition, when Abe addressed the joint session of the United States Congress on April 29, 2015, a number of protesters called upon him to apologize for Japan's wartime atrocities.

Although Abe has professed a commitment to improving relations with the Republic of Korea, certain of his behaviors have consistently provoked the Korean people. Abe reversed a precedent set by former Japanese Emperor Hirohito and current Emperor Akihito to refrain from visiting the Yasukuni Shrine after the remains of 14 Class-A war criminals were moved there in 1978. Instead, Abe visited the Shrine on December 26, 2013, on the occasion of the first anniversary of the second premiership. Abe's revisionist education and security policies manipulate the Japanese people into a false belief of Japanese wartime history and mislead them into supporting Japan's claim to Korea's territory of Dokdo. As sovereign territory of Korea, Dokdo is located in the East Sea, 87.4 km (47.2 nautical miles) east of Ulleungdo, Korea. As part of its imperialist agenda, Japan illegally incorporated Dokdo into its territory in 1905. After Japan was defeated in World War II, Dokdo was returned to Korea. However, several rightwing Japanese politicians, as well as Abe recently, have stretched the bounds of logic to question Korean sovereignty over Dokdo.

Abe deliberately promotes this territorial claim as a way to increase his

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popularity at home by appealing to Japanese nationalism. Since he became prime minister in 2012, Abe and his cabinet have insisted that Dokdo belong to Japan, vowing to use international law to make their case. Abe, for the first time in Japanese history, established the Office of Policy Planning and Coordination on Territory and Sovereignty (OPPCTS), elevating management of the Dokdo issue to the level of a governmental organization. He also for the first time sent a central government representative to the 2013 Takeshima Day ceremony. The Abe cabinet forced textbook publishers to include untrue information supporting Japan's territorial claim over Dokdo. The Abe cabinet repeated this wrongful claim in the 2013, 2014, and 2015 Diplomatic Bluebook (Yonhap News, April 7, 2015). Abe's territorial claim to Dokdo severely undermines any expectation of comity between Korea and Japan. Furthermore, as with most right-wing Japanese politicians, Abe cabinet members tout Dokdo as a cohesive symbol of nationalism. Abe's dangerous revisionism and right-wing nationalist position have increased tensions between Korea and Japan. Abe's scheme to stake a territorial claim over Korean sovereignty of Dokdo has been a thorny issue between Korea and Japan.

Why does the current Abe cabinet continue to push such a fictitious and incorrect territorial claim, ignoring solid historical foundation and legal evidence supporting Korean sovereignty over Dokdo? (see H Lee 1998; Choi 2005; Van Dyke 2007; S Kim 2010; S Lee & Van Dyke 2010; Bae 2012). To what end does Abe push revisionist education and security policies relative to Japan's territorial claim to Korea's Dokdo? Can we probe the mindset behind such a murky territorial claim? This paper purports to investigate these research questions. Section II examines Abe's political background and political ideology behind his revisionist policies on education and security regarding the Japanese territorial claim to Dokdo. Section III analyzes the kind of measures that Abe has implemented in order to increase awareness of Dokdo as a territorial dispute and Abe's scheme to stake territorial claims over Korea's Dokdo in three broad levels. The conclusion suggests a brief policy proposal as a response to Abe's revision policy on Dokdo.

## THE POLITICAL BACKGROUND OF SHINZO ABE'S LEADERSHIP AND REVISIONIST POLICIES

In order to understand how Shinzo Abe defines his political ideology and establishes his revisionist policy, we need to examine his family background and his first tenure as Japanese prime minister. Shinzo Abe's elite family background heavily influences his political ideology. His father, Shintaro Abe, occupied several ministerial positions during the 1970s and 1980s. Abe's grandfather Nobusuke

Kishi, his role model, was prime minister from 1956 to 1960. Kishi was an imperialist who built the State of Manchuria, a puppet state of Japan in Northeast China, into a labor and natural resource base for Japan. As one of the founding members of the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI), Kishi sought to industrialize Japan. He also sought to revise the peace constitution that the United States had constructed as a way for post-World War II Japan to renounce militarism and build a democracy. Following in the footsteps of his grandfather who wished to elevate Japan to global power and glory, Abe tried, by amending Article 9 of the Japanese constitution (Hayashi 2014; Mishima 2007, 32), to transform the country into a normal state with a military that could wage war with other nations.

Shinzo Abe began his political career in 1993 when he was elected to the House of Representatives. His first stint as prime minister was for one year, from September 2006 until August 2007. Although Abe, as a young promising leader, enjoyed a high approval rating upon first assuming office, he was not an effective leader. Contrary to Abe's policy priorities of using the education system to promote patriotism and to transform Japan into a normal state, the Japanese people wanted him to solve the problem of stagnant economic conditions at the time. However, Abe did not meet this basic demand and failed to manage the pension crisis. In addition, several of his cabinet members were involved in a series of political and financial scandals. In the end, Abe lost the confidence of the Japanese people and stepped down within a year (Envall 2011, 158-162). Abe's failure motivated him to pursue new policy priorities. He reflected on the failures of his first term and contemplated how to pursue his policy agenda in his second term. The House of Representatives elected him prime minister again in December 2012 and to a third term in 2014 by a two-thirds majority. In his second and third terms, Abe focused on reviving the Japanese economy with ongoing policy reforms.

During Abe's formative years from the mid-1950s to the 1980s, Japan's post-war economy outstripped that of other advanced countries, becoming the world's second largest economy after the United States. Basking in the glow of this economic miracle, Abe's pride in his country carried with it questions of why Japan should depend on the United States for national security under the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between the United States and Japan. He might have been frustrated by the fact that the world's second largest economy was unable to pursue its own independent security policy. As did his grandfather Kishi in trying to revise the Japanese constitution, Abe sought to revise Article 9 of the Japanese constitution. Abe is also of a generation of politicians that saw first-hand more than two decades of economic stagnation (Lost Decade) beginning in the 1990s. As a way of coping with economic stagflation, Abe advocates very aggres-

sive economic management using a three pillars approach; boosting government spending, increasing monetary supply, and reforming the economic structure (Abenomics). His book, *Utukushii Kuni e* (Toward a Beautiful Country 2004), revealed his political ideology. Abe preaches that Japan deserves appreciation for its achievements in economy, technology, and for its peace-loving nature. He believes that in order to defend Japanese honor, territory, and property, the country should maintain a strong Self-Defense Forces (SDF) (Inoguchi 2014, 105). Abe's political ideology is based on three characteristics: 1) breaking with the old legacy of World War II through reinterpretation of history, 2) a fair appreciation of Japan's economic success, and 3) a pro-business and non-interventionist government (Mishima 2007, 32).

Born in 1954, Abe is the youngest prime minister in Japan's modern political history (see Profile of the Prime Minister 2015). He did not live through the disasters of World War II. Unlike most older Japanese who are remorseful about the militarism that inflicted suffering on neighboring countries and led to the U.S. atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Abe might not understand the wartime history of Japan and empathize with the older generation's trauma. Lacking this genuine introspective view of history, he may attempt to suppress the memory of brutal Japanese imperialism. Following the ideology of Nippon Kaigi, a right-wing revisionist organization, Abe alleges that Japanese troops were never involved in the 1937 Nanjing massacre and were not directly engaged in forcing innocent women into sex slavery during World War II (Kato 2014). Abe has been reluctant to fully accept Kono's statement that the "Japanese military was, directly or indirectly, involved in the establishment and management of the comfort stations and the transfer of comfort women...in many cases they were recruited against their own will, through coaxing, coercion..." (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan 1993). Abe has partially recanted the Japanese government's apology for the brutal acts of colonial rule and aggression, which had been officially stated by former Prime Minister Murayama Tomiichi in 1995 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan 1995).

...we tend to overlook the pricelessness and blessings of peace. Our task is to convey to younger generations the horrors of war, so that we never repeat the errors in our history...we should bear in mind that we must look into the past to learn from the lessons of history, and ensure that we do not stray from the path to the peace and prosperity of human society in the future. ... Japan, following a mistaken national policy, advanced along the road to war, only to ensnare the Japanese people in a fateful crisis, and, through its colonial rule and aggression, caused tremendous damage and suffering to the people of

many countries, particularly to those of Asian nations. In the hope that no such mistake be made in the future, I regard, in a spirit of humility, these irrefutable facts of history, and express here once again my feelings of deep remorse and state my heartfelt apology. Allow me also to express my feelings of profound mourning for all victims, both at home and abroad, of that history. ... Building from our deep remorse on this occasion of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the war, Japan must eliminate self-righteous nationalism, promote international coordination as a responsible member of the international community and, thereby, advance the principles of peace and democracy. At the same time, as the only country to have experienced the devastation of atomic bombing, Japan, with a view to the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons, must actively strive to further global disarmament in areas such as the strengthening of the nuclear non-proliferation regime. It is my conviction that in this way alone can Japan atone for its past and lay to rest the spirits of those who perished (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan 1995).

Abe's revisionist view of history helps to explain his rationalization of the Yasukuni Shrine as similar to Arlington National Cemetery in the United States (Tepperman 2013, 2-8). He thus switches from the role of an aggressor to that of a defender in World War II. After frequently expressing regret about not visiting Yasukuni during his term, Abe ultimately followed up on this intention. Even though current Emperor Akihito and former Emperor Hirohito refused to visit Yasukuni, Abe went to the Shrine on December 26, 2013 (The New York Times, December 27, 2013; March 3, 2014). He further argued that the visit was an anti-war gesture expressing hope that people would not suffer war again (BBC, December 26, 2013). This revisionist wartime history has brought Abe strong support from right-wing factions, but such a dangerous and abnormal nationalism exacerbates an already strained relationship with Korea and China.

His revisionism and political ideology are an operational code for implementing or redesigning education and security policies. His ultra-nationalism and revisionist historical viewpoint pushed him forward in his quest to change the foundation of traditional civic education. The traditional Japanese education system, which provided imperialist and Confucianist thought during the pre-WWII period, was replaced by the *Fundamental Law of Education* (教育基本法, *kyoiku kihonho*) in 1947 (Horio 1994, 25-26) under the guidance of the Supreme Commander for the Allied Power (SCAP). The purpose of post-World War II law was to eliminate the legacy of Japanese imperialism and to provide the foundation of a democratic culture for Japanese students. Abe, however, sees the educational system as a way to promote Japanese patriotism. During his first term in 2006,

Abe amended the law and inserted a new education goal of “love of country and homeland.” In keeping with this guideline, the Abe cabinet strictly screened textbook content beginning in 2006. For example, the sentence “Imperialist Japanese Army was responsible for the abducting and enslaving” was changed from active to passive voice—“women being abducted and turned into sex slaves” in order to minimize the responsibility of Japan. Although Abe vehemently objects to the prevailing narrative, it is an undeniable historical fact that the Japanese government forced and even kidnapped Asian females to serve as sex slaves for Japanese soldiers until the end of World War II in 1945. Under pressure from the Education Ministry, textbook publishers had to delete the word “massacre” from the “Nanjing massacre” and were forced to describe as uncertain the number of victims. In addition, the publishers had to describe the Korean territory of Dokdo as Japanese territory (Yoshifumi 2015; McCormack 2014, 79-80).

Under Abe's current term, the Education Ministry applied new rules for textbook editions and authorized school textbooks on April 6, 2015. Textbook publishers must adopt the government's official viewpoint in certain topics. Ignoring facts, Japanese textbooks must contain incorrect historical events and the distorted historical viewpoints of right-wingers. Nowadays, most of the textbooks have to use such expressions as “South Korea illegally occupies the Takeshima islands” and “territory that is an inherent part of Japan” (Asahi Shimbun, April 7, 2015). Given that junior-high school students tend to accept instruction from their textbooks or teachers unquestioningly, these screened textbooks might imbue the young generation with blind Japanese chauvinism.

Abe's plan to amend Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution is another move that creates severe anxiety among Asian neighbors concerned about the imminent emergence of a neo-imperial Japan. Article 9 has stood for Japan's strong commitment and desire for peace and prosperity with other nations. The clause stipulates that:

Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes. In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized (See Article 9 of the Constitution of Japan).

Abe's plan to amend Article 9 was revealed in a 2013 interview with *Foreign Affairs* Managing Editor Jonathan Tepperman. Responding to Tepperman's question, “...

why you're interested in revising Japan's constitution?" Abe answered as follows:

With regard to the issue of the right to collective self-defense, imagine that U.S. vessels on the high seas were being attacked and an armed ship, say an Aegis-type destroyer, from Japan, America's treaty ally, was just passing by. The arrangement we currently have in Japan does not allow the destroyer to make any response whatsoever. That is insane (Tepperman 2013).

Abe continued to pressure his cabinet to approve a reinterpretation of Article 9 relaxing the prohibition on Japan's use of force. Abe wished to circumvent the democratic revision process of the Constitution, which requires a vote of two-thirds of each Diet and then another simple majority vote by the people, through cabinet decision. Abe's first goal was achieved when his cabinet allowed the SDF to exercise "the right to collective self-defense." On May 15, 2014, Abe announced that Japan is now able to dispatch the SDF to defend U.S. vessels which "are evacuating Japanese citizens from a conflict area" (Asahi Shimbun, May 15, 2014). Abe's intention also coincided with U.S. interest in curbing China's rising naval power in the Southeast China Sea. On April 27, 2015, the United States and Japan revised *the Guidelines for U.S.-Japan Defense Cooperation* (2015), in which SDF can exercise the use of forces for self-defense and collective-defense.

The Self-Defense Forces will have primary responsibility for the protection of major ports and straits in Japan and of ships and vessels in waters surrounding Japan and for other associated operations. For this purpose, the Self-Defense Forces will take necessary actions, including, but not limited to, coastal defense, anti-surface warfare, anti-submarine warfare, mine warfare, anti-air warfare, and air interdiction (See the Guidelines for U.S.-Japan Defense Cooperation 2015, 13).

Article 9 of the Constitution bans SDF's participation in collective self-defense as well as the use of armed forces in overseas operations, but Abe's revisionist policy undermines this spirit of peace. The most serious problem is that Abe himself and his cabinet members may not clearly understand the limitation of use of force by the SDF under the revised Guidelines. On May 25, 2015, a day before the effective date of the Japanese national security bill, Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga addressed a possible pre-emptive strike on other countries' military bases, apparently having in mind North Korea's missile bases and nuclear facilities. Suga said "[h]itting missile bases falls within legal limits for self-defense, and there have been Diet responses to that effect" (Miwa 2015). What would happen if



the SDF launched preemptive attacks on North Korea's military facilities under the Japanese estimated range of security threat without consulting South Korea? If the SDF, like a runaway horse, were to use military means against the South Korean navy near Dokdo, which side does the United States take? Thus, there is a fair chance that Abe's revisionist policy could bring serious legal issues in domestic as well as international law in the near future. In early June 2015, a phalanx of critics emerged in Japan, energizing opposition to the security reforms. The bills remove geographic restriction on where the SDF could operate and allow Japan to defend its allies even when Japan itself is not under attack, under the principle of collective security. Critics fear Japan will be drawn into a United States-led war (Reuters, July 15, 2015). The bills also lack public support, with citizens wondering why it is needed. More than 200 constitutional scholars in Japan have joined a statement calling the legislation unconstitutional and demanding it be dropped, with the Japanese Bar Association issuing a similar statement (The Associated Press, June 10, 2015). In spite of mass oppositions, Abe's LDP and his allies approved the 11 security-related bills in the lower house on July 15, 2015 (Sobel 2015) and in the upper house on September 19, 2015 (Asahi Simbun), paving the way for the SDF to be involved in war mission overseas for the first time since World War II.

### SHINZO ABE'S SCHEME TO STAKE TERRITORIAL CLAIM OVER KOREA'S DOKDO

During his second term, Abe has taken various measures regarding Dokdo. Those measures include an official announcement of his intention to file the Dokdo issue to the ICJ, inserting Dokdo as a Japanese territory in school textbooks, installing the Office of Policy Planning and Coordination on Territory and Sovereignty (OP-PCTS) to manage the Dokdo issue at the government level, sending central government representatives to the ceremony of Takeshima Day in Shimane Prefecture, conducting a public opinion survey on Dokdo, and continually making wrongful territorial claim over Dokdo in the Diplomatic Bluebook and the Defense White Paper. These Dokdo related measures may appear to be utterly disconnected, but are, in fact, an elaborately planned operation by Abe's cabinet. As examined in the previous section, Abe's revisionist policies on education and security are serving as a framework for his erroneous territorial claim over Dokdo. In other words, one major hidden goal of Abe's revisionist policies is to mislead the Japanese people into supporting an erroneous Japanese territorial claim over Korea's Dokdo. In order to solidify Japanese claims over Dokdo, Abe has constructed an artificial rationalization.

Abe's transparent scheme can be disaggregated into three broad levels. In the short-term, Japan intends to politicize the Dokdo issue domestically and to increase international awareness on the issue as a territorial dispute between South Korea and Japan by using various step-by-step approaches. Domestically, Abe believes that a series of nationalist gestures on the Dokdo issue can appeal to his conservative right-wingers in order to gain firm political support. Abe also wishes to take advantage of the Dokdo territorial claim to divert criticism from stagnated economic conditions. The Abe cabinet is devising various strategies of propagandizing the Dokdo issue. Regrettably, Abe is the first prime minister to send a central government representative to the ceremony of Takeshima Day in Shimane Prefecture (Asahi Simbun, February 23, 2013). Moreover, Abe continued to send government officials to the ceremony in 2014 and 2015 (Asahi Simbun, February 23, 2015). All previous Japanese prime ministers had refrained from sending a central government official to the ceremony since the day was designated on March 16, 2005, in a diplomatic consideration to avoid a provocation of the South Korean government (Choe 2014). As such, Abe's action did not match his words in proposing a summit meeting as a conciliatory gesture to Korea. Because Dokdo is "an integral part of Korean territory historically, geographically and by international law," the Korean government consistently and firmly resists against any measure to impinge upon its sovereignty over the island (see Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea, February 22, 2013). Abe's cabinet also produced, and circulated over YouTube and various other Internet sources, video clips asserting its ownership over Dokdo. The Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs summoned a Japanese diplomatic official and demanded Japan take down the video clips (Inocencio 2013). The Abe cabinet conducted an official survey regarding territorial claim over Dokdo and released the results on August 2, 2013. As the purpose of survey was not to measure public opinion on Dokdo issue but to increase public awareness of the issue, the Abe cabinet deliberately asked loaded questions, which led respondents to wrongly support Japanese ownership of the island (Sekiguchi 2013). Korea's Park Geun-hye government vigorously protested against the Abe cabinet that the survey is a provocative measure to challenge Korean sovereignty (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea, August 2, 2013). Regardless of such stern protests from Korean government, the Abe cabinet continued to supply erroneous information on Dokdo through the Diplomatic Blue Book (Yonhap News, April 7, 2015), the Defense White Paper (The Hankyoreh, January 22, 2015), and various Japanese governments' official websites and advertising pamphlets.

In a middle term plan, Abe hopes to develop an artificial logic supporting Japanese territorial claims over Dokdo and to systematically cope with any Ko-

rean government response. In the end, Japan wishes to compile various pieces of false evidence to support its territorial claim over Dokdo in order to prepare for a possible ICJ review. Like former Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda, Abe declared in the Diet on January 30, 2014 that his cabinet was reviewing and preparing to submit the Dokdo issue unilaterally to the ICJ at the Plenary session of the House of Councillors (参議院) (see Japanese National Diet Record Search System). Abe's intention was not realized because both Korea and Japan must agree to submit the Dokdo case to the ICJ. The Korean government's official view is firm that Dokdo is an integral part of Korean territory by virtue of history, geography, and under international law. Therefore, Seoul's position is that no territorial dispute exists regarding Dokdo. The United States also pressured the Abe cabinet to maintain close cooperation with the Korean government to deter a North Korean nuclear threat and the rise of China in the Northeast Asian region. As a way to manage territorial issues and to promulgate the artificial logic of a Japanese territorial claim to Dokdo, Abe created the OPPCTS. OPPCTS deals with territorial issues, such as the Dokdo/Takeshima island, the Senkaku/Diaoyutai islands, and the Southern Kuril islands/Northern territories, at the level of a governmental agency. The "Advisory Panel on Communication Concerning Territorial Integrity," organized under OPPCTS in April 2003, serves as a forum within which Japanese experts in international relations, international law, and history can efficiently communicate with each other as they develop a series of arguments to counter any territorial claims made by foreign governments. After working from July 2013 to June 2015, the Advisory Panel submitted a summary report of its findings, which also included recommendations for how the Japanese government should deal with the international and domestic context of Japanese territorial claims (see the homepage of the OPPCTS). Furthermore, the OPPCTS enlisted the aid of college professors to conduct research on how to solidify its territorial claim (see FY2014 Cabinet Secretariat Commissioned Research Project 2015). This research is to be utilized in education material for Japanese students and citizens.

Lastly, in the longer-term perspective, Abe hopes to use textbook screening to whitewash Japan's imperial wartime history and to brainwash the people into a misguided sense of nationalism and erroneous ideas about Dokdo. As a way of imbuing young Japanese students with erroneous belief about Korea's Dokdo, the Education Ministry approved teaching manuals for junior high school textbooks that present Dokdo as Japanese territory (Oka 2014). Under instruction from Abe's cabinet, Japanese middle school textbooks introduced a significant revision of the earlier description of Dokdo. The textbooks describe Dokdo as Japan's sovereign territory that has been illegally occupied by Korea. The Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs protested that "for the Japanese government to continue

to inculcate young minds with a view of territory that is based on distortions is tantamount to a threat to repeat the mistakes of the past” (The Hankyoreh, April 7, 2015). However, Japan’s repetitious references to territorial claim over Dokdo will mislead the Japanese people into a belief that Korea illegally occupies Dokdo. If Japan’s younger generation does not learn the historical truths about how their past government invaded neighboring countries and attacked Pearl Harbor, their ancestors’ brutal occupation of Asian nations, and how the military regime forced tens of thousands of innocent women into sex slaves, they are vulnerable to have blind faith in Japanese nationalism. Japan’s rightwing forces and Abe are predisposed to believe that Japan was unfairly and incorrectly slandered by the United States after WWII. They assert that Japan has been sufficiently punished by the United States to compensate for any past atrocity against its Asian neighbors. They insist erroneously that the Asian Women’s Fund is enough to atone for their ancestors’ brutal treatment of these women. Their large financial contribution to the Official Development Assistance would be a strong foundation to demonstrate that the country is a responsible middle power in the world. Furthermore, Abe hopes to establish Japan as a 21<sup>st</sup> century leader, able to support the United States to counter a rising China (The New York Times, April 20, 2015). If Abe is unable to dispel his revisionist views of wartime history, his plan to make Japan a proactive contributor to peace would be nothing more than a daydream.

## CONCLUSION

Abe’s revisionist policy is partially aligned with Japan’s conservative Liberal Democratic Party’s wish to increase global awareness on the Dokdo issue as a territorial dispute between Korea and Japan in order to boost domestic popularity by appealing to Japanese nationalist sentiment. Under an elaborate scheme to implant the misguided belief of Japan’s territorial claim on Korea’s Dokdo, Abe has pursued a three-phase plan. In the short-term, Abe’s dispatch of government officials to the ceremony of Takeshima Day, the wrongful territorial claim over Dokdo in the Diplomatic Blue Book and the Defense White Paper, and conducting a public opinion survey were designed to publicize the Japanese territorial claim over Dokdo. In the mid-term, Abe installed the OPPCTS as a government organization and began several research projects on Dokdo in order to develop an artificial logic to counter the reality of Korean sovereignty of the island. In the longer-term, Abe hopes to indoctrinate students with his revisionist wartime history and erroneous territorial claim of Dokdo using a system of textbook screening.

Abe’s electoral victory in December 2014, which secured a new two-thirds

majority of the ruling coalition (the Liberal Democratic Party and the Komeito) in the House of Representative, paved the way for his ambition to turn Japan into a normal state by amending Article 9 of the Japanese constitution. The recently passed national security bills and the revised U.S.-Japan defense guidelines heightened the Korean government's fears of the possibility of the SDF's deployment of military forces. Japan's minister of defense stated that the SDF would not launch military forces in another country's territory without consent of the concerned country. Consequently, Korea has a growing unease that Japanese ultranationalist right-wingers might risk using naval forces against the Korean navy near Dokdo or against the Chinese navy near the Senkaku/Diaoyutai islands as hawkish Japanese factions carried out aggressive wars in the past. In order to prevent such a disastrous territorial conflict, the Korean government must maintain close diplomatic communication channels with the United States and Japan.

If Abe is a rational leader, he definitely recognizes that his wrongful territorial claim over Dokdo severely undermines cooperative international relations between Korea and Japan. However, Abe will not retreat from his position. Furthermore, the Korean government had been avoiding a summit meeting with Abe unless he sincerely apologized for Japan's colonial rule and acknowledged the Japanese military's role in forcing women into sex slavery. Recently, Abe reluctantly complied with a U.S. demand that Japan and South Korea maintain close cooperation to deal with a rising China and with North Korea's nuclear threats. The reality is that both South Korea and Japan must cooperate closely with the United States in the face of security threats from North Korea's ambition of developing long-range missile and nuclear weapons. On November 2, 2015, President Park and Abe had a summit meeting at the Blue House in Seoul, Korea. Both leaders agreed that the issue of Japan's wartime sex slavery should not be an obstacle for future relations between the two countries and the issue should be resolved through negotiations in a way that is acceptable to the wounded parties (Kim 2015).

Because Abe hopes to negotiate with South Korea in order to resolve the wartime sex slavery issue in the near future, he might be hesitant to provoke the South Korean government by staking a territorial claim over Dokdo in these days. However, Abe might use the Dokdo issue again as a scapegoat when confronted with severe domestic political unrest. From August 2015 until now, a number of Japanese intellectuals and tens of thousands of Japanese citizens have protested against Abe's security bills and revisionist policy. If Japanese opposition parties manage to unite with widespread public support, Abe might definitely use the Dokdo issue to divert public mistrust from his cabinet. In the end, South Korea has to confront Abe again.

How to deal with Abe's revisionist view and his scheme to stake a territorial

claim over Korea's Dokdo is not an easy task. It might be painful for the Korean people to ignore Abe's continuous provocative territorial claim to Dokdo, but, for now, ignoring him would be a practical way to deal with this provocation. When Korea's conservative media reported every measure of Abe's territorial claim to Dokdo, Koreans became emotional and overreacted to the actions of the Abe cabinet. However, the Korean peoples' reaction is precisely what the Abe cabinet and Japanese right-wingers wanted. They would never miss an opportunity to publicize these occurrences and exploit such Korean sentiment to encourage Japanese nationalism. Thus, imprudent reactions that appeal to national sentiment intuitively will backfire against the Koreans. Such a vicious cycle of action and reaction has driven Korea-Japan relations into a disastrous situation. For South Korea, responding to Abe's revisionism and erroneous territorial claim on Dokdo through diverse official diplomatic channels and international organizations is a time-consuming job, but likely to be most effective in the end.

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