



The Role of Europe in Enhancing Cooperative Security in Asia and the Pacific: A View from Japan

Takako Ueta

“In principle, I think it would be possible to establish multilateral structures and institutions also in Asia. Of course, I realize that there are clear differences between the situation in Europe in the wake of the Second World War and the current situation in Asia... in the 1970s a very particular process was started in Europe called the Helsinki Process which was a conference that took place on a regular basis in which European countries on both sides of the divided Europe... both sides of the Iron Curtain participated with the aim to promote security-building, confidence-building, more transparency, better arms control. Why couldn't all this take place in Asia? Of course, it can. It's a question of political will. And I think actually that Asia needs more and stronger multilateral structures to deal with potential conflicts.”

Remarks by NATO Secretary-General Fogh Rasmussen at the National Press Club in Tokyo, April 15, 2013.(1)

Asia is a prominent export market for Europe while in the East and South China Seas, tensions continue. Europe has searched for its political role in Asia. This policy brief presents an analysis and argues the role of Europe in enhancing cooperative security in Asia and the Pacific, which would promote stability and peace there.

SOURCES OF TENSIONS AND INSTABILITY

Europeans tend to regard Asia as an export market. German exports to China have been almost half of EU exports. It has been profitable and has been indispensable to economic growth and the recovery of Europe. However, this region has become a source of instability and tensions, not only because of the longstanding threats which originated from

North Korea and potential conflict between China and Taiwan, but also because of the attitudes by China which has deployed forces including maritime safety vessels to its self-claimed territory in the South and East China Seas.

After an academic survey by the UN ECAFE had shown the possibility of the existence of petroleum resources in the surrounding sea of the Senkaku Islands in 1968, the Government of China and Taiwan officially started to make their sovereign territorial claims in 1971. Since the collision incident between Japanese Coast Guard patrol vessels and a Chinese fishing trawler in Japanese territorial waters off the Senkaku Islands in September 2010, China has continuously sent its governmental vessels to that area.(2) On December 13, in 2012, an

airplane of the State Oceanic Administration of China as well as four vessels entered Japanese territorial airspace and sea. On January 30, 2013, in the East China Sea, a weapons-guiding radar was directed from a Chinese State Administration aircraft at an escort vessel of the Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force.(3) An unpredictable incident may trigger conflict as the vessels and aircraft come too close.

It has not been reported in Europe, but in Japan this situation is similar to a weather forecast or the exchange rate of foreign currencies which TV, radio or internet news report every hour, day by day. China is not a military security threat to Europe, while Japanese nationals are very preoccupied about their security. Among Europeans, those who are mainly concerned about Chinese military development are experts on nuclear arms control and disarmament.

If the territory under Japanese administration is attacked, the US has a legal obligation to defend Japan under article five of the Japan-US Security Treaty and the Obama government has made it clear to China many times. On the South China Sea, at the Ministerial Meeting of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) in July 2012, Secretary of State, Mrs. Clinton, explained the basic US position: “the United States has a national interest in the freedom of navigation, the maintenance of peace and stability, respect for international law, and unimpeded lawful commerce in the South China Sea...Each of us has followed closely the troubling recent developments in the South China Sea. None of us can fail to be concerned by the increase in tensions, the uptick in confrontational rhetoric, and disagreements over resource exploitation. We have seen worrisome instances of economic coercion and the problematic use of military and government vessels in connection with disputes among fishermen.” In the view of the US, not only the South China Sea, but also the East China Sea is important. The National

Defense Authorization Act for the fiscal year 2013 defines the East China Sea, including the Senkaku Islands, as “a vital part of the maritime commons of Asia, including critical sea lanes of communication and commerce that benefit all nations of the Asia-Pacific region.”

For Europe, sea lanes of communication to Asia as well as freedom of navigation are crucial to its economic growth. In order to establish an institutionalized risk reduction and confidence and security-building mechanism, Europe has a role to play. Europeans seem to be concerned about the US “re-balancing” toward Asia in military terms. If Asia and the Pacific are stable and non-confrontational towards US interests, the rebalancing will not continue to happen. Not only because of trade, do Europeans have every reason to contribute to peace and stability in Asia.

Among the Asian countries, Japan’s relations with European countries and institutions have been distinct.(4) It is far beyond cooperative security. Based on the same democratic values and on the same level of industrialization, their policy lines of various issues have been almost the same. In terms of defense cooperation, Japan agreed to develop military equipment with the UK(5) and France(6) on a bilateral basis. In the future, an agenda for cooperation could be envisaged between Japan and the European Defence Agency (EDA).

INTERNATIONALIZATION BY MILITARY CONTACTS AND DIALOGUES

A British think tanker, Mr. Charles Grant pointed out the big difference between Russia and China: “China does not take global governance very seriously on issues of security, but it does engage, when it sees an interest in doing so, on economic subjects. Russia has tended to take the opposite approach: it has been willing to sign up to international rules on security, but is reluctant to engage in economic

global governance... In the field of security, China is a rising power, increasingly confident in its new found strength. So it is unwilling to be shackled by international rules on armaments...The rhetoric of China's leaders remains closer to that of the engagers than of the nationalists: they talk of multilateralism. But they see multilateralism as a tool and a tactic for promoting China's interests, rather than – as many Europeans see it – as an inherently superior system. China remains reluctant to engage in arms control or other sorts of security governance.”(7)

The *East Asia Strategic Review 2013* which was published by the National Institute for Defense Studies of Japan referred to the importance of cooperation with China as follows: cooperation “on the maintenance of maritime order through bilateral and multilateral frameworks will further improve military transparency and the PLA's manners at sea and lead to the inclusion of China in a maritime order based on regulations and the rule of law.”(8)

In order to avoid unexpected incidents, a maritime communication mechanism including:

- mutual confirmation of the communication frequencies of ships and aircraft in the area;
- the creation of a hotline between the two countries' defense departments; and
- the holding of regular meetings, has not been implemented between the two countries because China has not responded to Japan.(9)

Despite the territorial problem between the two countries on the Northern islands (Kurile islands), the implementation record of the Agreement of Prevention of Incident at Sea between Japan and Russia has been good. The reason seems to be that the Russian Forces have been internationalized by their contacts with the West. Members of the Self- Defense

Forces of Japan point out that they share the same professionalism as military men with Russian forces. The Soviet and Russian Forces have had significant experiences of military contacts and dialogues in the Helsinki Process including the military CSBMs since 1975, implementation of the US-Soviet arms control treaties, and after the end of the East West confrontation, the implementation of the CFE Treaty and its exchanges with NATO. It helped enhance internationalization of the Russian forces.

European countries and NATO have started to invite PLA to their defense colleges and NATO Defence College. It will help PLA understand international manner and rules. It should be beneficial to China in reducing incidents and frictions. In the process of the transformation of the role of NATO, cooperative security has become one of the core tasks. Developing military exchanges and contact with China would be an important future agenda for NATO. NATO may organize a meeting with non-member countries with specific issues. In this forum, if Japan, China and other countries in Asia and the Pacific are invited, it will pave the way to their cooperation together. This may depend on the future evolution of NATO-China relations. The channel is not only through NATO, but also its member countries. As for the OSCE, China is not among its Asian Partners for Co-operation (Japan, ROK, Thailand, Afghanistan and Australia). Among the OSCE participating countries, Germany should have a role to play since traditionally, Germany has attached importance to this organization.

INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF RISK REDUCTION MECHANISMS

For the purpose of risk reduction, the most efficient method is to have constant meetings without scheduling, which would allow for emergency meetings. More basically, in order to implement internationally agreed rules, we need

an institution. For the purpose of risk reduction, not only the role of the secretariat and regular meetings are important, but also contacts between the delegations in the same town would be useful.

In terms of security cooperation, Europe is a highly institutionalized region while Asia does not have regional security institutions with a secretariat and permanent missions of its member states.⁽¹⁰⁾ ASEAN has its secretariat and missions, but it is not a military security organization. The ASEAN Regional Forum is supposed to play the role of security cooperation and the EU has a full membership. The ARF is supported by the unit of the ASEAN Secretariat, but there are no permanent missions. In the case of cooperation among Japan, ROK and China, in Seoul, the Trilateral Cooperation Secretariat was established in September 2011, but without permanent delegations.

In Asia and the Pacific, there are countries with different political systems. For these characteristics, the CSCE or OSCE would be a reference point. The institutionalization of the CSCE started in early 1990s.

The ARF has a Foreign Ministerial Meeting once a year, and it is supported by senior officials and various inter-sessional meetings. The separate ADMM plus (Meeting of ASEAN Defense Ministers and Defense Ministers of US, Japan, Australia, ROK, China, New Zealand, India and Russia) is to be convened every other year. In the case of the East Asia Summit (EAS), it is an annual summit and is prepared by Foreign Ministers and senior officials. Every time when necessary, meetings need to be scheduled. The ARF Foreign Ministerial Conferences and the EAS Summits are always held in the yearly rotating chair holder country of the ASEAN. There were some reasons for the lack of the institutionalization of security in Asia and the Pacific. During and immediately after the Cold War, it was Russia who proposed the Asian Collective Security System which was

not accepted by the US and its allies.

The existing forum for multilateral security dialogues such as the ARF has been led by ASEAN, which does not like to be dominated by an institution, while even security experts from ASEAN and other countries admit that an ASEAN-centered approach to security is not working well⁽¹¹⁾ in view of the rising tensions. The EAS is dealing with every policy area including security, but it has also taken an ASEAN-centered approach. ASEAN has had difficulties in keeping its unity because China has divided ASEAN member countries, which Europeans experienced in the case of the solar panel dispute.

It is crucial to distinguish between the support of regional cooperation among ASEAN countries, and the deficit of the ASEAN-centered approach to security. In terms of promoting security cooperation and the establishment of an institutionalized mechanism in Asia and the Pacific, not only NATO and the OSCE, but also the EU has a significant role to play. The EU has been a top or major trade partner and investor of countries in Asia and the Pacific. It has been a major donor of development assistance and other support activities. In this regard, the EU has leverage.

Paragraph 25 of the Revised Guidelines of the EU's Foreign and Security Policy in East Asia, adopted in June 2012 deals with the mechanisms: "The EU should share our own experience of regional peace and security mechanisms (including for example, the OSCE), and should be willing to cooperate in the context of broader East Asia peace and security mechanisms as they evolve." In EU terms, East Asia includes ASEAN countries.

High Representative Baroness Ashton and Secretary of State Clinton issued a Joint EU-US Statement on the Asia-Pacific Region in July 2012: "Both sides plan to work with Asian

partners on increasing maritime security based on international law as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, and lend assistance to the development of confidence building measures to reduce the risk of clashes and conflict. On the South China Sea, both sides continue to encourage ASEAN and China to advance a Code of Conduct and to resolve territorial and maritime disputes through peaceful, diplomatic and cooperative solutions. “

DESIRED MECHANISM

In the discussion of designing institutionalized risk reduction mechanism, it cannot be influenced too much by the CSCE experiences. Firstly, in comparison to the Cold War era, nowadays, countries with a different political and value system are in the globalized economy. This means that the three basket approach of the CSCE is not relevant. Secondly, in order to meet rising tensions, the target should be immediate risk reduction and military confidence and security-building measures, and not to touch upon the human rights issues which would be a non-starter in Asia. Thirdly, for obvious reasons, the confidence and security-building measures should not include exchange of naval military information and measures related to movement of the navy since the institution without US participation does not make sense. Fourthly, it is not necessary to negotiate a basic document which is comparable to the Helsinki Final Act, because the objective is risk reduction and respect for the existing internationally agreed rules. The negotiation of the basic document should cause significant delay.

The desired measures to be introduced would be:

- Communication network which is the same as the OSCE and links the member countries and organizations;
- Weekly meeting at Ambassadorial level with Military representatives;
- Emergency meetings by Foreign Ministers;
- If agreed, this institution supports

implementation of agreed disarmament and non-proliferation treaties, regimes, and related United Nations Security Council Resolutions.

Geographically, it should cover all Asia and the Pacific, and not be limited to North East Asia or South East Asia since the nature and the root cause of the rising tension is the same. North East Asia and South East Asia are sub-regions and after the establishment of the institution, sub-regional measures could be introduced.

Regarding North East Asia, President Park of South Korea launched the idea of non-military cooperative measures on the occasion of her visit to the US in May 2013. A security expert in South Korea explained that the objective of this idea was to support the Six Party Talks, but it was not agreed by the US and China since the priority of the two countries was to re-convene the Six Party Talks as soon as possible.

In view of the current political climate, it would be almost impossible to institutionalize the ARF and EAS in this way because of its style of decision taking. For this reason, it is necessary to set up a separate forum which is an assembly of Ambassadors and Military representatives of the member countries, and meet at least once a week. It needs a small-scale administrative secretariat, and member countries and the EU should set up its mission to the forum. The secretariat should be located in a capital which has almost all the embassies of member countries so that the political section of the embassy could be double-hatted to this mission in order not to be too costly. Another requirement will be that for the purpose of emergency meeting at the Foreign Ministerial level, easy access of flights from other capitals. Freedom of press should be necessary for interviewing and reporting the activities of the forum. The problem of this region is that there has been no neutral

country with diplomatic skills and efficient conference support which is comparable to e.g. Austria, Finland, Sweden or Switzerland.

This institution would not duplicate the work of the ARF and EAS. On the contrary, it will support these fora at a working level, which could be a significant contribution to and enhancement of the effectiveness of their work.

FUTURE PERSPECTIVE AND THE ROLE OF EUROPE

On the tensions in the East China Sea, the EU declaration in September 2012 is helpful in the enhancement of rule of law: “With its significant interests in the region, the EU is following with concern the developments in East Asia's maritime areas. The EU urges all parties concerned to seek peaceful and cooperative solutions in accordance with international law, in particular the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea and to clarify the basis for their claims. The EU calls on all parties to take steps to calm the situation.” Japan proposed that South Korea bring the territorial problem to the International Court of Justice three times in the past. South Korea has never accepted doing this. In the case of China, the former Foreign Minister of Japan suggested that China should refer the case to the ICJ as China was not satisfied with the status of the Senkaku islands.

Because of its specific character, the EU can act like a neutral state, although its policies remain driven by its values. The EU may point out that the activities of China have been counter-productive because countries which are threatened by China are strengthening their alliance and deterrence capabilities. As a result, a vicious circle of militarization is in progress, which would deprive China of precious resources. It should invest in environmental and social affairs. Destabilization in the neighboring region will not contribute to its economic growth.

In the process of drafting the EU Global

Maritime Security Strategy, the role of the EU in Asia and the Pacific is expected to be discussed, in particular respect for the rule of law, because danger would not be limited to this area. If we do not have a responsible China but one which would seek a China-centric order⁽¹²⁾, the international rules of Western origin will be in crisis. The same thing can be said to NATO which is expected to have more discussion on the Alliance Maritime Strategy.

Another role of Europe in reducing tensions in North East Asia is to explain its history from a different angle. In the past, China and South Korea accepted apologies from Japan⁽¹³⁾, but they have brought historical issues to the fore mainly because of their domestic politics. The EU needs to make clear that the reconciliation was achieved between Germany and France, which share the same democratic political system and values. Peace in Europe was not accomplished by a unilateral apology from Germany, but the role of the Schuman Plan from France was significant.

In South East Asia, responsible statesmen are future-looking and have expressed gratitude for development assistance from Japan, which was also offered to ROK and China.

A Korean Studies expert in Japan, Professor Kurata, expressed concern about the foreign and security policy of the Park Government, which is seeking a balance between China and the US. As long as US-China relations are good, it may work, but China has its own strategic interest.⁽¹⁴⁾ The press reported that South Korea and China agreed on military cooperation in June 2013. If this South Korean policy would turn out to be based on an illusion, and not realism, the policy would be comparable to the policy of balance of Poland between the two World Wars. It is a question of an assessment of

realpolitik.

The geo-strategic location of South Korea is similar to Finland before the end of the Cold War, while Finland was not an ally of the US, and did not have a hostile “North Finland.” In view of the instability of North Korea, the military experts deplore that necessary defense cooperation with Japan is not possible because of the nationalism of their country.⁽¹⁵⁾ Both countries agreed on the General Security of Military Information Agreement, but because of their nationalism, the Korean Parliament postponed the signature in June 2012.⁽¹⁶⁾

On Japan, in response to tensions, the first stage of the foreign and security policy of the Abe Government has been focused on the strengthening of the alliance with the US and developing security cooperation with Australia, India, Vietnam, and other countries. Regarding the review of the interpretation of the right of collective self-defense and the issue of the amendment of the Constitution⁽¹⁷⁾, its policy objectives are not interpreted as the remilitarization of Japan, but seek enhanced burden sharing with the US, as well as an upgraded contribution to peacekeeping activities. When Japan deployed the Self-Defense Forces to Iraq in Samawah from 2003 to 2009, its missions were strictly limited to water purification, medical services, reconstruction of public infrastructures, transportation and so on. They were protected by the Dutch, UK and Australian forces because the SDF were lightly armed.

The second stage of the foreign and security policy of the Abe Government may need to have a vision of a sustainable security network in Asia and the Pacific, based on its deeply-rooted pacifism since the Pacific War, which would give Japan its rightful place and position among its neighbors.

Whereas the experiences in Europe are not well-known in Japan, a few steps have been

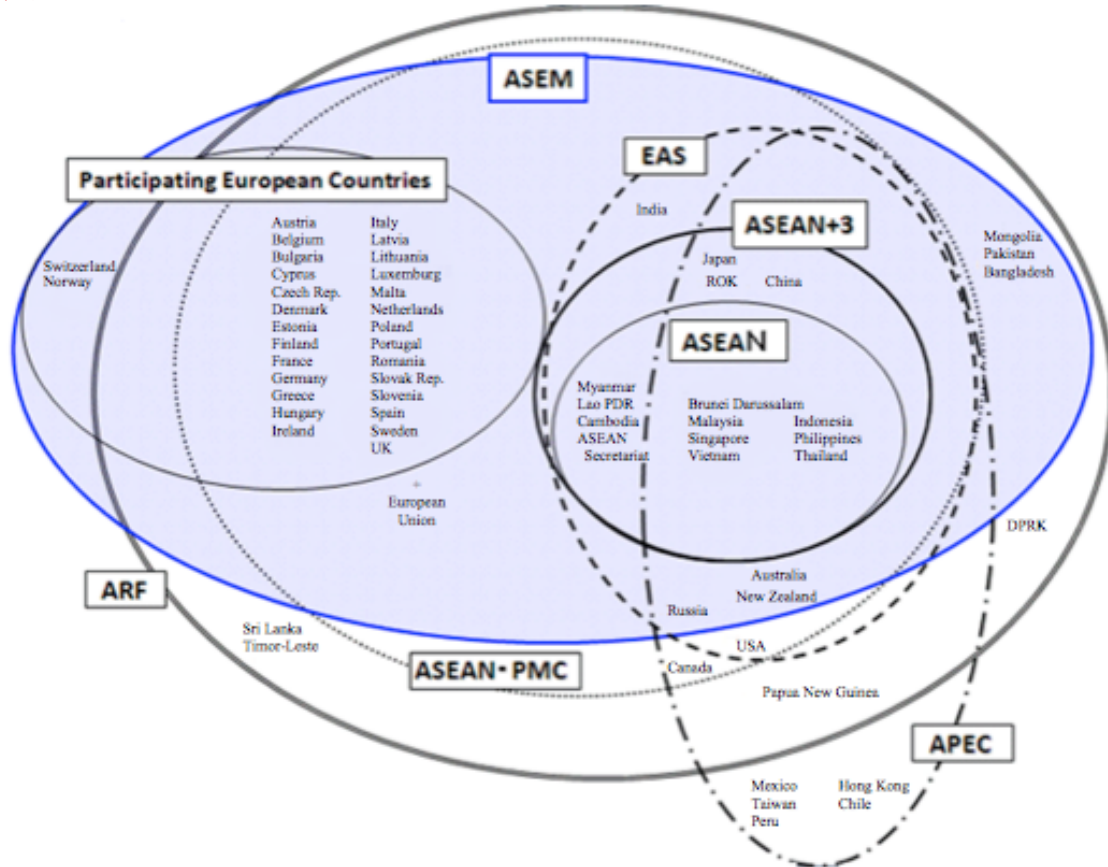
taken. On July 30, the Defense Minister of Japan, Mr. Onodera visited the OSCE Secretariat in Vienna. It was the first ever ministerial visit of Japan. He expressed his opinion that Asia needed to have a framework which was comparable to the OSCE with a permanent institution and weekly security dialogues. On August 29, 2013, in his speech at the ADMM plus in Brunei, he referred to his visit to the OSCE, and suggested his proposal for its heading towards the establishment of a permanent institution for the purpose of continuous dialogues which should include transparency measures of armed forces. In his view, these exchanges of views would contribute to the enhancement of stability in the Asian security environment. He urged that the ASEAN should learn from the experiences in Europe. Ambassador Iwatani, who was bilateral Ambassador to Austria and was responsible for the OSCE, was appointed as the Secretary-General of the Trilateral Cooperation Secretariat in Seoul in September 2013. Already in summer 2012, a senior diplomat, Director-General of the European Bureau Mr. Kozuki, contributed a commentary, “Why Asia Needs a New Security Framework” to *Europe’s World*.⁽¹⁸⁾

The former Prime Minister of Australia deplored the lack of a diplomatic culture of cooperative security in Asia.⁽¹⁹⁾ He was an advocate of an OSCE-type institution in Asia. On the occasion of the OSCE Foreign Ministerial in December 2011 he stated that “We’ve been building the ASEAN Regional Forum, building the East Asia Summit, building APEC and Australia’s longstanding diplomatic support over past years for the long term emergence of an Asia Pacific community. These are important steps in that direction. But in the future we perhaps need something that is the equivalent of the Helsinki Accords. Maybe the Tokyo Accords. Maybe the Jakarta Accords. Maybe the Seoul Accords. Maybe even the Canberra Accords.”

In my view, as stated above, at the first stage, it is not necessary to negotiate a basic document. It will be a gradual process. It would be easier to start this process while we have US President Obama, who has been sympathetic to multilateral cooperation, and the risk reduction mechanism should reduce the US burden. We need to seek a win-win solution for peace and stability in Asia and the Pacific. The institutionalization of risk reduction mechanisms and security cooperation is the way to proceed.

Dr. Takako UETA is professor at the International Christian University in Japan. She was Ambassador, Deputy Chief of the Mission of Japan to the EU (2008-2011), advisor and member of the Delegation of Japan to major CSCE/OSCE meetings (1992-2001), and Special Advisor on NATO and European security to the Embassy of Japan to Belgium (1990-1993). The views expressed in this paper are her own.

ANNEX



Notes:

1. EU Participates in the ARF and ASEAN PMC (Each EU members doesn't participate in these fora individually).
2. The name and outline of each forum is as follows:
 - (a) ARF (ASEAN Regional Forum) Forum for region-wide dialogue concerning political and security-related matters in the Asia-Pacific region
 - (b) ASEAN PMC (ASEAN Post-Ministerial Conferences) Forum for dialogue between ASEAN member countries and their external dialogue partners at the Foreign Ministers' level
 - (c) APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation) The premier forum for facilitating economic growth, cooperation, trade and investment in the Asia-Pacific region
 - (d) EAS (East Asia Summit) Forum led by leaders for developing concrete cooperation to deal with common regional issues
 - (e) ASEAN Plus 3 (ASEAN Plus Three) Forum for developing concrete cooperation in wide areas among ASEAN member countries, Japan, China and Republic of Korea
 - (f) ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) An association of 10 Southeast Asian nations for accelerating economic growth, social progress, and cultural development in the region

Source: <http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/economy/asean/partner.html>

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 - (3) http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/senkaku/position_paper3_en.html
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- (6) http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/page6e_000076.html
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<http://www.nids.go.jp/english/publication/east-asian/e2013.html>
- (9) *Ibid.*, p.127.
- (10) On the members of various frameworks in Asia and the Pacific, see Annex.
- (11) See Moosung Lee, “The conflict resolutions by regional cooperation: the case of North Korea,” in *EU-Korea@50, Bilateral Cooperation and Security Challenges in North East Asia*(Conference Report), Sponsored by EUISS and Korea Foundation, July 2013, p.148; Katja Weber, “The ASEAN Regional Forum and the EU’s Role in Promoting Security in the Asia-Pacific,” in Thomas Christiansen, et al., eds., *The Palgrave Handbook of EU-Asia Relations*, Hampshire, 2013, pp.346-347.
- (12) See Mitsuru Kitano, “China’s Foreign Strategy,” *Asia-Pacific Review*. Vol.18, Issue 2, 2011, 37-59.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13439006.2011.630855>.
- (13) Ueta, *op.cit.*, pp.14-15.
- (14) See Hideya Kurata, “Precarious ‘Anti-Japanese’ Alignment with China by South Korea,”(in Japanese), *Sankei Shinbun*, Tokyo, July 5, 2013.
- (15) The Asia report of the International Crisis Group points out that “Anti-Japanese sentiment in China is a legacy of the Japanese invasion during the Second World War and has been reinforced by decades of patriotic, government-driven education and mass media,” “Dangerous Water: China-Japan Relations on the Rocks,” Crisis Group Asia Report, No, 243, 8 April 2013, p.17.
<http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/asia/north-east-asia/china/245-dangerous-waters-china-japan-relations-on-the-rocks.aspx>
- On education and media, the same thing can be said in South Korea. Japan does not have educational system which plants distrust of and antipathy against any foreign countries.
- (16) See Ueta, *op.cit.*, pp.15-16.
- (17) CHAPTER II RENUNCIATION OF WAR, Article 9. Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes. (No proposal to amend this provision.)
- In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized.
- CHAPTER IX AMENDMENTS, Article 96. Amendments to this Constitution shall be initiated by the Diet, through a concurring vote of two-thirds or more of all the members of each House and shall thereupon be submitted to the people for ratification, which shall require the affirmative vote of a majority of all votes cast thereon, at a special referendum or at such election as the Diet shall specify. http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/constitution_and_government/frame_01.html
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