


UK-Japan Strategic Partnership

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Executive Summary

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The purpose of this policy brief is to explore the scope for Japan and the UK to pursue an enhanced security partnership, both globally and regionally. Our approach is aimed at assessing to what extent the two countries share a common strategic outlook, and at examining the benefits, opportunities for, and limits to a deeper partnership. We adopt here a wider definition of strategy that is not limited to military and defense issues, but also encompasses the commitment to a set of shared norms and values on the international stage. We believe that ‘partnership’, rather than ‘alliance’, is the ideal framework for fostering cooperation between the UK and Japan, because it offers a more flexible and less formal structure in which both countries can pursue their own approach in response to regional contingencies all while striving to develop policy convergence in the matters of shared interest. The UK and Japan’s international position as well as historical background makes them ideal partners. London and Tokyo have a long record of established and effective bilateral cooperation and share many characteristics of ‘island nations’ that play a similar role within US-led alliance structures. Both Japan and the UK are strongly committed to liberal-democratic values and norms, and have similar sized and largely complementary economies.

“Partnership’, rather than ‘alliance’, is the ideal framework for fostering cooperation between the UK and Japan”

Contents

This brief comprises four chapters, each examining one key issue of the UK-Japan partnership, as follows.

- I. Our analysis starts from considering Japan and the UK’s stance vis à vis the resurgence of great power politics on the international stage. As the current international environment is undergoing increasing challenges from the rise of populist and demagogic leaders, the backlash against globalization and the increasing fragility of liberal-democratic norms, we set to identify the repercussions that these structural changes have on the UK and Japan’s

strategic posture. In particular, we focus on the phenomenon of the resurgence of great power competition: how are Japan and the UK adapting to the aggressive foreign policy of China and Russia? What is their stance vis à vis the US progressive retreat from globalism? We highlight an interesting puzzle: on one hand, Britain and Japan are two of the countries that have most significantly contributed (and also benefited from) the International Liberal Order (ILO) guaranteed by the United States after the Second World War, and thus two of its staunchest supporters on the international stage; however, on the other hand, their perceptions of and approaches to the two main challengers of that very order – China and Russia – starkly differ.

- II. In the second chapter we examine the two new emerging frameworks of cooperation in Asia: China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and Japan's Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy (FOIP), and evaluate to what extent they can be considered as complementary or alternative to each other. We outline the challenges of post-Brexit diplomacy for the UK, and its ambitions to pursue a 'Global Britain' strategy. Our approach is largely informed by economic considerations, as trade is widely considered a core area of the 'Global Britain' project. Trade is also one of the top items on the agenda of Sino-UK relations, which are characterized not only by the enthusiasm for China's Belt and Road Initiative by British conservative politicians, but also by the preeminent role played by UK Commercial Law Firms in serving clients involved in BRI-related disputes. We then juxtapose Japan's FOIP to China BRI and argue that, behind the official rhetoric focusing on infrastructural development project, FOIP serves the primary goal of containing China and supporting Prime Minister Abe's international security agenda based on the 'security diamond' concept. As such, our argument is that FOIP and BRI are two instruments of power projection and enhancement of the geopolitical presence of Japan and China respectively. We emphasize how the UK is faced with a dilemma between the short-term economic gain – which is provided by the opportunities of the BRI – and the long-term stability of the Liberal International Order (LIO) in the Pacific region – which FOIP sets to preserve.
- III. After considering the economic and legal aspects underpinning China and Japan's strategies in the Pacific region, we move on to security issues. We argue that, in order to foster meaningful cooperation between the UK and Japan, we should abandon the artificial dichotomy between civil and military security and rather embrace a more holistic approach to security that encompasses not only military concerns (including terrorism) but also issues such as the freedom of press, climate change, human rights and cybersecurity. Concerning traditional security matters, we examine the significance and impact of the recent institutional creation and strengthening of the National Security Council in both the UK and Japan. We also focus in particular on the ambitious changes made by the Abe administration in the realm of Japan's security policy. The latter part of this chapter turns then to 'civil security' aspects. We argue that it is in these areas that Japan and the UK, as

committed supporters of the rule of law, free trade and liberal values, have the most in common – and thus the largest scope for cooperation.

- IV. Finally, we consider the issue of North Korea, unambiguously perceived as a major security threat from both Britain and Japan, and examine how the two countries should deal with the DPRK as a nuclear power. First of all, we propose a more nuanced interpretation of the motivations and objectives of the North Korean regime – one that rejects sensationalistic depiction of the DPRK as a ‘irrational’ actor led by a madman, and instead argues that North Korea’s foreign policy priorities have been consistently characterized by a certain logic and stability (largely informed by the priorities of regime survival, prestige and international recognition). Therefore, we adopt the assumption that Pyongyang’s acts of provocation are part of a deliberate strategy to increase a perception of volatility that could place the DPRK in a stronger bargaining position when negotiating. Our long-term vision for stability is based on the theory that as a result of relations normalisation and economic integration into the international community, the need for North Korea to hold nuclear weapons as a means of self-defence and preservation of the regime will become obsolete. In order to prove our point, we undertake a historical survey of the past negotiation initiatives with North Korea in order to identify patterns of behaviour and draw lessons about what makes certain negotiation strategies fail or succeed. Our conclusion is that, while denuclearisation is a non-negotiable eventual goal in negotiating with the DPRK, it is not immediately feasible – therefore, the main focus for the British and Japanese governments should be shifted towards utilising their international platforms and alliances to contribute to trust-building between the DPRK and the other main actors involved, notably the US and South Korea.

Policy Recommendations

At the end of each chapter, we advance a series of policy recommendations for each of the main areas considered. They can be summarized as follows.

- I. **Both Japan and the United Kingdom can play key roles within the international order.** Their governments’ policies are suggestive of countries ready and willing to take on increasingly global (or at least regional) responsibilities. However, the opposed nature of their strategies vis à vis the resurgence of great power politics (which produce inverse perceptions of ‘threat’ from China and Russia) hinders their ability to do so. Therefore, **they should cooperate more closely to align their approaches** in light of the many common interests they share – which vastly outweigh their immediate economic benefit (in the case of British support for BRI) or domestic political gains (in the case of Abe’s rapprochement to Russia).

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- II. Being aware of the great economic opportunities that lie in UK-China cooperation (especially post Brexit), **we would encourage the UK government to maintain its strong engagement towards BRI and AIIB.** However, we recommend that: in the short term, the UK leverages its ties to Beijing to advocate for conformity of BRI projects with Western standards and practices; in the long term, we urge the UK government to consider the risk (which FOIP sets to prevent) of the Indo-Pacific region transforming into China's sphere of influence.
 - III. While noting that often British and Japanese actual policy fails to live up to the declaratory policy (such as that of 'value based diplomacy'), **we encourage the UK and Japan to reflect their commitment to internationalism and democratic values also into the security sphere,** and to increase their level of expertise sharing both at the academic as well as the policy-making level. Against the recent critique made by Mearsheimer to the 'great delusion' of liberal-democratic values, we argue that a commitment to the ILO is a crucial component of Britain and Japan's role in the international system and that they should "put their money where their mouth is" and be ready to invest time, effort and capital in promoting their values around the world.
 - IV. While we appreciate that North Korea represents a greater and more proximate security threat to Japan than to the UK, we suggest that **in order to be effective 'trust builders', both the Japanese and British governments should soften their current positions and offer sanctions relief measures.** We argue that coercion via the pressure of sanction is not only ineffective but also counterproductive. Instead of focusing on complete and irreversible denuclearization, we suggest that a more realistic goal, for the time being, would be cooperating with the DPRK to reduce its arsenal of nuclear weapons, cease testing of nuclear weapons, dismantle certain sites as a measure of good faith as has been done in the past, limit its potential for proliferation and prevent further escalation of the nuclear crisis.

I. The UK and Japan vis à vis Great Power Competition

Kona Irie and Mikey Pears

According to a recent analysis of a UK Parliamentary Committee on foreign policy, the global balance of power is undergoing a period of structural ‘disruption’ caused by a sudden acceleration of post-Cold War trends such as the disappearance of ‘superpowers’ and the new multipolarity on the global stage.¹ These are conditions that have given room to a new wave of great power competition. The report highlighted how the US has taken ‘a number of high-profile unilateral foreign policy decisions that are contrary to the interests of the United Kingdom’. Similarly in the Japanese case, while Tokyo’s relationship with Washington remains at the heart of their foreign policy dealings today, Japan is seen to act upon their national interests in engaging with and building ties with the other powers in competition with their United States ally. It is however undisputable that the main challenges to the international liberal order primarily originate from China and Russia.

The UK and Japan have opposite attitudes regarding these two countries: while London has opted for a ‘long-standing openness to China’ (based on the observation that ‘[...] it is not in the UK’s interest to treat China systematically as an adversary’)² paired with tense relations with Moscow, Tokyo has instead pursued engagement with Russia and welcomed with much less enthusiasm (but enthusiasm nonetheless) Beijing’s Belt and Road Initiative.

“The main challenges to the international liberal order today primarily originate from China and Russia.”

¹ UK House of Lords - Select Committee on International Relations, UK foreign policy in a shifting world order (December 2018). Chapter 2: Disruption and change to the global balance of power.

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201719/ldselect/ldintrel/250/25005.htm>

² Ibid.

1. The UK and Great Power Competition

1.1. UK-China Relations

In the UK, the years of the Cameron premiership in particular (2010-2017) can be considered to mark a rapprochement between the UK and China as the UK sought closer economic and investment ties with China.³ This was spearheaded, for the most part, by the then Chancellor George Osborne, who launched the so-called “Northern Powerhouse” scheme – a project aimed at boosting economic growth in the North of England. For example, in 2015 Osborne visited Chengdu to pitch the “unprecedented opportunities” for Chinese investment in the region. The Chinese responded to these proffers warmly with promises of further investment partnerships and investment in a £130 million Chinese investment hub in Manchester. This was subsequently followed up by a visit by Xi Jinping to Manchester during his state visit to the UK in 2015. This was widely viewed as a Chinese vote of confidence in Osborne and in the Conservative’s economic policy more generally.

The strengthening of these economic ties was further confirmed in March 2015, when the UK announced – to the US’s dismay – that it intended to join the Asian Infrastructure and Investment Bank (AIIB), making it the first major western nation to do so. In February 2016, British politician Danny Alexander was also appointed Vice-President and Corporate Secretary of the bank. In Osborne’s words, “This government has actively promoted closer political and economic engagement with the Asia-Pacific region and forging links between the UK and Asian economies to give our companies the best opportunity to work and invest in the world’s fastest growing markets is a key part of our long term economic plan. Joining the AIIB at the founding stage will create an unrivalled opportunity for the UK and Asia to invest and grow together’.⁴

The UK has also been the target of further Chinese investment in its nuclear industry. Most notorious was the Hinkley Point C power station, which the Chinese state-owned entity CGN bought a stake in in 2015. The UK has been a target for Chinese investment because of the relatively open nature of its economy and the willingness of successive governments to tolerate the presence of foreign entities as part of its industrial strategy. In addition, the UK, unlike the French, does not have the ability to easily build its own nuclear reactors and as such relies on foreign contractors decided on the basis of cost. The deal subsequently, despite protests from the Americans, passed a security review under Theresa May in 2016.

³ A notable exception was David Cameron’s meeting with the Dalai Lama in 2012, which sparked furious protests in China.

⁴ UK Government News Release: ‘UK announces plans to join Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank’.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-announces-plans-to-join-asian-infrastructure-investment-bank>

In recent years, the UK's departure from the European Union has heightened the UK's determination to maintain a close relationship with China. While the Theresa May administration had seemingly placed the UK's relationship with Japan on a much higher priority compared to its predecessors, the urgency of sealing bilateral trade deals in a Post-Brexit scenario makes it impossible for London to downgrade its relationship with Beijing. As such, the UK has made consistent high-level efforts to get the Chinese to engage in trade talks. On one trip to Beijing in April this year Philip Hammond labelled the Belt and Road initiative a 'truly epic ambition'.⁵ Theresa May herself also made a series of similar trips, and current Prime Minister Boris Johnson is an outspoken admirer of the Belt and Road initiative.⁶

UK economic ties have been a source of occasional tension in the UK-US special relationship. The US protested against Chinese involvement in Hinkley Point C and was vociferously opposed to Huawei's involvement in the construction of the UK's 5G network - even to the point of threatening intelligence sharing reprisals. However, while the US has often protested there has thus far been little indication of immediate changes. These economic decisions should be considered in terms of domestic UK economic imperatives and do not indicate that the UK is shifting its alliance position relative to either China or the US.

1.2. UK-Russia Relations

In terms of security policy, it should be noted that the UK's stance is largely determined by its alliances as a (current) member of the EU and the NATO alliance. Additionally, as a mid-ranked power it does not really have the wherewithal to act unilaterally, but rather through international institutions.

Nevertheless, the UK's own position on Russia is currently very harsh. The UK has been relatively suspicious of Russia for many years because of military and intelligence operations which the Russians have carried out on UK soil. This began in 2006 with the poisoning of Alexander Litvinenko (a Russian dissident) in 2006 and subsequently of Sergei and Yulia Skripal in Salisbury in 2018. In addition, the UK has reacted very dimly to the ongoing Ukraine crisis, viewing Russia as responsible for the downing of Malaysian Airlines flight 17 and sponsoring an illegitimate separatist government on Ukrainian soil. Finally, unlike some other EU countries such as Italy, the UK is not dependent on Russia for energy and as such can take an activist line on Russia without directly affecting its economic health. As such, the UK is currently signing up the EU sanctions

⁵ Reuters, 'Britain calls China's Belt and Road Initiative a 'vision'', 26 April 2019.
<https://fr.reuters.com/article/topNews/idUKKCN1S2005>

⁶ South China Morning Post, "Pro-China' Boris Johnson 'enthusiastic' about belt and road plan", 24 July 2019.
<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3019884/pro-china-boris-johnson-enthusiastic-about-belt-and-road-plan>

regime which aims to discourage the Russians from their actions in Ukraine and lead to a normalisation of relations there. Events such as the poisoning of the Skripals in Salisbury in March 2018 have not only further increased diplomatic tensions between Moscow and London, but also caused widespread outrage in British public opinion.

Moreover, in recent months an intelligence and security committee dossier suggesting that there might be Russian influence in the Conservative party has attracted scrutiny over the relationship between the Tory leadership and Russia. The Government's decision to delay the publication of the classified report has sparked international condemnation, including by Hillary Clinton.⁷ Commentators have pointed to the effects that the delay might have in the upcoming UK election, and have speculated that, were the conservatives remain in power, there might be room for a UK-Russia rapprochement after the general election. Another potential effect of a Conservative government's less confrontational attitude towards Russia could be – in a scenario in which Brexit is yet again postponed – that the British could lobby for a relaxation of EU sanctions on Russia from within EU institutions. However, at least for the foreseeable future it is unlikely that we will see a dramatic alteration in the UK's position of suspicion to Russia, while at the same time acting as host to large amounts of Russian money (with London being considered one of the global main hubs for laundering corrupt assets from Russia).

1.3. UK-US relations

The UK maintains a very close relationship with the US, and the alliance is often called the 'special relationship'. Economically, the two are very close, in 2014 for instance the US exported \$140 billion to the UK and imported \$122 billion. In total the UK is the 7th largest trading partner of the US. However, a focus on trade figures obscures the depth of the economic relationship which encompasses many scientific, cultural and diplomatic links.

On security and military matters as well, the UK and the US are intimately connected. The two countries acted essentially as one power during the Iraq and Afghanistan wars in the 2000s and their militaries remain highly intertwined. Indeed, the UK trains American special forces and UK Strategic Defence Reviews have consistently delegated certain military functions to the US on the understanding that the UK will never go to war without at least American logistical support. On security as well, the Americans and the British cooperate closely, for instance through the Five Eyes intelligence sharing network. However, due to Brexit and other world events, it has yet to be seen if the UK will remain in the European economic orbit or will drift more towards America.

⁷ BBC News, 'Hillary Clinton: 'Shameful' not to publish Russia report', 12 November 2019. <https://www.bbc.com/news/election-2019-50382668>

2. Japan and Great Power Competition

Japan's geographical location within East Asia firmly plants itself within the midst of great power competition, and as such, Tokyo's respective positions regarding China and Russia are largely influenced by economic and security interests within the region and abroad.

First and foremost, however; it must be established that in examining great power competition today, the role of the United States is not one that can be overlooked. While the context of this paper limits the scope to focus specifically on China and Russia, the presence of the US within Asian regional relations is tangible at its weakest points and dominating at its strongest. In particular, the relationship between the United States and Japan is integral to security interests in the region, the former's hub-and-spoke approach to the bilateral relationship reinforcing the primacy of this strategic cooperation to Japanese policymakers.⁸ Japan's emphasis on this bilateral alliance is by no means hidden, Tokyo having labelled the alliance 'the 'axis' (*kijiku*-) of Japanese foreign relations, both regionally and globally'.⁹ It is integral to note this fact within the context of great power competition, as the primacy of this relationship can serve as both as an indicator of Japan's reactive behaviour but also as a strong counterargument to this claim, in its deviance from US attitudes especially in terms of China and economic policies.

2.1. Japan-China Relations

Japan's relations with its neighbour China have historically been more complex and dynamic than any of its other foreign policy relationships. Sino-Japanese relations see strong, robust cooperation in areas of trade, foreign investment and other economic policies, while security and territorial interests of both nations see more divergence.

Currently the second and third largest global economies respectively, China and Japan saw bilateral trade worth over 327.66 billion US Dollars in 2018, an 8.1% growth since 2017. In 2019, this growth is expected to continue and even surpass previous years, with estimates of double digit growth made by several observers.¹⁰ This prediction is supported by the notion that China and Japan, both being major manufacturing centres, share common interests in enriching cooperation and deepening support for multilateralism, as well as preserving the stability of the existing global economic order through opposition of protectionism.¹¹ Such commonality is seen through the symbiotic relationship between Chinese national economic growth and Japanese private sectors,

⁸ 'The UK and Japan: Forging a Global and Proactive Partnership', Chatham House Report, May 2019.

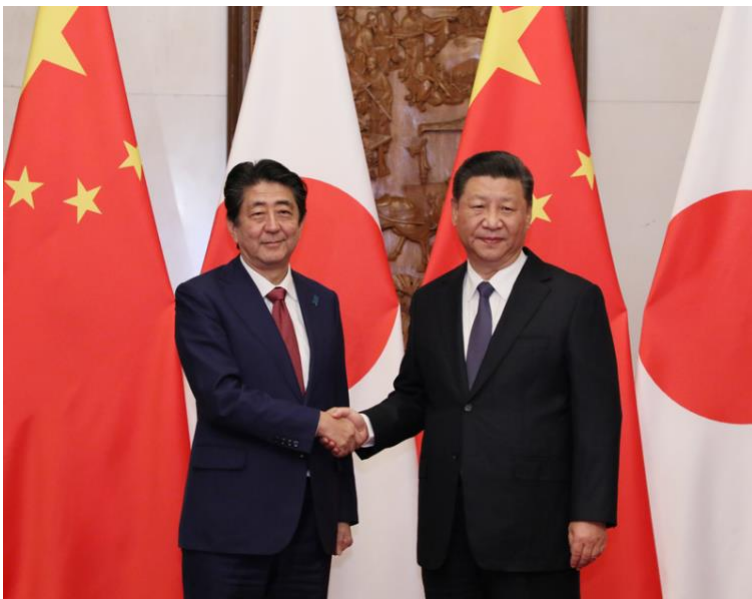
⁹ 外務省 (2009) '日米関係' (Japan-US Relations), <https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/area/usa/kankei.html>

¹⁰ Zhong Nan, 'China-Japan trade likely to see double-digit growth this year', *The Telegraph*, 28 June 2019. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/china-watch/business/japan-china-trade-growth-2019/>

¹¹ Ibid.

with Chinese economic development manifesting in increased demand for materials, electronic equipment and parts, as well as in services such as healthcare, elderly care, banking and insurance. This relationship is vital in light of stagnant national growth within Japan itself, with private sectors working to overcome challenges posed by both domestic and international barriers to growth.

Further to this, Japan could see a much more pertinent dependency on China in light of its ongoing trade difficulties with South Korea. In July 2019, Japan moved to tighten exports of chemicals required by the South Korean semiconductor industry, placing new restrictions on the industry as a whole. Matters deteriorated in the months that followed, with the ultimate removal of South Korea from Japan's 'white list' of most favoured trade partners in August. This action was mirrored



by Seoul, which saw the downgrade of Japan into the newly established A-2 category in its export system in September. Within this context, it can be expected that Japan would shift its focus increasingly on China to maintain and grow its economic alliance.

Similar sentiments could also be expected from the Chinese side, in light of their trade war with the United States. The conflict, which had seen seeds sown since the early 2000s with China's entry into the World Trade Organisation (WTO), physically culminated in tariffs imposed by the US on China beginning in

[Source: Wikimedia Commons]

January 2018. Since this policy, both sides have seen successive increases in tariffs and decreases in investments and holdings (on the Chinese part). Both governments have encouraged domestic companies to avoid dealing with and buying from, their respective counterparts, and the situation has caused much turbulence for both these parties and the international community. While disruptive, this conflict can also be taken as an opportunity for China to deepen its ties with other economies, including Japan.

Japan's position on the war and on China is visibly much softer than its United States ally, Tokyo having rejected the latter's idea of a zero-sum approach to economic competition. In light of the symbiotic relationship as aforementioned and prospects of increased trade opportunities that could prove vital to the national economy, Japan does not see the exclusion of China as a sensible strategy, but views this approach as posing a threat for Japanese companies, not only costing Japanese companies tolls from the tariff war itself, but with export controls potentially seeing

many Japanese firms having to choose between American and Chinese markets. Both China and Japan see the potential for multilateral thinking in economic development, their cooperation on the One Belt One Road (OBOR) initiative exemplifying this united stance.

In contrast to this largely positive economic relationship, Japan and China are more divergent when it comes to security interests. While Japan does not agree with the US in terms of economic policy, in security matters, Tokyo has seemingly aligned itself with Washington in opposing Chinese ambitions in the East and South China Seas. Ongoing territorial disputes and small-scale military confrontations have been one of Japan's core interests vis-à-vis China policy, and it is generally agreed that a growth in Chinese military strength could see a more assertive position regarding territories, which would not bode well with the Japanese side. While these issues are indeed complex and long-term, there is potential for cooperation regarding the issue of North Korea. Both sides see strategic benefits in the denuclearization of the peninsula, although Japan's exclusion from the Chinese-proposed four-party talks could see an increased strategic dependency on the US to assert Japanese interests in the issue.

2.2. Japan-Russia Relations

Economically, Japan-Russia relations have been seen to be largely steady in the post-Soviet era, with few exceptions in light of the Crimean Crisis in 2014. Following Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 as a response to pro-European Union sentiments in Ukraine, Japan imposed a series of sanctions in the form of suspended talks and visa bans, and froze assets of individuals and groups supporting Crimea/Ukraine separation. Furthermore, in line with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, Tokyo suspended funds for new projects in Russia. This was followed by an arms embargo in September 2014, which was largely symbolic (Japan barely exports arms to Russia), and these sanctions were the weakest among the G7 nations.¹²

Such responses to Russia have garnered Japan criticism by other G7 nations of their 'bandwagoning' nature, in that it imposes sanctions and restriction on Russia as a means of showing solidarity with the international community, rather than seeing pure national interest or benefit. There have been criticisms that Japan's weak Russia policy undermines the cohesion of the G7 response as a whole, even though Abe had consistently emphasised G7 solidarity in the wake of the Crimean Crisis.¹³ However, it can be seen that Japan's slow response and their failure to impose further restrictions on Russia in the wake of other events that caused international outcry (such as the MH17 incidents) have to an extent isolated the nation in terms of forming a coherent international response to certain events.

¹² Maria Shagina, 'Japan's Dilemma with Sanctions Policy Towards Russia: A Delicate Balancing Act', Institute for Security and Development Policy, November 2018. <http://isdpeu/publication/japan-dilemma-sanctions-policy-towards-russia/>

¹³ Ibid.

From the Japanese perspective, however, their Russian policy is coherent and sensible. Russia is viewed as a strong strategic partner to counter geopolitical threats in the Asia-Pacific, a view contrary to Japanese allies in the west, who perceive Russia itself as a geopolitical threat. In terms of security issues, there exist tensions regarding the ownership of the Kuril/ Northern Chichishima Islands off the coast of Hokkaido/ Kamchatka Peninsula. These islands, having been under Russian (then-Soviet) administration since the end of World War II, have been disputed for decades, serves as one of the main agendas in Japan-Russia relations. In 2014, there was a renewed effort on the part of Japan to reinvigorate Russo-Japanese relations in the hopes of seeing new developments in issues such as this territorial dispute. It was within this context that the Ukraine Crisis occurred, and Japan was understandably reluctant to risk the possibility of alienating the country, ruining the 'unique, historical opportunity to settle the territorial issue after decades without progress'.¹⁴ As such, it can be seen that Japan's policy towards Russia tends to be coherent in the sense that it is generally quite constructive, only imposing restrictions and sanctions when it would disadvantage Japan internationally not to do so.

3. Convergence and Conflicts: Shared interests, different approaches

While both the UK and Japan are fully committed to the liberal international order (from which Japan has gained perhaps more than any other country in the world, as recently argued by Asia Pacific Initiative's Chairman Funabashi Yoichi),¹⁵ their stances towards the two main challengers to that very same order – China and Russia – is starkly different.

The fundamental difference lies in the perception of Russia and China – perhaps also influenced by mere considerations of geographical proximity – as threats and opportunities. While the UK (as the rest of the Western world) perceives Russia as a geopolitical threat, Japan has tended to frame Russia as an Asian power with a strategic value for Tokyo. As such, Japan is unwilling to alienate Moscow and swings between necessary condemnation of Russia's foreign policy (for instance, by 'bandwagoning' within the G7 majority in maintaining sanctions on Russia) and avoiding more confrontational positions (in the Skripal case, Japan opted against UK government in condemning incident citing lack of evidence of Russian involvement). On the other hand, the UK has reached an unprecedented low in its diplomatic relations with Russia over the past months, while the Conservative government – starting with the Cameron administration – has consistently been an enthusiastic supporter of China's Belt and Road Initiative. Japan has also supported the BRI,

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Dr Funabashi Yoichi's speech at the IISS Alastair Buchan Lecture & Annual Dinner 2019, 13 November 2019. <https://www.iiss.org/events/2019/11/iiss-annual-dinner-2019-yoichi-funabashi>

sharing Chinese and ultimately, UK interests in pursuing a more multilateral international approach to economic development in the East Asian region and beyond.

Criticism of Japan's 'bandwagoning' behaviour does, however, reflect Japanese tendencies toward a more 'reactive' policy, especially when it comes to dealing with Russia and China, which sees a deep consideration for Japan's allies when acting. This, however, is not to be confused with the notion of a 'reactive state'¹⁶ as popularised by Kent Calder in 1988. A 'reactive state', Calder maintains, is one that finds its impetus for policy change in outside pressures, and that "reaction prevails over strategy in the... [case] the two of them come into conflict".¹⁷ In the case of Japan, this is seemingly not the case, with its China economic policy clearly demonstrating its ability and willingness to stand its ground and assert national interest and policies in the face of pressure from outside forces, including its biggest strategic and economic ally. As such, while Japan's seemingly 'weak' foreign policy stance may pose a hindrance to its cooperation with western countries such as the United Kingdom, it can also be argued that criticisms of this behaviour stem from something as simple as geographic location. Practically, Japan is located much closer to Russia and China than the United Kingdom, and as such, regional dynamics hold much higher stakes for the Asian nation than they do for the United Kingdom. While there have been attempts made by the United Kingdom in resolving maritime tensions in the Pacific, Japan simply has more stakes at play and must conduct its foreign policy as such.

¹⁶ Kent E. Calder, 'Japanese Foreign Economic Policy Formation: Explaining the Reactive State', *World Politics* 40:4 (1988): 517-541.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

II. New Frameworks of Cooperation: BRI and FOIP

Masanori Kōno, Norman Luk and Shang Li

In the East-Asian Region, there are two influential powers: the People's Republic of China and Japan. In the past decade, their strength has been brought to the spotlight through the launch of two new schemes. Chinese President Xi Jinping revealed his plan to revive the historic Silk Road during his visit to Kazakhstan in September 2013, and Indonesia in October 2013. Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, similarly, had outlined his vision of a Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) during his visit in Nairobi, Kenya in August 2016. If we were to compare the New Silk Road (later described as Belt and Road Initiative; hereafter BRI) with the FOIP, it is clear that both were similar in terms of its geo-political interests but, more importantly, the often-neglected socio-economic sphere. On the China-led BRI, the United States has expressed its skepticism and urged international support for the FOIP. One may wonder that as the US's special ally, what are the views of Great Britain on the BRI and the FOIP initiatives?

As Asia's geopolitical and economic leverage becomes increasingly prominent in international politics, the UK government's approach to the two initiatives would have a substantial impact on its political and economic status. In this policy recommendation paper, we will investigate the potential benefits and risks when the UK engages with the initiatives, and ultimately, we also seek to identify the most preferable approach for the UK after Brexit.

1. A Glimpse into the United Kingdom's Asia Foreign Policy

1.1. Post-Brexit Diplomacy

After the 2016 referendum, the Brexit issue has remained at the core of any discussion on the future of Great Britain's foreign relations. The then Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson, now Prime Minister, delivered a speech on the post-Brexit foreign policies in December 2016, and declared that the country should continue its contributions to global society through a pursuit of 'active diplomacy'. Johnson emphasised on the importance of a 'Global Britain running a truly global

foreign policy'.¹ Prime Minister Theresa May further insisted that the UK must become 'more outward-looking' and build closer relations with countries beyond Europe under such a 'Global Britain' strategy.² The successive governments under the Conservative Party viewed Brexit as an opportunity to secure free trade deals and to foster closer relations with fast-growing economies. However, while both Johnson and May's speeches suggested that a post-Brexit vision was promising, some scholars are skeptical.³ For them, the decision to leave the European Union just deteriorates its connection with the other European states, and it is hard to anticipate the UK being more successful in forming closer ties with other regions when weakening its position in the world's second largest consumer market. Asia's importance, therefore, is in ameliorating but not resolving the trade and economic difficulties that the UK could face after Brexit.

1.2. The Importance of China as a Market to the UK

The trade statistics between Great Britain and other Asian states show that China is one of the most important markets for the UK. It is the fifth largest trading partner with the UK (following the United States, Germany, the Netherlands and France) with the total exports and imports to and from the country reaching £23.1 billion and £4.5 billion in 2018 respectively.⁴ This makes China the most important trade partner for the UK outside the EU and North America. This is the basis for some British leaders, most notably Prime Minister Johnson, who repeatedly emphasises that the economic relationship between the UK and China is becoming more and more important.

However, it is also worth looking at more sober and critical observations. Oliver Turner of University of Edinburgh holds a view that a successful Brexit would weaken the UK's position in the Asian markets. This is supported by other scholars who have argued that the strong links between Asian countries and the European Union would have negative consequences on the UK's trade links after Brexit.⁵

¹ Chatham House (2016), 'Global Britain: UK Foreign Policy in the Era of Brexit'. Available at: <https://www.chathamhouse.org/event/global-britain-uk-foreign-policy-era-brexit> (Accessed on: 30 Nov 2019)

² FCO (2017), 'The Government's Negotiating Objectives for Exiting the EU: PM Speech - GOV.UK'. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/the-governments-negotiating-objectives-for-exiting-the-eu-pm-speech> (Accessed on: 30 Nov 2019)

³ Sophia Gaston (2019), 'The Post-Brexit Paradox of "Global Britain"', *The Atlantic*, 10 June 2019. Available at: <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2019/06/post-brexit-paradox-theresa-may-global-britain/591244/> (Accessed on: 30 Nov 2019)

⁴ UK GOV. (2019), 'UK trade in numbers'. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/836787/190924_UK_trade_in_numbers_full_web_version_final.pdf (Accessed on: 30 Nov 2019)

⁵ <https://www.ed.ac.uk/news/2019/brexit-could-weaken-trade-links-with-asia-study-su>

Over the issue of Huawei, for instance, it is beneficial for the UK to maximise its economic ties with China while upholding its security interests. In the commercial sphere, indeed, UK firms took the initiative and established a global partnership between Huawei and British Artificial Intelligence companies in September 2017.⁶ Afinti, a US-based Artificial Intelligence Company, succeeded in the appointment of prominent figures, notably David Cameron and Princess Beatrice of York, to senior positions of the advisory board.⁷ Nonetheless, the UK government's view on the issue remained relatively ambiguous. It was not until January 2020 that the UK government decided to give Huawei a 'limited role' in its 5G project, and Prime Minister May had even put Chinese investment in the country's nuclear energy sector on hold in 2018 with demands for further scrutiny.

In a time of ambiguity, we argue that it perhaps could be the greatest opportunity. In this article, we intend to agree with Wintour and will seek to expand on his argument, that is: the UK's attitude is crucial as the US cannot afford to lose their long-term political ally and China cannot afford to lose their potential long-term economic ally. Therefore, the UK's decision to embrace China's economic expansion including the Huawei issue, albeit in a limited fashion, might have a certain negative consequence on the UK-US relationship, but the UK can use its leverage in its post-Brexit diplomacy.

1.3. The UK as a Member of the Liberal International Order

Preserving the Liberal International Order (LIO), one that is based on 'openness and rule-based relations enshrined in institutions' has remained an indispensable part of UK diplomacy. The UK as a prominent advocate for the LIO seeks to safeguard the order by pursuing issues with direct interests and others that are less so. Indeed, Hosoya pointed out that the UK sought to utilise its exceptional position in prominent institutions, such as the UN Security Council and NATO, to uphold this international order. In addition to the use of official development assistance (ODA), it is worth noting that the UK relies on multilateral institutions such international tribunals, as well as soft power, to advance its interests vis-à-vis ILO.⁸

The importance of the LIO can also be seen in bilateral relations between countries. Back in 2017, Prime Minister May and Abe agreed that their two countries are 'among the strongest champions

⁶ <https://fp.brecorder.com/2017/09/20170909216148/>

⁷ <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/2019/11/02/inside-mysterious-world-ai-firm-afinti-boasts-david-cameron/>

⁸ Hosoya, Y. (2019). 'Defending the Liberal International Order: The UK–Japan Partnership in an Uncertain World' in *The UK and Japan Forging a Global and Proactive Partnership*, Chatham House Report

of free trade’, and that promoting rule-based fair trade is ‘more important now than ever’.⁹ Thus, cooperation with Japan and other Western global players is also important.

2. The Significance of the Belt and Road Initiative to the United Kingdom

2.1. What is the Belt and Road Initiative?

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), launched by China in 2013, is an ambitious project with a broader scope than what the American and European observers have first envisioned. Stretching over 10,000 km with the participation of over 138 countries, the Chinese-led initiative could, if successful, reshape the geopolitical and economic circumstances of the future.¹⁰ Sovereign countries in various geographical regions have initially embraced the projects of the initiative thanks to it being cost-competitive in comparison to other bidders, but with China’s growing political strength and leverage, governments are now becoming wary of the potential security risks that it may entail.

2.2. The UK’s Relaxed Attitude towards China

The British governments, unlike its counterpart western states, had embraced the Belt and Road Initiative from the start. As it was noted in the official reports of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the UK ‘welcomes[s] the opportunities provided by China’s Belt and Road Initiative’, and saw itself as a ‘natural partner for the ... initiative’. The UK, working with China, sought to find common interests and more importantly, ‘ensures that it meets international standards’.¹¹ In spite of the security skepticism that some backbenchers of the Conservative Party held against China, the UK government’s economic interactions with China have remained relatively consistent.

If we were to compare the UK with the US and Japan, it is interesting to note that the former is more cooperative with the China-led Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), a key financial institution that has exerted a significant role in the Belt and Road Initiative. The UK has become the first Western country to announce its intention to join the organisation as a founding member in 2015. Such a stance had provided the UK with an opportunity to appoint Danny Alexander, the

⁹ MOFA (2017). JAPAN-UK JOINT VISION STATEMENT. Available at: <https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/files/000285428.pdf> (Accessed on: 30 Nov 2019)

¹⁰ <https://chinapower.csis.org/china-belt-and-road-initiative/>

¹¹ FCO (2019), ‘Written Evidence – Foreign and Commonwealth Office’. Available at: <http://data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/committeeevidence.svc/evidencedocument/international-relations-committee/foreign-policy-in-changed-world-conditions/written/79900.html> (Accessed on: 30 Nov 2019)

former UK Chief Secretary of the Treasury, to Vice-President and Corporate Secretary, key positions in the bank's governance.¹² As one of twelve members of the AIIB's board of directors, the UK secured a way to reflect its voice in an ultimately China-led financial institution.

Cooperation in the infrastructure and financial service sectors is important in UK-China cooperation. Baroness Fairhead, a former Minister of State for Trade and Export Promotion, emphasises on the advantages that the UK holds, through its experience in utilising technology for public service uses. She further points out that the UK through its prominent British financial institutions can become the financial contributor of the BRI.¹³ In just this one consideration, the benefits for the UK to engage with China on the BRI is evident. In fact, rather than opposing the initiative, it is in the UK's interest to seek how to maximise its leverage on the project.

2.3. Examples of Joint Programmes by the UK and China

Areas of cooperation between the UK and China are wide-ranging, comprising not only of investment projects but also the sector of legal litigation. If we were to look at the scale of direct investment into the UK, there is no doubt that the country has benefited significantly from Chinese state-owned and private corporations. Sanpower Group, a Chinese private enterprise, acquired the UK toys retailer Hamleys in 2015, and SinoFortone, a Chinese investment company, invested over £100 million in the London Paramount Entertainment Resort in the same year.¹⁴ Such investments continued after the results of the Brexit Referendum in 2016: in the first quarter of 2018, the UK successfully attracted over £1.2 billion of direct investment from China.¹⁵

Headquartered in the UK with Asia regional offices based in Hong Kong and Shanghai, UK Law Firms hold a critical role in tackling issues that clients faced while engaging with the BRI initiative. As the initiative consisted of transactions compassing many legal jurisdictions, the global expertise that UK law firms hold traditionally proved impactful. Likewise, the English common law system is held in high regards by most trading parties and attempts to resolve commercial conflicts are often based on this legal system. As an example, the UK law firm CMS has international offices in over 18 BRI-participating countries, assisting even state agencies such as the Bank of China, in

¹² UK GOV. (2016), 'Danny Alexander appointed as Vice-President of new Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank'. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/danny-alexander-appointed-as-vice-president-of-new-asian-infrastructure-investment-bank> (Accessed on: 30 Nov 2019)

¹³ UK GOV. (2018). 'Why China's Belt and Road offers the UK huge opportunities'. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/why-chinas-belt-and-road-offers-the-uk-huge-opportunities> (Accessed on: 30 Nov 2019)

¹⁴ Pwc. (2015) Elevating China-UK ties to a new level - A business review of President Xi Jinping's visit to the UK. <https://www.pwchk.com/en/migration/pdf/business-review-china-uk.pdf> (Accessed on: 12 Dec 2019)

¹⁵ China Daily (2018), Chinese investors still keen on UK despite Brexit. <http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/201811/30/WS5c001aeca310eff30328be4c.html>

dealing with regulatory matters it faced.¹⁶ The degree of trust in UK law firms is therefore high, and it will be an industry that continues to play a critical role in global trade, even when the country is faced with a possible Brexit economic downturn.

However, the UK government's scepticism on Chinese initiatives could be justified if we look at Myanmar. While Myanmar and China signed 33 bilateral agreements in January 2020 during President Xi's visit to the country, it is noticeably clear that the Burmese is expressing some hesitation in accepting extensive Chinese investment. In 2011 the Government of Myanmar halted the construction of the Myitsone dam – one of China's largest investment projects in the country – due to concerns over growing Chinese influence and potential environmental damage. The project continues to remain in limbo after the agreement this year.

3. The Meaning of FOIP to the UK

3.1. Strategic Implications of FOIP

According to the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan's Free and Open Indo-Pacific Initiative (FOIP) is an effort to develop the Indo-Pacific region to ensure a rule-based international order.¹⁷ For this purpose, Japanese policymakers highlighted the importance of three key aspects, namely the 'promotion and establishment of the rule of law, freedom of navigation, free trade', the 'pursuit of economic prosperity' and the 'commitment for peace and stability'.¹⁸ While the Japanese Foreign Ministry's analysis of the FOIP focused on the aspects of international development, infrastructure and connectivity projects, it can be argued that Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's intention was to build a coalition in containing China's expansion.¹⁹ In fact, many scholars pointed out that the FOIP is not a purely liberalist economic cooperation project but a realist strategy to counter the rise of China through spending additional resources to maintain the existing status quo of the region.²⁰

It is certainly arguable that China's increasing assertiveness in the Asia-Pacific region had led neighbouring countries to start questioning its geo-political intentions. The United States is especially skeptical of Chinese companies' investment into nuclear energy, in which is believed to enable the Chinese-related funds to control over half of the global nuclear pipeline by 2030, with

¹⁶ CMS Law (2017). One Belt One Road: On the New Silk Road with CMS.

¹⁷ MOFA (2019) Towards Free and Open Indo-Pacific <https://www.mofa.go.jp/files/000407643.pdf> (Accessed on: 6 February 2020)

¹⁸ MOFA (2019). Free and Open Indo-Pacific. Available at: <https://www.mofa.go.jp/files/000430632.pdf> (Accessed on: 30 Nov 2019)

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Watanabe, T. (2019). Japan's Rationale for the Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy, Sasakawa Peace Foundation. Available at: https://www.spf.org/iina/en/articles/watanabe_01.html (Accessed on: 30 Nov 2019)

a further 80% of the 300 new reactors to be built by Chinese developers in the Belt and Road countries.

3.2. Japan's attitude towards BRI

Regarding the BRI, Abe expressed his conditional support in 2017. In his speech, he said: 'I would expect that the "One Belt, One Road" initiative will fully incorporate such a common frame of thinking, and come into harmony with the free and fair Trans Pacific economic zone, and contribute to the peace and prosperity of the region and the world'.²¹ Scholars evaluate this step positively. For example, Hosoya argues it is necessary to respond to the voices of Asian countries, which are not necessarily confrontational to China as the US is.²²

In fact, the Abe Government has shown its accommodative attitude towards China. Abe's visit to China and the wide-ranging agreement between the two countries made in October 2018 can be said to be a part of this development.²³ This Tokyo's step as well as the continuing effort to conclude the negotiation of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) are evaluated as Japan's strategic move under the relationship with the unpredictable Trump's America.²⁴

3.3. The US's Pressure on Japan

When we study the Japanese strategy, it is essential to look at how US policymakers view the FOIP. As Hosoya noted in his analysis, it is misleading to identify the FOIP as a Quad initiative, as this may not be the intention of the Japanese Government. However, it is true that the Japanese Government is always keen on close collaboration with the US and many scholars, equating the FOIP with the US' Trans-Indo Pacific Security Initiative.²⁵ In the view of the United States, the Trans-Indo Pacific Security Initiative envisaged a strong coalition of like-minded liberal democracies. The US aims to hinder the expansion of China's political influence, as it believes that the rising power threatens its core values – such as the rule of law, freedom of navigation, and

²¹ Prime Minister of Japan and his Cabinet (2017). "Asia's Dream: Linking the Pacific and Eurasia" - Speech by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe at the Banquet of the 23rd International Conference on The Future of Asia. available at: http://japan.kantei.go.jp/97_abe/statement/201706/1222768_11579.html (Accessed on: 30 Nov 2019)

²² Hosoya, Y. (2019). FOIP 2.0: The Evolution of Japan's Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy. *Asia-Pacific Review*, 26(1), 18–28.

²³ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan (2018). Prime Minister Abe Visits China. Available at: https://www.mofa.go.jp/a_o/c_m1/cn/page3e_000958.html (Accessed on: 30 Nov 2019)

²⁴ Pollack, J. (2018). Abe in Beijing: The quiet accommodation in China-Japan relations. Brookings. Available at: <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2018/10/25/abe-in-beijing-the-quiet-accommodation-in-china-japan-relations/> (Accessed on: 30 Nov 2019)

²⁵ Miyake, K. (2019). What does the 'Indo-Pacific strategy' mean?, Japan Times. Available at: <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/opinion/2019/03/11/commentary/japan-commentary/indo-pacific-strategy-mean/#.XePRw252tyw> (Accessed on: 30 Nov 2019)

other liberal values. Such a strategy, however, may have the opposite effect on Beijing, as it provokes China to confront this growing threat with zero-sum competition.

The containment strategy that the Trump administration advocates is conspicuous. Neither the 2019 National Security Strategy (NSS) nor the US National Defense Strategy (NDS) portray China as a potential contributor to regional or global stability and prosperity and on global security problems.²⁶ No matter how the Japanese government attempted to explain the difference between the US-led security initiative and the Japan-led economic cooperation scheme, it is difficult for the international audience to dissociate these two concepts.

3.4. China's response to FOIP

The Chinese Government's response to FOIP is arguably due to the unclear differences between the US strategy and the Japanese initiative. Several Chinese scholars have argued that the US' Indo-Pacific Strategy is an extension to the 'Pivot' to Asia of the Obama administration. Wang Xiaowen of Beijing Language and Culture University believes that the Indo-Pacific strategy is used to deepen the Pivot strategy with 'the aim of strategically linking the Indian and Pacific Oceans'.²⁷ Zhang Guifeng of Renmin University of China further argues that the strategy is an attempt to strategically restrict China's economic development and political influence.

If Japan's FOIP adopts the same approach as the United States, namely in containing China, foreign governments that vocally support the FOIP approach would be deemed as unfriendly to Chinese policymakers. There would, therefore, be significant effects on the UK's economic ties with China if it supports the initiative. The UK Government needs to take caution in pursuing policies that could irritate the Chinese, especially when the latter becomes increasingly assertive. As the United Kingdom has little to gain in provoking China, maintaining a business relationship could be seen as more beneficial.

3.5. The importance of preserving order in Indo-Pacific

At the same time, however, a destabilization of the region is of no benefit to the UK. It is reasonable for the UK to consider the re-balanced Indo-Pacific regions as well as to re-strategize their interests in the region. In reality, however, it is often pointed out that the UK response to the Indo-Pacific strategy is lacking. A delayed response to the regional initiative could lead to the UK's position in the region being converted from a leading role to a 'lower-tier' player. While there may not be

²⁶ Swaine, M. (2018). Creating an Unstable Asia: the U.S. "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" Strategy, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Available at: <https://carnegieendowment.org/2018/03/02/creating-unstable-asia-u.s.-free-and-open-indo-pacific-strategy-pub-75720> (Accessed on: 30 Nov 2019)

²⁷ Chen, D. (2018), What China Thinks of the Indo-Pacific Strategy, The Diplomat. Available at: <https://thediplomat.com/2018/05/what-china-thinks-of-the-indo-pacific-strategy/> (Accessed on: 30 Nov 2019)

short-term negative effects on the UK's position in the Indo-Pacific, failing to participate may have long-term repercussions to the UK's relations with Asian countries.

The official UK response on the Indo-Pacific region was stated by the then UK Secretary of State for Defence Gavin Williamson: 'Standing united with allies is the most effective way to counter the intensifying threats we face from countries that don't respect international rules. Together with our friends and partners we will work on a more strategic and multinational approach to the Indian Ocean region—focusing on security, stability and environmental sustainability to protect our shared prosperity.'

Historically, the UK has held strong ties with the Commonwealth countries and transformed to today's various strategic interests in the Indo-Pacific region. An example can be viewed as the annual exercises of the Five Power Defense Arrangement (FPDA). Within this regional security group, it consists of Australia, Malaysia, New Zealand, Singapore, and the UK since 1971. With the promotion and larger scale of implementation of FOIP, Japan also aims to establish an Australia-India-Japan-United States coordinated strategy. If the UK aims to maintain its influence, it would be valuable to join such a network for various security reasons.

In August, Prime Minister May and Prime Minister Abe had agreed on a Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation pledging to enhance the two countries' 'global security partnership'. British Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt met with Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Kono in Tokyo in September 2018 and Kono welcomed the further presence of the U.K. in the Indo-Pacific region. In October 2018, the UK and Japan held a joint army exercise in Japan.

With Japan's friendly invitation and the UK's official response, one would ask- what is the UK's internal policy on FOIP? Within the UK government, concerns for economic interests versus strategic interests diverge. The Treasury and DIT favor a more friendly relations with China in order to create and maintain trade and financial partnerships. In contrast, the MOD and perhaps the Foreign Office feel that China's expansionist policies should be a priority over economic interests. But with the uncertain outcomes of Brexit, the UK's internal political challenges may need to be addressed first.²⁸

²⁸ Congressional Research Service (2018). France, the United Kingdom, and the Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP): Issues for Congress. Available at: <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/IF11052.pdf> (Accessed on: 30 Nov 2019), Sheng, L. J. (2019). Where Is Britain's Indo-Pacific Strategy?, The Diplomat. Available at: <https://thediplomat.com/2019/06/where-is-britains-indo-pacific-strategy/> (Accessed on: 30 Nov 2019)

4. Policy Recommendations

4.1. *The Strategic Dilemma*

As shown above, siding with China's BRI has economic benefits, but the UK also sees it as a responsibility to commit to the liberal effort in the region to preserve LIO. Therefore, the UK needs to carefully architect the combination of the short-term economic-gain-maximizing strategy and the long-term view on geopolitical and geoeconomic impact on the region.

“The UK should continue to engage with China for short-term interest, while safeguarding its relationship with the United States and Japan for long-term interest.”

4.2. *Short-Term Policy: ‘Engage China and try to shape its course as an insider’*

The above research has shown that there is a valuable economic opportunity for the UK to cooperate with China. Through engaging with the BRI initiative, the UK can access the Asian development market. It is with this understanding that we should consider the UK's approach to the BRI as one of the key points in the post-Brexit Global Britain diplomacy.

Under this view, we can argue that the British policymakers' view on the BRI is more economic-oriented in comparison to their Japanese counterpart. While Japan sees the expansion of China's influence in the region both as an economic opportunity and as a security threat, the UK has a more relaxed view. By closely working with China, the UK believes it can embrace China in its favourable business style. The support and engagement it showed in the case of AIIB is a good example. AIIB is an important aspect of BRI, but at the same time, the most reconcilable institution with the existing Western financial institutions. The governing system is similar to other Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) such as the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank, and most of AIIB's financing projects are co-financed by other MDBs.²⁹ The UK's commitment in the financial

²⁹ Shahar Hameiri and Lee Jones, 'China challenges global governance? Chinese international development finance and the AIIB', *International Affairs* 94.3 (2018): 573-593.

sphere of BRI possibly enables to bring China into the liberal economic orbit. Although many scholars are dubious about such an optimistic vision, at least the UK can secure its access to the China-dominant Asian market. In the short term, the UK can maximize its economic gain. Therefore, upholding Japan's FOIP in a provocative way may raise the risk of irritating China.

4.3. Long-Term Policy 'Mitigate the impact of China as an outsider'

In the long run, however, the preservation of liberal economic order in any part of the world is the benefit of the UK. What Japan and the US are trying to do is contesting against expansionist China in a high-key approach. The approach itself might not fit the British instant national interest, but its policy goal of them is shared by the UK, namely preventing the Indo-Pacific region from transforming into China's sphere of influence. In this sense, cooperating with Japan is a first step for the UK to participate in the larger maneuver of united liberal economic power in the Indo-Pacific to mitigate the overwhelming influence of China.

In conclusion, while there are still multiple concerns on a China-led regional economic order, the UK can maximise its economic interests by participating in the Belt and Road initiative. Under this view, it is likely that a UK-China partnership could be maintained in the coming years. We recommend that the UK continues to engage actively with China and attempt to make BRI projects more in conformity with existing trade customs and the liberal institutional standards. However, that is not to argue that the UK should disengage from the United States or Japan, who are both traditional allies and prominent members of the Liberal International Order. It is in the UK's long-term interest to continue to preserve the existing liberal order. It would be beneficial for the UK to cooperate with interested parties, including Japan, and also consider how its partners' interests could be affected by the path it chooses to take.

III. Security Cooperation between the UK and Japan

Sean Tan and Rebecca O’Leary

Modern efforts at security cooperation between the UK and Japan largely benefitted – and to an extent, continue to benefit – from the circumstances and historical contexts both nations found themselves in following the Second World War. The post-war consensus of social democracy that emerged in Britain during the mid-20th century, championing the importance of democratic values, stability and security is oft-cited. The beginning of what Masaru Tamamoto calls ‘the diminution of politics’ in Japan from 1960 shaped its democracy into a consensus-based one,¹ in turn forging its foreign security policy for much of the 20th century- for instance, Tamamoto notes that the ‘viability’ of peace and consensus-based democracy in Japan was what made its special security relationship with the United States possible.² Both nations continued to share similarly broad values and circumstances during the post-Cold War period, with Britain’s integration into the European international order and Japan’s increasing interaction with South-East Asian nations providing the basis for multilateralism in both nations.

However, as John Nilsson-Wright observes at the beginning of his contribution to the May 2019 Chatham House Report on the UK and Japan, consensus-based democracy and ‘a commitment to internationalism’ are in ‘crisis’ around the world, providing new challenges for security cooperation between the UK and Japan as the very same values underpin it. It is therefore first and foremost essential for both nations to remain committed to the above values in order for any successful security relationship to prosper. It also necessitates that military security cooperation between the UK and Japan be geared toward maintaining the international order – primarily, the ‘rules-based international order’ of security and other broader security issues, which the first part of this paper will deal with. The second part of this paper outlines suggestions for expansive security measures that facilitate the upholding of democratic values in both Britain and Japan. Some of these security areas, such as cybersecurity, are well-established, however others, most notably issues to do with climate change, are much less so. While perhaps unforeseen in some sense, the lack of emphasis given to climate change in existing security policy documents suggests

¹ Masaru Tamamoto, ‘Reflections on Japan’s Postwar State’, *Daedalus* 124:2, What Future for the State? (Spring, 1995), 11.

² Tamamoto, 7.

that both nations have had a tendency to overlook certain pressing civil security issues. This paper, therefore, urges a holistic approach to both civil and military security.

“We advance a holistic approach to both civil and military security, urging the UK and Japan to focus more on key security areas such as climate change and cybersecurity”

1. Military Security Measures

1.1. International standards and rules-based international order

The main security issues being faced are the growing nuclear threat from North Korea, and broader security issues in the East and South China Seas concerning increasingly aggressive Russian and Chinese foreign policy. In this sense, it is vital that an emphasis be placed on maintaining international standards – for example, the rules-based international order on maritime security to deal with territorial disputes with China.

Japan and the UK share a common identity as they do not wish to take direct, active military operations.³ Instead, they rely on more forms of soft power, such as donating aid and undertaking peacekeeping missions, in order to maintain security in their respective regions. Some of the key traits found in both country’s security measures are to be mainly passive, to avoid risks and only taking safe action when international pressure is applied to them or other countries are taking the lead. North Korea can be seen as an example of this. Kim Jong-un has shown no indication he will forfeit his ambitions in nuclear weapons and intercontinental ballistic missiles. Japan has recently started to engage in diplomatic meetings. However, Japan has long done little about these issues and only after immense international pressure started to engage in talks.

Another key factor influencing Japan and the UK’s military security measures is the fact that Japan and the UK do not have military resources of the same size as China and the US so they are more reliant on ‘rules-based international order’, which is the post-war rules, norms and institutions

³ Pauline Neville-Jones and Harukata Takenaka, “Institutional Innovation: Strategy and Policymaking for National Security”, Chatham House Report (May 2019).

that govern relations between countries.⁴ The UK is facing challenges from Russia and Japan has the same challenges with China. Both Russia and China are testing the limits of the rules-based international order. Examples of this include Russia with Ukraine and China with the South China Sea dispute. By following sanctions and providing aid which is driven by other countries, Japan and the UK can be seen to maintain this ‘rules-based international order’ while still not taking direct action against the source of these sanctions. An example of this is how both Japan and the UK support the UN and WTO, while countries with a stronger military presence, such as the US or Russia, can disapprove of these organisations and withdraw from treaties.

In the national interest of both the UK and Japan to defend this order and the norms it represents. Both Japan and the UK showed their commitment to these issues by signing the Japan-UK Joint Vision Statement in 2017, which states that both UK/Japan are together global strategic partners who both commit to creating outward-looking and free trading island nations with a global reach, committed to the rules-based international system.

1.2. Japan-UK Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation

The Japan-UK Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation, signed in the same year, states that both countries commitment to using their leadership to maintain the rules-based international system as the closest security partners (of the US) respectively in Asia and Europe’. While this sounds like it is committing to direct, active action the reality is that the actions taken by these countries are still non-direct. The Defence Logistics Treaty signed 26 January 2017 is a better example of what is happening today. This enabled UK and Japanese armed forces to work together for UN peacekeeping operations, humanitarian aid and relief missions, as well as sharing equipment. The UK describes Japan as its ‘closest security partner’ in Asia.



A Japanese Fuji Camp based Ground Self Defence Force recon unit soldiers participated in the exercise VAMBRACE WARRIOR along with a US Marine Corps Officer and British Army officer. [Source: Wikimedia Commons]

⁴ Pauline Neville-Jones and Harukata Takenaka, “Institutional Innovation: Strategy and Policymaking for National Security”, Chatham House Report (May 2019).

1.3. Terrorism

An example of Japan's attitude vis-à-vis international security is their stance on fighting terrorism. While Japan has engaged in peacekeeping meetings, their response has largely been indirect and following in the footsteps of the initiatives of other countries. Japan has a three-pillar response to terrorism. The first is strengthening counter-terrorism measures, which include supporting multilateral cooperation. Japan does this mostly by supporting UN initiatives in the Middle East, such as the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). Japan also supports countries in the Middle East, Africa and Asia by providing workshops, seminars and giving equipment to help them counter terrorism in their own countries. The second is enhancing diplomacy to assist with stability and prosperity in the Middle East. These measures include providing humanitarian assistance, and so far over \$200 million has been donated. Furthermore, aid is given to help with the regional economic and social stability which is necessary to promote economic growth in the area. Finally, the third pillar is creating societies resilient to radicalization. It is important to note that Japan's plan to counter terrorism is quite soft. No hard, direct action is been taken and instead, Japan follows the lead of international organisations, such as the UNODC. Domestically, Japan focuses on creating an action plan to prevent terrorism and preparing measures in the various government ministries, such as the National Policy Agency and the Ministry of Defence.

The UK's domestic counterterrorism initiatives focus on four key points: prevent, pursue, protect and prepare. Yet these ideals often play out in their international counterterrorism strategies as well. Similarly to Japan, the UK acts with overseas partners to help overseas organisations tackle terrorism, as well as introducing security strategies.⁵

One key difference is how the UK's approach is more focused on protecting its citizens overseas as a policy focus, while the Japanese counter terrorism initiatives instead emphasised assisting other countries to prevent the core of terrorism. Furthermore, the UK's method of helping overseas countries focuses more on training staff in the UK to help counter terrorism abroad. On the other hand, Japan seems more likely to give monetary assistance to countries tackling terrorism.

1.4. The National Security Council

Both Japan and the UK have National Security Councils. In the UK, the NSC was established in 2010 to inform the government on key security measures. The reason for the Security Council arose out of the changing circumstances of international security.⁶ Previously, these matters were dealt with

⁵ UK Government: Policy Paper 'Counter-terrorism strategy (CONTEST) 2018'.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/counter-terrorism-strategy-contest-2018>

⁶ Pauline Neville-Jones and Harukata Takenaka, "Institutional Innovation: Strategy and Policymaking for National Security", Chatham House Report (May 2019).

in a cabinet committee, but this method was not properly equipped to deal with both external and internal policymaking. Currently, the National Security Council is headed by the prime minister and there are weekly meetings. In its conception, it was made with three main goals: reorganising the government structure to drive policy, be more coherent and finally, to encourage collaboration with other states. According to Neville-Jones & Takenaka, the Security Council has been a massive improvement on past endeavours to promote national security, mostly through increased accountability, reduced chances to purposefully neglect key issues and a better organisational structure. In regards to coherence and collaboration, both have been partially achieved through correct funnelling of resources. It is worth noting that the council is only 8 years old, and more time is needed to correctly see its long-term effects.

In Japan, the National Security Council (*Kokka anzen hoshō kaigi*) was established in 2013 after Prime Minister Abe scrapped the Security Council which had remained largely the same since its initiation in 1986. The previous Security Council did not have strong links with other government ministries and agencies, which made it hard for them to be involved with the foreign policy and security aspects of politics.⁷ Similarly, to the UK, the reason for the new council was the changing context of security in the world. The structure of this committee is based around 9 ministers from Cabinet, which sometimes breaks down into 4 members, including the prime minister. The National Security Council has made two key changes to the way Japanese security policy is developed. First of all, there are now meetings on a regular basis with the prime minister which allows for more security policies to be developed. Secondly, the cross-cabinet council allows for more cooperation and discussion across the different ministries.

The overall effectiveness of the Japanese National Security Council is as of yet unclear. While it has certainly made the process easier for the government and it is easier for prompt military decisions to be made, Japan has not had its security tested in a major way since the council's establishment. However, the recent conflicts with North Korea will certainly make clear the usefulness of the National Security Council.

2. Expansive Security Measures

2.1. The Abe Administration

Abe's return to power in September 2012 marked the diversification of Japan's foreign policy, placing a bigger emphasis on relations with ASEAN and EMEA states in addition to its special relationship with the United States. This coincided with increasing murmurs and debates within Japanese society over the role of its military- specifically, the validity of Article 9 in the Japanese

⁷ Ibid.

Constitution within the context of the growing frequency of North Korean missile tests, and the 2013 Korean crisis. Following the Japanese executive's approval of looser restrictions on the use of its military in 2014,⁸ subsequent trends in Japan's security policy have understandably been skewed in this direction – its decision to send the JSDF to Egypt as part of a non-UN mission in May 2019,⁹ and the potential for the revision of Article 9 in 2020 being key examples.¹⁰

Nevertheless, Abe has also stated his intention to 'make Japan a "proactive contributor to peace", dismissing allegations that Japan under his leadership is shifting politically to the right and towards a more militarist posture'.¹¹ An analysis of existing security policy documents suggests a large emphasis from both Japan and the UK on military security- the 2017 Japan-UK Joint Declaration heavily prioritises military security, law and order, and nuclear disarmament (i.e. strong measures to deal with North Korea) in points 1 to 10, with less said about cyber and civil security in its remaining 7 points. The issues of modern slavery and sexual exploitation are mentioned almost as afterthoughts in the final point of the document.¹² There remains a great amount of potential for both nations to fulfill their roles as 'proactive contributors to peace' in future security policy documents.

2.2. Press Freedom

While John Nilsson-Wright acknowledges both nations' 'commitment to the rule of law and international order', he also warns against assumptions of both nations maintaining liberal democratic values and press freedom, amidst the context of political polarisation, the rise of the far right and increasing self-censorship. Cooperation between both nations on this front is said to have been 'more rhetorical than substantive' – despite Abe reiterating the sharing of these 'common values' at the Third Japan-UK Foreign and Defence Ministerial Meeting, substantial policy proposals remain lacking.

In a similar vein to the bilateral strategy on military security, a first step might be to establish and uphold robust standards of democracy and press freedom, and embed them within formal agreements. Given that Britain has consistently supported Japan's desire to restructure the UN

⁸ The Associated Press, 'How Japan can use its military after policy change', 1 July 2014. https://archive.is/20140707074233/http://helenair.com/news/world/asia/how-japan-can-use-its-military-after-policy-change/article_a9186edb-f943-5fee-8a05-f557d2a2d3cf.html

⁹ Foreign Policy, 'With Little Fanfare, Japan just Changed the Way it Uses its Military', 3 May 2019. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/05/03/with-little-fanfare-japan-just-changed-the-way-it-uses-its-military/>

¹⁰ Reuters, 'Japan's Abe hopes for reform of pacifist charter by 2020', 3 May 2017. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-japan-government-constitution-idUSKBN17Z0BH>

¹¹ Michito Tsuruoka, 'The UK, Europe and Japan', *The RUSI Journal*, 158:6, p. 59.

¹² The Joint Declaration can be accessed at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/641155/Japan-UK_Joint_Declaration_on_Security_Cooperation.pdf

Security Council, there is potential for British and Japanese collaboration within the UN and other international institutions to tackle the above issue – the UK’s 2019 Global pledge on media freedom outlined a commitment to the rights ‘enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights’,¹³ providing a benchmark (and a list of well-defined standards by the UN) for both nations to maintain in order to protect press freedom. The 2019 pledge also ‘encourages enabling regulatory environments to promote transparency in judicial processes’, suggesting room for collaboration between regulatory bodies in both nations (for example, Ofcom and the MIC), or even opportunities for both nations to be jointly involved in legislative procedure aimed at securing media freedom and pluralism. An example might be the joint establishment of an organisation aimed at doing so, housing media regulation researchers and specialists from both nations, similar to the EU’s Centre for Media Pluralism and Media Freedom. Regarding the EU’s example- while Llorens and Costache have acknowledged difficulties in establishing common standards of media pluralism across 28 diverse and multicultural EU member-states, they also note that an ‘inclusive approach to better connect and integrate with social and political institutions’ is likely to deal with the above problem.¹⁴ This, along with the existing support between both nations within international institutions, would be key to any successful cooperation on this particular front.

2.3. Human Rights and Counterterrorism

Human rights also continue to be a significant factor in regional security, particularly in the case of Japan. For example, despite significant Japanese investment in both Cambodia and Myanmar from the late 20th century to the present day, both nations failed- and continue to fail- miserably on human rights accounts. Japan is still one of the only developed countries in the Asia-Pacific region to acknowledge the existence of the problem in these countries, but hasn’t done much to deal with it in terms of tangible policy. The legacy of the Rohingya conflict and the Rakhine State crisis in Myanmar e.g. sectarian violence in the Rakhine State and the murders of aid workers exposes the human rights problem as a critical regional issue. This also poses a cultural argument toward the Japanese government in its attempts to deal with domestic and regional terrorism. This paper recommends that Japan take a markedly different approach to its recent approach terrorism in the Middle East, where Japan has been perceived as reluctant to involve itself in diplomatic issues e.g. blaming Japanese hostages themselves for acting irresponsibly, and concerns about looking ‘weak’ in conceding to terrorists.

¹³ UK Government: Global Pledge on Media Freedom, 11 July 2019.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/global-pledge-on-media-freedom/global-pledge-on-media-freedom>

¹⁴ Carles Llorens and Andreea Madaline Costache, ‘European Union Media Policy and Independent Regulatory Authorities: A New Tool to Protect European Media Pluralism?’, *Journal of Information Policy*, Vol. 4 (2014), pp. 396-420.

The UK government, on the other hand, has had considerable long-term experience in dealing with similar forms of domestic and regional terrorism – specifically violence derived from sectarian tensions in Northern Ireland. While the 2015 National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review recommends that the continuing ‘severe’ terror threat in Northern Ireland be dealt with by increased policy-security collaboration,¹⁵ others have also recommended working with sociologists and criminologists to deal specifically with religious/sectarian terrorism.¹⁶ Japan’s presently-outlined counter-terrorism measures include vaguely-defined ‘legislative measures’ and ‘information exchange’ between the National Police Agency and the Public Security Intelligence Agency.¹⁷

We recommend increasing bilateral cooperation between Britain and Japan on this front, and the additional consultation of sociologists and criminologists in dealing with the origins of regional conflict, in order to ensure that Japan takes a more proactive approach in dealing with both regional terrorism and human rights issues. A possibility may be to increase collaboration within the sociology and criminology academic departments of RENKEI (the strategic partnership between a select group of British and Japanese universities).

2.4. Cybersecurity

On the other hand, cybersecurity is a security area where Britain stands to benefit most from cooperation with Japan. Cybersecurity is given a slightly larger focus in the Japan-UK Joint Declaration, with points 11-14 outlining the need to develop cyberspace capacity in South-East Asia, for the 2020 Olympics, stronger legislation and ‘industrial and academic cooperation’. However, while China poses arguably the largest threat to global cybersecurity, it should also be noted that China has also placed a slightly greater priority on ‘developing its own cyberspace’¹⁸ i.e. making sure its domestic information networks are controlled by national companies- perhaps still a greater priority to China than influencing foreign information networks. Dan Schiller notes that while China’s economic policies hinge on both ‘attracting-in’ (foreign investment into China) or ‘walking-out’ (Chinese foreign investment), Chinese cyberspace and computer industry have historically been reliant on ‘attracting-in’ in order to ‘establish a nationally-based information

¹⁵ UK National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/555607/2015_Strategic_Defence_and_Security_Review.pdf

¹⁶ The Guardian, ‘Counter-terror chief says policing alone cannot beat extremism’, 6 August 2019.

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2019/aug/06/counter-terrorism-chief-calls-for-greater-social-inclusion>

¹⁷ Japan’s Counter-Terrorism Measures, MOFA. <https://www.mofa.go.jp/files/000156881.pdf>

¹⁸ Dan Schiller, ‘Geopolitical-economic conflict and network infrastructures’, *Chinese Journal of Communication*, Volume 4:1 (2011), 90-117.

industry'.¹⁹ Likewise, Russia has also seemingly shifted their focus toward developing their own cyberspace in order to 'combat anti-government activism' within the country.²⁰

As the USA continues to largely dominate the global Internet policy regime, this also makes things more straightforward for both Japan and the UK regarding legislation. For example, both the UK and Japanese mobile providers stopped Huawei 5G launches in May 2019 – in line with American legislation. Therefore, this paper recommends a greater emphasis be placed on developing cyberspace capacity in South-East Asia, where there exists a potential for Britain to access the ASEAN cybersecurity market through cooperation with Japan- specifically the East-West Economic Corridor, where Japan has provided significant assistance. A particular focus should be placed on investing in cyberspace infrastructure and the training of workers in Least Developed Countries where Japan have already invested in significantly, such as Laos, Myanmar or Cambodia (combined population approx. 76 million, 2 of them bordering China) before China does. This provides an opportunity for Britain to build upon existing Japanese investment, in order to ensure these nations are less susceptible to China, and also to increase the lucrativeness of the ASEAN cybersecurity market.

2.5. Climate Change

Finally, the issue of climate change requires a different strategy- the US' withdrawal from the Paris Agreement means that Britain and Japan have to take a more proactive approach toward legislation instead. Presently, RENKEI has outlined one of their 2019 priorities as climate change research.²¹ While specific details about this research haven't been published, this paper recommends that it be geared toward joint legislation on climate change, and embedded within existing joint statements and frameworks on combating the issue. Unlike EU emissions standards, which are set out as directives, this climate change strategy should be distinguished by its emphasis on regulations instead- similar to the aforementioned strategy for maintaining media plurality, with the potential for an organisation on climate change to be jointly established by both nations.

This paper also recommends bilateral cooperation in developing infrastructure and architecture aimed at combating the consequences of climate change. For example, the increasing number of earthquakes experienced in the UK in the 21st century as a consequence of fracking can also be addressed via collaboration with Japanese infrastructure specialists. With both nations currently experiencing ageing infrastructure, this paper recommends increasing collaboration within the

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ International Policy Digest, 'Russia Solidifies Grip on its Cyberspace, via the Sovereign Internet Law' <https://intpolicydigest.org/2019/07/30/russia-solidifies-grip-on-its-cyberspace-via-the-sovereign-internet-law/>

²¹ British Council, RENKEI Activities. <https://www.britishcouncil.jp/en/renkei-activities-2019>

private sector- specifically the construction and projects sectors in both nations- in order to build new and maintain existing infrastructure.

3. Policy Recommendations

3.1 More Military Cooperation

While Japan and the UK engage in joint military operations, it would be beneficial for them to collaborate on a larger scale. The UK and Japan have similar national interests and a more robust alliance would be beneficial to both parties. This could be done through more peacekeeping missions or a larger, wider scale military relationship.

IV. Dealing with North Korea as a Nuclear Power

Mercedes McCambridge and Yang Jie

Is Denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula Impossible?

In the last two years we have witnessed two summit meetings between the leaders of the DPRK and the United States, three inter-Korean summits, several declarations and many more talks between North Korean and US officials, yet nothing concrete towards the denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula. In fact, the activities of the past two years serve as an epitome of how negotiations with the DPRK have traditionally materialised over the past four decades: an abundance of negotiations and agreements that collapse due to disputes over implementation, or accusations of violating the agreements made. The DPRK has sought to take advantage of this chaotic situation and has been accused of stalling negotiations to gradually develop its nuclear weapons program. Regardless of outside interference and attempts to prevent progress, the DPRK has become a *de facto* nuclear power. In the future, if no change is made to current policy, it can be expected that the DPRK will continue to use this strategy to maximise its interests and power, tactically showing cooperative gestures to continue the flow of engagement and material benefits without genuinely committing to denuclearisation. *The challenge for Japan and the UK, as well as the rest of the world, is how to achieve denuclearisation on the Korean peninsula when dealing with an opponent as uncooperative and volatile as the DPRK.*

In this policy brief, we suggest that despite the rather lacklustre track record for successful negotiation with the DPRK in the past, engagement and diplomacy is still the best option for addressing the North Korean nuclear crisis. We believe this is the case for a variety of reasons, including the facts that despite its isolation and sanctions against it, the DPRK has still managed to develop nuclear weapons, at this point in time the DPRK regime seems unlikely to collapse, and the cost of using pre-emptive force against the DPRK is unbearably high. In addition, closer scrutiny of past negotiations can provide us with new insights on how to facilitate a more effective strategy in reducing the threat the DPRK and its nuclear weapons pose to the world.

The policy brief is organised as follows. In the first two sections, we outline the history of past negotiations, identifying the DPRK's behaviour patterns and priorities and drawing lessons from both successful and failed attempts negotiating with the DPRK. This analysis supports our development of an evidence-based policy recommendation for dealing with the DPRK as a nuclear

power. In the third and fourth sections, we analyse Japan and the United Kingdom's perception of the DPRK nuclear threat, current foreign policy stances and current defence strategies in East Asia. This allows us to perceive the issue specifically through the lens of these two countries. In our final section, we provide our recommendations concerning how we believe the Japanese and the UK governments should modify their approaches and offer concrete policy options addressing the DPRK nuclear issue in a way that maximises the interests of Britain and Japan.

1. North Korea: A Die-hard Negotiator?

1.1 The Priorities of the DPRK Regime

Understanding the nature of the nation the Japanese and British governments seek to negotiate with, and what the primary goals of the DPRK are, is crucial to influencing the current situation in a manner that is beneficial for Japan and the UK's interests.

To maintain its hold on power, the DPRK seeks to repel threats and empower itself both economically and militarily to avoid being overwhelmed by powerful opponents and their influence in the region. Its strategies have been incredibly provocative but in actuality its aggressiveness and volatility seems to place the DPRK in a position of greater bargaining power when negotiating. Having now become a *de facto* nuclear power, the DPRK's bargaining power has increased significantly.

“The DPRK has three key priorities: regime survival, prestige and recognition (on an international scale), and economic prosperity”

The DPRK has three key priorities, namely regime survival, prestige and recognition (on an international scale), and economic prosperity. Neutralising the military threat to the DPRK and enhancing its economy are key to ensuring regime survival that also serve to legitimise North Korea's leadership in the eyes of its own citizens and the world. Normalising relations with the US has been a primary goal towards decreasing the military threat against them, and the DPRK has

consistently sought security guarantees from the US during negotiations. It seems logical that normalisation of relations with Japan and the ROK would be necessary for the DPRK to prosper economically; both are goals which have also consistently appeared in past bilateral negotiations with both countries.

Whether previous negotiations have been purely for short-term gain without real intent for change or have incorporated some genuine attempts to change the external situation surrounding the DPRK, these key priorities have remained stable and are logical. As such, we are working with the assumptions made here when considering how to formulate a practical policy for the British and Japanese governments to pursue which aligns with their interests and those of their allies.

1.2 Patterns of Behaviour within Negotiations

In 1991, the Bush Sr. administration unilaterally withdrew nuclear weapons from the ROK. This eventually led to the signing of the South-North Joint Declaration on the Denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula and North Korea allowing IAEA inspections in early 1992. The Clinton administration also negotiated with North Korea, and despite occasional turmoil within their relationship, it eventually resulted in the 1994 “Agreed Framework” and the 1999 moratorium on long-range missile testing.

However, in the early 2000s, insisting that the DPRK had broken its commitment by pursuing uranium enrichment in secret, the Bush administration insisted that there would be no further negotiation or possibility of normalised relations until the DPRK completely dismantled its nuclear program. In response, North Korea accelerated its nuclear program, testing two nuclear bombs in 2006 and 2009. Although the Six Party Talks yielded a Joint Statement in 2005 and an Action Plan for the Joint Statement in 2007, after successful nuclear tests, North Korea became determined to keep its nuclear weapons. Facing this stalemate, the Obama administration employed a policy of so-called “strategic patience”, refusing to engage with North Korea and imposing stricter sanctions with the assistance of the international community. Under the Trump administration, with the rhetoric of “fire and fury”¹ aimed towards the DPRK, the DPRK conducted missile and nuclear tests even more boldly as a means of provoking the United States. This kind of diplomatic brinkmanship is nothing new, though North Korea’s capacity to cause potential harm and its brazenness to defy international law has dramatically increased in recent years. However, during recent summits with President Trump, with ROK President Moon Jae-In facilitating dialogue, the DPRK reacted incredibly warmly to invitations to participate. Chairman Kim sending his sister Kim Yo-Jong to attend the Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang in 2018 alongside President Moon, and the exchange

¹ Baker, P. and Sang-Hun, C. (2017), ‘Trump Threatens ‘Fire and Fury’ Against North Korea if It Endangers US’, The New York Times, 7 August 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/08/world/asia/north-korea-un-sanctions-nuclear-missile-united-nations.html> (Accessed: 11 December 2019)

of letters between President Trump and Chairman Kim ahead of the Second US-DPRK Summit, are just some of many such examples of positive contact between the three nations.²

However, the DPRK now seems to have grown increasingly frustrated with the US's inability to shift its position regarding Complete, Verifiable, Irreversible Denuclearisation (CVID) before significant progress with negotiations can be made.

As seen here, the DPRK has displayed two consistent patterns of behaviour in recent history. First, the DPRK has tended to seek improvement with and eventual normalisation of its relations with the US, though this intention can be obscured by its hostile behaviour. Normalising relations with the US would neutralise the greatest threat to its security and its regime, though as this has been incredibly difficult to achieve, relying on a risky deterrence strategy using weapons of mass destruction has served in its stead.

Second, when receiving positive gestures from the US and other parties, the DPRK has almost always responded positively. On the other hand, external pressure or sanctions has usually been met with severe retaliation rather than acquiescence. This is due to the same survival strategy presented above, and partially due to the fact that admitting its vulnerability to either its domestic or international audience could severely endanger its regime. Thus, the DPRK relies on a set of extremes to manage the external threats posed to its leadership and bolster its perceived strength.

2. Lessons from past experiences negotiating with the DPRK

As explained above, in the past few decades, six major agreements have been made with the DPRK addressing the issue of nuclear weapons:

- The 1994 US-North Korea Agreed Framework
- the 1999 Moratorium on missile and nuclear tests
- the 2005 Joint Statement from the Six Party Talks
- the 2007 Action Plan for the Joint Statement
- the 2012 US-North Korea agreement
- the 2018 Joint Declaration from the Trump-Kim Summit

However, all of these agreements have either collapsed or are yet to see revived progress since their inception. If we look at the four main lessons learned from these agreements and discover why past agreements have failed, it can help us understand how to successfully negotiate with the DPRK in future.

² Finnegan, C., (2019) "Kim Jong-Un praises President Donald Trump and his 'good personal letter' ahead of second summit", ABC News, 24 January 2019 (Accessed: 06 February 2020)

Firstly, all the agreements above did not require immediate CVID. Rather, they set CVID as the primary long-term goal and focused on short-term aims, such as freezing existing nuclear facilities and the development or testing of weapons. This is a key feature that allowed the DPRK to recognise the benefits of negotiating with outside parties and build trust, so we recommend this step be continued in future.

Secondly, within many of these agreements, neither the short-term nor the long-term goals were outlined with an agreed step-by-step approach to achieve them. Such ambiguity made judgement over whether each party had fully satisfied their commitments subject to interpretation by the other parties. In addition, the lack of a detailed time frame further caused mistrust to arise when delays occurred. This also allowed the DPRK a certain degree of flexibility to exploit any existing loopholes while still abiding by the technical wording of the agreements, a key example being its secret enrichment of uranium in the early 2000s while agreeing to freeze progress on its development of plutonium-based weapons. Therefore, future agreements must be very clear in laying out the short and long-term goals of easing tensions and aiming for eventual denuclearisation. They must clarify precisely the expectations of each party with a strict time frame, and also outline clearly the consequences and following procedures should any party fail to comply after agreement.

Thirdly, the lack of mechanisms to ensure that reciprocal action is taken within negotiations seems to have also contributed to past failures. In past discussions, particularly the DPRK and the US have often made demands of the other to fulfil their outlined commitments before realising their own, creating tension that can erode trust and threaten the negotiations themselves.

Finally, the overall lack of trust between North Korea and external parties has been a key feature of past talks. In particular, the US has been very hesitant to provide serious security guarantees to the DPRK in exchange for conciliatory action. This has made it difficult for the DPRK to see the benefit in yielding to US requests by risking the security of its regime, and this increases suspicion of US intentions in implementing agreements. Without a clear basis of trust between parties, negotiations are doomed to fail, so a key priority must be the establishment of this trust through clear communication and ensuring that promises that have been agreed upon are then fulfilled.

3. Japanese and British Policy towards North Korea

3.1 Perception of the DPRK Nuclear Threat by the Japanese and British Governments

It has been agreed upon by both the Japanese and British governments that North Korea is a rational state and is acting in-line with strategies that are in its greatest self-interest according to its own perception of the situation and its priorities.

Japan perceives the DPRK to be a massive threat to its own security; the DPRK consistently engages in ballistic missile testing in waters close to Japan, its current nuclear capacity could easily reach Japanese territory, its potential for cyberwarfare is very potent, and abductions of Japanese citizens have shown its willingness to violate Japan's borders in the past.

The UK has increased its threat perception of the DPRK in recent years given its increased capability to strike the UK using Inter-Continental Ballistic Missiles (ICBM) and the recent 'Wannacry' cyberattack on the NHS's database system.³ While of course Japan, due to its proximity to North Korea, is more vulnerable to harm should a potential attack occur, whether nuclear, chemical, biological or conventional, a key worry for the UK is the British nationals who live abroad in East Asian nations and are thus also exposed to the threat.

As well as having shared economic interest in East Asia, and the UK seeking to increase business links with East Asia due to Brexit, there seems to be a great deal of common ground between Japan and the UK in terms of security and economic interests in maintaining a stability on the Korean peninsula. Both countries are allies and are mutual supporters of NATO, the UN, and their common ally the US. As such, there is a good amount of consistency with the stances they have taken in the past and at present to deal with the DPRK alongside their more powerful and influential ally the United States.

3.2 Current Policy Stance towards the DPRK

At present, both governments seek the Complete Verifiable Irreversible Denuclearisation (CVID) of the DPRK as the key goal of negotiations and sanctions, which is in-line with US policy. As such, the key strategy is for Japan, the UK and their allies to make the pursuit of nuclear weapons so costly for the DPRK that its best strategy will be to negotiate to dismantle its nuclear capabilities to secure material benefits and avoid collapse. This would thereby neutralise the nuclear threat and allow room for the situation on the peninsula to become more stable.

It appears that both governments do not wish to ease pressure put on North Korea, particularly via sanctions or UN resolutions condemning North Korea's violations of international law, before sufficient concessions are made by the DPRK. This means that it is unlikely that either government will choose to ease sanctions as an early measure of good faith or within negotiations, instead seeking concrete concessions first. However, agreements over aid and basic resources such as fuel have been negotiable in the early stages, which alludes to there being a degree of flexibility in what

³ Great Britain. House of Commons Defence Committee. (2018). Rash or Rational? North Korea and the threat it poses. p31. Available at: <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmdfence/327/327.pdf> (Accessed: 11 December 2019).

concessions can be made to encourage further negotiations. The UK and Japan have consistently used international channels such as the UN to carry out their policies and to influence the process of engagement or pressure under the framework of their alliances with the US and other nations.

4. The state of Japanese and British Defence in the region

While the likelihood of a hot conflict involving nuclear weapons is relatively low, the threat of a miscalculation or error is always present, so remaining prepared and relying on traditional deterrence policy is also a key element of defence for Japan and the UK. As part of this strategy of deterrence, Japan and the UK have and will continue to conduct joint training exercises as part of maintaining conventional readiness and improving communication between forces in the event of an armed conflict.

Japan has increased its cooperation with the UK as part of the Five Eyes alliance, which seeks to share intelligence among Anglophone allies the US, Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand.⁴ This intelligence sharing is crucial when monitoring the DPRK's weapons development program and weapons tests close to Japanese territory. While the United Kingdom is not legally obliged to participate in the event of military conflict with the DPRK, it is likely that should its allies require military assistance, it will be provided by the British government.⁵ Japan's defence spending budget is planned to increase further by 2024,⁶ with part of this rise being attributed to the more complex threats Japan is facing with the DPRK as a nuclear power and its increased hostility towards Japan. Japan is also seeking stronger alliances outside of its main military partner, the United States, hence its interest in working with the United Kingdom to complement each other's ability to maintain stability in East Asia and protect their interests.⁷

⁴ Hadano, T. (2019), 'Japan lends its vision to 'Five Eyes' intelligence alliance', *Nikkei Asian Review*, 10 January 2019, <https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/International-relations/Japan-lends-its-vision-to-Five-Eyes-intelligence-alliance> (Accessed: 11 December 2019)

⁵ Great Britain. House of Commons Defence Committee. (2018). *Rash or Rational? North Korea and the threat it poses*. p32. Available at: <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmdfence/327/327.pdf> (Accessed: 11 December 2019).

⁶ The Japan Times (2019), 'Izumo upgrade and planned space unit to further boost Japanese Defense Ministry budget', *The Japan Times*, 9 November 2019, <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2019/11/19/national/izumo-space-unit-japan-defense-ministry-budget/#.XfE31ej7SM8> (Accessed: December 11 2019)

⁷ The Japan Times (2019), 'A reality check for Japan-UK ties', *The Japan Times*, 19 February 2019, <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/opinion/2019/02/19/editorials/reality-check-japan-u-k-ties/#.XfE50-j7SM8>, (Accessed: December 11 2019)

5. Policy Recommendations

5.1 Broad Approach

Based on our analysis in previous sections, we suggest that the safest path towards the eventual denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula lies in negotiation and diplomacy, but in order to make it effective, we must integrate lessons from past mistakes.

In particular, we recommend that while setting denuclearisation as the eventual goal in negotiating with the DPRK, the main focus for the British and Japanese governments should be shifted towards utilising their international platforms and alliances to create an atmosphere of stability and trust between the DPRK and involved parties, notably the United States.

In practical terms, this would require the Japanese and British governments to soften their current positions that offer sanctions relief and further cooperation largely on the DPRK's complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearisation (CVID). This position, in our opinion, only stymies the opportunity to reach any substantial agreement with the DPRK at this point in time. Outlining tangible benefits that could come from negotiation and gaining the flexibility to ease some sanctions as part of reciprocal gestures of good faith seems to be a more effective and safer strategy.

Instead of CVID we argue that more realistic goals for the near future, in order of priority, would be:

1. Preventing further escalation of the nuclear crisis via diplomatic means
2. Cooperating with the DPRK to cease nuclear weapons testing
3. Cooperating with the DPRK to reduce its arsenal of nuclear weapons
4. Limiting the DPRK's potential for proliferation of nuclear weapons
5. Dismantling certain sites as a measure of good faith as has been done in the past

We propose that by using talks and summits with concrete, clear terms, as well as the prospects of multilateral treaties and security guarantees at the start of this process, these will serve as the primary stabilising momentum needed to continue further negotiations and ease tensions overall. Using the trust that has hopefully been established during these early stages, we suggest that the UK and Japan use their influence to persuade their allies to offer further economic and diplomatic incentives (aid, loans, fuel, further security guarantees) to the DPRK on a reciprocal, tit-for-tat basis. As negotiations continue, the level of incentive offered could be increased, as growing trust and stability should allow for greater levels of transactional commitment to negotiated agreements. Of course, we advocate that the establishment of clear time frames and wording of all agreements to be a priority on the UK and Japan side to ensure cohesion and overall success.

In this respect, it seems that one of the only ways to influence the situation effectively, would be to engage and negotiate, as coercion via pressure has shown only limited potential for success. This is clear when we look at history and the DPRK's behavioural trends, which are compelling in

the fact that they have persisted for decades regardless of external changes and have weathered radically different US administrations. The DPRK gaining nuclear weapons has not been prevented by increased sanctions, and the persistence to continue with its development despite such harsh condemnation by the international community is proof that either sanctions are not having their intended effect, or that even if they are affecting the North Korean economy negatively, the DPRK believes that the possession of nuclear weapons is worth the risk.

We are not ignoring the DPRK's propensity for deception and capacity to disrupt or stall agreements once material benefits have been gained. However, it would seem that pursuing a strategy of tentative engagement while maintaining current deterrence via conventional military power, though not increasing it, is the most sensible course of action for Japan and the United Kingdom.

The long-term vision for stability is based on the theory that as a result of relations normalisation and economic integration into the international community, the core need for North Korea to hold nuclear weapons as a means of self-defence and preservation of the regime becomes obsolete. Thus, East Asia could remain more stable and safer regardless of the DPRK's status as a nuclear or non-nuclear power.

5.2 Strategy for Encouraging Negotiation

We strongly advise that the Japanese and British governments encourage negotiation to reach a detailed agreement with the DPRK that clearly articulates each of the steps for improving relations and trust between the DPRK and other involved parties, and the path towards gradual denuclearisation. During past negotiations, a lack of clarity concerning the goals and means of implementing negotiations caused mistrust to breed when different interpretations of implementation led to accusations of violating agreements, becoming a partial cause for their collapse. An emphasis must be placed on reciprocal, step-by-step exchanges between the DPRK and the allied parties, particularly the United States.

We believe that the Japanese and British government's ability to persuade the United States to follow this dialogue-focused, concrete and reciprocal policy is at least somewhat realistic given the domestic political climate of the US today. President Trump has fought to acquire a reputation as a deft deal-maker and has been one of the driving forces behind the US's approach to hold summits with the DPRK. Therefore, there is a good chance a concerted effort between Japan and Britain, some of America's closest allies, could take advantage of President Trump's self-interest in making headway with a dialogue-led deal as we approach the 2020 US Presidential elections. Even if Presidential leadership should change as a result of these elections, there is a decent chance that a young administration would seek to seize the opportunity to break with the US's history of diplomatic failure, and start its term on a high note by reaching out to the DPRK, if supported via

strong backing from its allies Japan and the United Kingdom. The chance to share the burden of diplomatically handling the DPRK nuclear crisis could also be an attractive incentive for the United States to cooperate with Japan and Britain, given its current 'America First' policy.

We insist that Japan and the UK work in close concert with their own allies, especially the ROK to accomplish this, and that sufficient coordination and consensus is established between these alliances before proceeding to negotiate with the DPRK. This will present the DPRK with a strong, united alliance that cannot be easily divided and exploited and allows members to keep others accountable.

However, before this, trust-building is required, which could take the form of the Japan and the UK convincing the US and other UN member states to gradually lift sanctions while North Korea freezes its nuclear activities. No CVID, we recommend, should be required at this early stage. We believe Japan and the United Kingdom could be very influential mediators in encouraging their allies to follow this policy line.

Practically speaking, we recommend that:

- Japan and the UK should work closely together, with input from the ROK, to influence the United States' policy line towards the DPRK and encourage a strategy of dialogue rather than military or economic pressure. Using their international partnerships, alliances and their UN membership (and in the UK's case UN Security Council membership) to garner support and influence the US in this way allows Japan and the United Kingdom to have maximum influence over the situation at hand and represent their interests.
- Through this dialogue, a variety of options are available to alleviate tensions and increase trust: reducing numbers of soldiers stationed in the ROK, encouraging the signing of an official peace treaty, offering security guarantees, changing the Demilitarised Zone to a so-called 'Peace Zone', encouraging cooperation between ROK/UK and DPRK armies to retrieve remains of Korean War soldiers, fostering exchanges between DPRK and ROK university students, investing in business opportunities, are all options available that Japan and the United Kingdom could facilitate as a result of encouraging dialogue as the main strategy among their allies. By actively participating in this process, it draws attention and potential support from the international community, as well as putting pressure on allies like the US and the ROK to avoid disengaging from the DPRK and the proposed diplomatic strategy.
- Japan and the UK should use the channels available to them as allies to insist that the US remain faithful to any future agreements made. The UK's embassy in Pyongyang could be used as a channel of communication for all parties, but particularly between Japan and the DPRK, especially when considering talks concerning historically difficult problems such as the abduction issue; while North Korea may not seek direct bilateral talks with Japan at this point in time, this could be a method of circumventing this issue during the initial stages of talks, using the UK as a third party to mediate if necessary.

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- To a country where image and prestige are incredibly important, the impact of summits with world leaders and treaties recognised by the international community must not be understated. Japan and the United Kingdom are in a unique position where they can support the actions of their main mutual ally, the United States, to ease tensions and foster trust with North Korea by trying to facilitate such events, particularly the United Kingdom given that it has a diplomatic presence in Pyongyang.
 - The UK and Japan should make use of their soft power when engaging with the North Korean people. For example, the BBC has already set up a Korean language service targeting a potential North Korea audience. It is encouraged that Japan and the UK work to complement each other's attempts to influence the hearts and minds of the North Korean people by making use of their soft power and cultural diplomacy wherever possible. For example, we strongly suggest Japan and UK encourage initiatives of educational and cultural exchanges between themselves and the DPRK.
 - Defence should be conducted in more creative ways. Military cooperation between Japan and the United Kingdom is encouraged, though not through training exercises or weapons sales while trying to foster a secure space for talks; rather cooperation within cybersecurity and intelligence sharing is encouraged. At the same time, Japan and the UK should also work together and with the US to sustain, though not escalate, the current level of military deterrence towards countering a potential conflict.
 - The United Kingdom, given its experience dismantling nuclear facilities and weapons, could provide an alternative route for the DPRK to freeze and decrease its nuclear capacity, with support from Japan given its historically strong anti-nuclear stance.

5.3. Additional Points

We strongly suggest that Japan improve its relationship with the ROK and resolve current tensions. A strong alliance between Japan and the ROK is paramount to ensure the coherence of any strategy to implement future agreements. The resumption of intelligence sharing is crucial in dealing with the DPRK as a nuclear power. With a deadlock at present, we consider whether the UK could act as a mediating figure to allow both countries to resolve disputes without losing domestic political capital. Beyond this, there is a chance for the United Kingdom to replicate its success in forming cooperative security links in the past with both Japan and the ROK, by expanding on its influence as a potential mediator to also establish a new trilateral security arrangement between all three nations. This would entail the distribution of intelligence, cybersecurity expertise and technology, and the expansion of communication channels among all parties. This would ensure the consolidation and coordination of future policy, which is especially crucial for Japan and the ROK whose interests are most at stake when negotiating with the DPRK.

Japan and the US's relations with China also are key towards establishing a successful strategy to limit the threat the DPRK poses to the region and the world; this is due to China's unique relationship with the DPRK and capacity to influence its decision-making to some degree. At the current time, China seems somewhat willing to compromise with other involved nations to reach a consensus regarding the DPRK's hostility and aggressive rhetoric, either as a party in negotiations or by using its position on the UN Security Council to maintain a stable East Asia. By facilitating dialogue, potentially even mediating between the US given the abrasive nature of the current trade war, perhaps Japan and the UK could further consolidate their negotiating positions and strengthen their own relations with China.

It must also be noted that if the long-term goal is to normalise relations with the DPRK and slowly integrate the DPRK into the world economy, there is an opportunity for Japan and potentially the UK to influence this process by being some of the major nations to enter an emerging DPRK market. With Britain being eager to seek new trade opportunities as a result of the uncertainty of Brexit and to alleviate some of the economic stagnation that faces Japan currently, this could be a strategy that supports both of their interests; this is true especially in Japan's case as a nation that has historically kept economic and political issues separate when dealing with neighbouring countries. With economic links, there also comes a degree of leverage, which could perhaps be used to pressure the DPRK regime to adhere to more stringent standards of human rights for its citizens as well as influence other policies.

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