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ESSAY

DISINFORMATION AND PROPAGANDA IN THE CRIMEAN AND EASTERN UKRAINIAN CRISES

Mónika MOLNÁR¹

ABSTRACT

During the 2014 Crimean crisis and later in the turmoil-struck Eastern Ukrainian region, soldiers without national insignia played an important role in the events. They were said to be either professional Russian troops or local pro-Russian insurgents – the narrative differed heavily. Depending on whether one was observing Western or pro-Russian media, propaganda has created two images of these unknown people: suspicious ‘Little Green Men’ with malignant intentions, and liberating, glorious ‘Polite People’. Extensive disinformation campaigns were launched to affect the opinion of people and to distort the events with a positive outcome for the perpetrators. The aim of this essay is to present some examples of the distorted accounts broadcasted in pro-Russian media channels, and to examine how it is received and what the reasons can be behind it.

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Keywords: Ukrainian crisis, 'little green men', 'polite people', propaganda, disinformation

INTRODUCTION

The word 'propaganda' is described in the Oxford Dictionary as 'information, especially of a biased or misleading nature, used to promote a political cause or point of view'. Although there is tremendous work on classifying and understanding propaganda in different countries and eras, it is usually not easy to differentiate between other types of persuasions and propaganda, as the latter is often covert. Nevertheless, distinction is becoming more and more important, as the rapid development of communication technology induced an increase in information flow and changed the media coverage of events concerning state interests and foreign policy.

It is a widely accepted viewpoint that only professional experts should be in charge of foreign policy decision making, but as the Vietnam War, 'the first televised war' has demonstrated for the United States, the opinion of the population cannot be ignored in the cases of armed conflicts. The end of the Cold War and the already mentioned rapid development of technology created the so-called CNN effect. With real-time international media and the increase in the number of people it can reach, the aspect of the possible effect of media coverage should be taken into consideration. According to political scientist Steven Livingston, there are three ways through which media can affect policymaking. Firstly, media can serve as accelerant, thus forcing policymakers to react in a shorter period of time. Secondly, it can also affect foreign policy priorities in a restrictive sense, by taking certain events to higher decision making levels due to a huge media interest. Thirdly, real-time modern media can also hinder foreign policy. One possibility for it is to endanger operational security by revealing too much information on a certain topic. The other possibility is what happened in Vietnam: media coverage changed the

attitude of the American population, therefore emotionally impeded foreign policy.²

The CNN effect and the latter are not unfamiliar for the Russian Federation either. The repulse of the first Chechen War is partly attributed for the extensive media coverage of the events. During the second war in Chechnya, the materials broadcasted were tended with heed. The Crimean and Eastern Ukrainian crises are different from the Chechen wars. On the one hand, the Russian Federation is officially not a party of an armed conflict, but on the other hand, it is directly affected due to the number of Russian minority groups in the area and the geopolitical goals of the country (for instance the tradition of controlling its own interests spheres in the ‘near abroad’ (*ближнее зарубежье*), originating from the 1990s).

Originating from different historical, sociological and political traditions, distinctive media models can be observed. One of the most famous media theories – developed during the height of the Cold War in 1963 by Fred S. Siebert, Theodore Peterson and Wilbur Schramm – presents four types of models: the libertarian theory, with absolute freedom of speech; the social responsibility theory, which means freedom of speech but with responsible self-regulation; the authoritarian theory, where media is subordinated to the governing power; and the Soviet theory, where the existing media structure serves the purpose of conserving the Soviet type of governance.³ Although with the end of the Cold War this theoretical classification was de-emphasized, the heritage of different journalist traditions cannot be questioned even today. It is often heard that recently established democracies have several obstacles to overcome due to the lack of democratic traditions, and the same can be observed in the case of journalism: the change from the Soviet type to the ones that are generally more accepted in Western countries proved to be a long and difficult path.

² Livingston, Steven (1997): “Clarifying the CNN Effect: An Examination of Media Effects According to Type of Military Intervention,” Research Paper R-18, Harvard University, John F. Kennedy School of Government. URL: <http://genocidewatch.info/images/1997ClarifyingtheCNNEffect-Livingston.pdf>. Accessed: February 18, 2016.

³ Oats, Sarah (2007): “The Neo-Soviet Model of the Media.” *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 59, No. 8, 1279-1297, 1280. URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20451453>. Accessed: February 6, 2016.

However, one has to keep in mind that Western journalism can also be partial, and the case of troops without national insignia in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine is of a disputed legal nature. In the next part, the legal background of the case is observed with the aim of trying to clarify the circumstances.

ARE TROOPS WITHOUT NATIONAL INSIGNIA BREACHING INTERNATIONAL LAW?

War has its rules. During wartime, soldiers do not wear uniforms only to proudly represent their homeland they are fighting for, but also to be easily distinguished from the non-belligerent civilian population. Another significant purpose of the uniquely designed uniforms is to easily identify which country the soldiers are from.

During the 2014 Crimean Crisis, troops without national insignia played an important role concerning the military capacity and supply of the breakaway region and insurgents, and the question whether Russian soldiers are fighting in the self-proclaimed Luhansk and Donetsk People's Republics continues to remain on the agenda. Although President Putin vehemently denied that any official Russian military groups were active in the region of Crimea during the crisis, the widely accepted international take on the situation is that Russian soldiers without insignia were involved.⁴ (Mr. Putin only admitted giving assistance to Crimean self-defence groups and organising the referendum, which ended with Crimea joining – whether lawfully or unlawfully – the Russian Federation.)⁵

The political evaluation of the situation is relatively simple: Russia's aggressive behaviour is to be condemned. A fair amount of evidence exists of Russian soldiers on the territory of Ukraine, and it is clear that no good-intentioned activity starts with sending unmarked troops to another country. However, the legal evaluation sparks disputes among experts. In international law, it is hard to find a direct, unmistakable and widely accepted rule about military

⁴ Reuters (2014): "Russia's Putin denies Russian troops took Crimea." March 4, 2014. URL: <http://www.reuters.com/article/ukraine-crisis-russia-crimea-idUSL6N0M122M20140304>.

Accessed: March 16, 2016.

⁵ BBC News (2015): "Putin reveals secrets of Russia's Crimea takeover plot." March 9, 2015. URL: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-31796226>. Accessed: March 16, 2016.

insignias. It is the 1949 Geneva Conventions that first dealt with civilians in war, until then the only actors mentioned in the conventions were combatants. The Third Geneva Convention, Article III, paragraph A, point (2) (b) states that military personnel must have ‘a fixed distinctive sign recognizable at a distance.’⁶ The Convention does not mention though, if a national symbol should be indicated, or a recognizable military uniform – that separates civilians from combatants – would suffice, therefore experts share different opinions on whether these troops – suspected to be Russian soldiers – breach international law.⁷ Some argue they do not, while others insist that it is not only highly illegal for soldiers to go unmarked, but as they do not seem to fulfil the obligations stated in the treaties, it is also not compulsory to treat them as prisoners of war if captured.⁸ This could be a serious disadvantage because soldiers who are given the prisoner of war status must be immediately released after the end of the conflict, as their detention only serves the aim of hindering them from continuing to fight and not as sanctioning their actions.⁹

The importance of this controversy is evident: Russia firmly stated that it has had no affiliation with the unmarked troops and that they were self-defence groups formed by locals.¹⁰ This stand is aimed towards keeping the conflict internal, of a civil war nature. If Russia admitted having participated in the conflict with official military forces, it would make it a clear-cut international war, such as in the case of Georgia in 2008. It is undoubtedly not the aim of either Russia, or any actor of the international community.

⁶ Convention (III) relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War, Geneva, August 12, 1949. URL: <https://www.icrc.org/applic/ihl/ihl.nsf/Article.xsp?action=openDocument&documentId=2F681B08868538C2C12563CD0051AA8D>. Accessed: October 5, 2015.

⁷ Rova, Alberto (2014): “Russia’s Use of Unmarked Troops in Simferopol, Crimea: Shady, But Not Illegal.” *International Business Times*. URL: <http://www.ibtimes.com/russias-use-unmarked-troops-simferopol-crimea-shady-not-illegal-1559425>. Accessed: October 5, 2015.

⁸ MacAskill, Ewen (2014): “Russian troops removing ID markings ‘gross violation.’” *The Guardian*, March 6, 2014. URL: <http://www.theguardian.com/news/defence-and-security-blog/2014/mar/06/ukraine-gross-violation-russian-troops>. Accessed: October 5, 2015.

⁹ Prisoners of war and detainees protected under international humanitarian law. International Committee of the Red Cross. URL: <https://www.icrc.org/eng/war-and-law/protected-persons/prisoners-war/overview-detainees-protected-persons.htm>. Accessed: February 18, 2016.

¹⁰ Shuster, Simon (2015): “Putin’s Confessions on Crimea Expose Kremlin Media.” *Time*. URL: <http://time.com/3752827/putin-media-kremlin-crimea-ukraine/>. Accessed: February 18, 2016.

EXAMINING THE NAMES

There are several aspects which form opinion. One important basic feature of the situation that has unfolded is that there is a considerable number of Russian minority groups in Eastern Ukraine and Crimea. They are generally supportive towards Russia, and can be characterised as being disillusioned by the Western orientation of the Ukrainian leadership.¹¹ Although the main industrial oblasts are situated in the mentioned regions, Ukraine has had a struggling economy ever since it became independent. For the ethnic minority there, Russia might seem to be a more attractive alternative than the European Union. Apart from being personally involved and having strong historical ties to Russia, media can also affect one's opinion about the unmarked soldiers.

In international media, these unmarked troops were given two names: 'little green men' or 'polite people'. The expression 'little green men' (*зелёные человечки*) was created due to the uncertain origin and the appearance of the soldiers: dark green uniforms, masks and military helmets without insignia. This expression can be encountered with in Ukrainian or Western sources of information and news, and it usually has a rather pejorative meaning. It is said to have been used first by locals in Crimea, and then spread through several journalists' accounts to even Ukrainian state representatives' speeches. According to most information sources, little green men had Russian military equipment ranging from uniforms and weapons to vehicles.¹²

The other name given to these soldiers paints a completely different picture: 'polite people' (*вежливые люди*). According to the news, the expression started to spread from pro-Russian locals of the Crimean Peninsula. The main aim of the name is to create the image of a liberating, warm-hearted and well-behaved soldier who is also very polite. Their behaviour without a doubt serves this propaganda goal, as on the Internet, dozens of photos of Crimean locals with 'polite

¹¹ Gallup (2014): "Ukrainians Prefer European Union, U.S. to Russia." December 16, 2014. URL: http://www.gallup.com/poll/180182/ukrainians-prefer-european-union-russia.aspx?g_source=COUNTRY_UKR&g_medium=topic&g_campaign=tiles. Accessed: March 16, 2016.

¹² Shevchenko, Vitaly (2014): "'Little green men' or 'Russian invaders?'" *BBC*. URL: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-26532154>. Accessed: October 5, 2015.

people' emerged. Adult men and women, and even children and whole families pose with the unknown soldiers, as if they were taking photos of holiday memories.¹³ These pictures are later posted on their Facebook, Instagram and VKontakte (the most popular Russian social site) account with encouraging captions.¹⁴

For some, these troops do represent a desirable and ideal image of soldiers, making them possible to feel closer to Russia. This can most obviously be seen through the support of pro-Russian civilians. In the next part, I would like to review some of the ordinary fields of everyday life, where this support is present.

‘POLITENESS IS A POWER THAT CAN OPEN ANY DOOR’

The Arab Spring has demonstrated how social media networks, such as Twitter or Facebook can make a palpable difference in the unfolding of a process proving to be a security concern. In the 21st century, people are closely connected through several new technologies. Mobile phones, tablets, computers and the Internet make it easier for news to spread and people to interact. This helps loads of issues to become a part of ordinary people's everyday life. This is what can be observed with the 'polite people' as well. As it was already mentioned, there is a considerable amount of photographs accessible to everyone on the Internet taken by local people that show them together with the unmarked soldiers.

Cartoon artists are also inspired by the 'polite people'. One can find several drawings with puns expressing sympathy for the soldiers, and there are many artworks that – based on photographs that depicts real life moments – show the 'polite people' with cats and dogs, thus creating a very humane and likeable image of them. These artworks are often printed on T-shirts as well. A new trend became fashionable:

¹³ Brady, Tara (2014): "Selfies from the frontline: People of the Crimea pose up with the masked Russian invaders." *MailOnline*. URL: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2571799/Shocking-pictures-people-Crimea-taking-SELFIES-Russian-masked-gunmen-Ukraine-teeters-brink-war.html>. Accessed: October 18, 2015.

¹⁴ "Ситуация в Крыму, часть 1." Varlamov blog, March 4, 2014. URL: <http://varlamov.ru/1017094.html>. Accessed: 18. October, 2015.

instead of the popular 'I heart NY' and 'FBI' shirts, people started to wear clothes with Russian national colours, or with texts such as 'I am Russian' and 'Crimea is Ours'. In several cities, activists held events where people could trade their Western-orientated clothes for patriotic shirts.¹⁵ Slogans like 'Politeness is a power that can open any door' became widespread.

Even fashion designers got engaged: a Russian company came out with a collection, called 'Novorossiya 2015' that designed several items such as swimsuits, clothes, teddy bears and thermos flasks with the flags and colours of the separatist regions of Donbas.¹⁶ (Novorossiya was a historical region of the Russian Empire, located approximately in the same area where now the conflict emerged.) Even more interesting is the fact that in March 2015, a new collection named 'Army of Russia' was introduced during the Moscow Fashion Week. The designer collaborated with the defence ministry of Russia to create the collection, which includes hoodies with the word '*ВЕЖЛИВ*' (short form of politeness), green stars, the text '*АРМИЯ*' (army) and a white star on red background, and also 'Victory 1945-2015', commemorating the 70th anniversary of World War II victory. The designer was quoted saying that the collection is the way how he expresses his patriotism, and that it was inspired by the 'Crimean Spring'.¹⁷

A DANGEROUS PROPAGANDA WEAPON: DISINFORMATION

In connection with the Ukrainian and Crimean crises, extensive disinformation campaigns can be observed by different media outlets. In this part, a few examples of such distortions will be reviewed to

¹⁵ The Voice of Russia (2014): "Being patriot is trendy: Russians give up 'I love NY' T-shirts for 'Crimea Is Ours.'" May 23, 2014. URL:

http://sputniknews.com/voiceofrussia/news/2014_05_23/Being-patriot-is-trendy-Russians-give-up-I-love-NY-T-shirts-for-Crimea-Is-Ours-8468/. Accessed: October 18, 2015.

¹⁶ Sharkov, Damien (2015): "Russian Company to Start Selling Ukrainian Separatist Bikini Range." *Newsweek*. URL: <http://europe.newsweek.com/russian-company-start-selling-ukrainian-separatist-bikini-range-308821>. Accessed: October 18, 2015.

¹⁷ The Guardian (2015): "Russia's defence ministry unveils clothing line inspired by 'Crimean spring' – in pictures." April 10, 2015. URL:

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/gallery/2015/apr/10/russia-defence-ministry-fashion-week-crimea-in-pictures>. Accessed: October 18, 2015.

exemplify how easy it is to alter news and present a distorted reality to ordinary people.

Originating from the World War II era, the majority of Russians condemn everything concerning the Nazi ideology. In the Eastern Ukrainian and Crimean Crises, slogans as ‘Say no to the Ukrainian Nazis’ and ‘Stop Nazis in Ukraine’ appeared during demonstrations, in addition to Maidan protesters being labelled as fascists. While there was an unquestionable presence of nationalists during the Euromaidan Revolution, their role and idea is strongly exaggerated in this approach. One famous disinformation in connection with this is the ‘fact’ that a concentration camp is being built in Ukraine. Television journalist Arkady Mamontov made a report on a construction site in the Donetsk region, labelling it as a concentration camp for pro-Russian people. But what the footage – originally shown on Rossiya 1 television channel – actually represents is an EU-funded detention site for illegal immigrants under construction.¹⁸ Soon after the report was aired, the Russian Foreign Ministry issued a statement. They expressed their concern about how these detention sites can be seen threatening, as based on the number of illegal immigrants in these areas, there seems to be no real basis for the need of constructing refugee camps. The statement raises a sharp question with the exact wording: ‘does the Kiev regime plan to put their own nationals from the South-Eastern regions of the country, those who do not agree with them, in these centres?’¹⁹, which illustrates the impact of this simple report.

Russian national television channel, Channel 1, also broadcasted an unconfirmed report in which a woman – claiming to be an eyewitness – describes how Ukrainian troops crucified a three-year-old little boy in front of her mother, only because he was the son of an insurgent. She also talked about the mother being dragged around the

¹⁸ Kates, Glenn (2014): “How Russian Media Turned Construction Site Into ‘Concentration Camp.’” *RFE/RL*, May 2, 2014. URL: <http://www.rferl.org/content/ukraine-unspun-concentration-camp/25370814.html>. Accessed: November 11, 2015.

¹⁹ Statement by the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding the political repression of the Kiev regime in Ukraine, The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. April 28, 2014. URL: http://archive.mid.ru/bdomp/brp_4.nsf/e78a48070f128a7b43256999005bcbb3/a421880782d99ef044257cca0054c5ef?OpenDocument. Accessed: November 11, 2015.

square, tied to a tank.²⁰ No evidence has been found to support the woman's story, but the report provoked severe criticism from the West, and especially from Ukraine. The criticism is quite understandable though, as this serious accusation was broadcasted on national television without any confirmation of its correctness.

Another interesting case of misinforming ordinary people is the case of Andrei Petkov. The contradictions surrounding him were allegedly discovered by internet viewers. In April 2014, three big television channels broadcasted reports about clashes in a South Ukrainian city, and in all three interviews, a man – identified as Andrei Petkov – is shown. Although he is lying in a hospital bed, wearing black clothes and a bandage on his nose, his story differs each time it is told. On Rossiya 1 news, he is described as an 'ordinary citizen', who was hurt by the armed Neo-Nazis of the Ukrainian police, while the NTV national news' version of Petkov is a German spy, who came to the city to fight both the insurgents and the radical Neo-Nazis, but was injured by the latter. On the National Independent News of Crimea television channel, Petkov is a heroic surgeon, who saved the lives of hundreds of people, and was injured while trying to help those wounded in clashes, again at the fault of Ukrainian Neo-Nazis.²¹ Notice how Nazis are present in all three versions.

The condemnation of Nazism in Russia originates from World War II, but has a long and mystified history. In Soviet countries, the war is styled as the Great Patriotic War, in which the Soviet victory over Nazi Germany is emphasized as a glorious homeland-defending war. As in many countries, there were Nazi collaborators in Ukraine as well. They were defeated by the Red Army, but as they were regarded as traitors their case remained widely remembered even as decades passed. From the beginning of the Maidan events, critical people voiced their opinions calling the protesters their successors. During the Soviet period, the decisive victory over fascism became an integral part of Russian national consciousness, and any form of Nazism

²⁰ "Witness Account of Atrocities committed by Ukrainian Fascist." Part1. Youtube. URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eKNaklUfMig>. Accessed: November 11, 2015.

²¹ Gregory, Paul Roderick (2014): "Russian TV Propagandists Caught Red-Handed: Same Guy, Three Different People (Spy, Bystander, Heroic Surgeon)." *Forbes*. April 12, 2014. URL: <http://www.forbes.com/sites/paulroderickgregory/2014/04/12/russian-tv-caught-red-handed-same-guy-same-demonstration-but-three-different-people-spy-bystander-heroic-surgeon/>. Accessed: November 11, 2015.

remained a common enemy for the majority of Russian people. However, it is interesting to mention that it was not the Crimean or Eastern Ukrainian crisis that brought forward the image of Nazism in the region. It was already present in 2004, when local Ukrainian opposition to ruling President Viktor Yushchenko called his pro-Western attitude policy an ‘orange plague’, which refers to the expression ‘brown plague’: the name fascism was called in Soviet countries.²²

WHY DO PEOPLE STILL BELIEVE THE MEDIA?

But if the propaganda network makes such big mistakes, then why do ordinary Russian people still believe the media? There are probably some who do not, but the majority still take these news for granted.²³

One answer can be quite obvious if one has observed the structure of Russian media: almost all the giant media outlets are owned directly or indirectly by the government, and with several new laws and regulations on the media, it is hard to present opposing ideas to theirs. (Online media can most likely be regarded as the most free media outlet in Russia, and although the percentage of people with internet access is growing year by year,²⁴ television is still the most popular form of receiving information.)²⁵ This is true on the international level as well. One of the biggest state-funded medium in Russia is RT. (Before the 2009 rebranding, it was known as Russia Today.) According to President Putin, the aim of RT is to ‘break the Anglo-Saxon monopoly’ over international media. RT operates in three official languages (English, Arab and Spanish), and on the most popular video site. It has more than one and a half million subscribers, which is considered a huge number comparing to other similar

²² Zhurzhenko, Tatiana (2015): “Russia's never-ending war against "fascism."” *Eurozine*, May 8, 2015. URL: <http://www.eurozine.com/articles/2015-05-08-zhurzhenko-en.html>. Accessed: February 18, 2016.

²³ Gallup (2014): “Russians Rely on State Media.” July 25, 2014. URL: http://www.gallup.com/poll/174086/russians-rely-state-media-news-ukraine-crimea.aspx?utm_source=genericbutton&utm_medium=organic&utm_campaign=sharing. Accessed: March 16, 2016.

²⁴ International Telecommunication Union, Statistics. URL: <http://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Pages/stat/default.aspx>. Accessed: November 11, 2015.

²⁵ Oats (2007).

companies. RT has been the target of heavy criticism over how it projects the Kremlin's perspective on its subjects. Russia has concentrated huge amounts of state support on the company: in 2015 their support rose more than 50%, which means that their annual budget equals to almost three hundred million USD.²⁶

RT is not to be confused with Russia Today (Rossiya Segodnya). The latter agency was established recently, more exactly in 2013, with a presidential decree and the aim 'to provide information on Russian state policy and Russian life and society for audiences abroad'.²⁷ In 2015, the financial framework of Russia Today was expanded, and now operates with a budget of approximately eighty-nine million USD. To put the numbers in context: while in 2014 25% of government media spending was directed at international media operations, last year it rose to 34%.²⁸

Another answer can be the convincing nature of propaganda methods and traditions. Russian media prefer the use of shocking illustrations of violent clashes and detailed portrayal of events. Some researchers talk about modern Russian propaganda as the offspring of the worst Soviet propaganda, or as the revival of the Cold War narrative, because it is heavily opposed to the actions of the West and illustrates Russia as the 'right one'. But one has to consider the differences as well before running into these kinds of conclusions. Modern Russian propaganda – be that state-controlled or spread by civilians - instead of denying globalization uses the possibilities that it has given. Although it is close to impossible to verify, several people reported that there are so-called 'troll houses' in Russia, where paid 'internet trolls' start arguments and cause scandals in favour of the government.²⁹ Modern propaganda also aims at inducing hate and gaining the trust and sympathy of citizens. And it is also important to

²⁶ Ennis, Stephen (2015): "Russia in 'information war' with West to win hearts and minds." *BBC*, September 16, 2015. URL: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34248178>. Accessed: November 11, 2015.

²⁷ "Executive Order on Measures to Make State Media More Effective." President of Russia, December 9, 2013. URL: <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/19805>. Accessed: November 11, 2015.

²⁸ Ennis (2015).

²⁹ Walker, Shaun (2015): "Salutin' Putin: inside a Russian troll house." *The Guardian*. URL: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/apr/02/putin-kremlin-inside-russian-troll-house>. Accessed: February 18, 2016.

mention that even President Putin has encouraged journalists who promote the Kremlin's viewpoint by awarding them. Among those awarded, the journalist who wrote the report about the allegedly crucified three-year-old boy, or Arkady Mamontov (mentioned earlier in connection with his record about the 'concentration camp for pro-Russians') can also be found. Another prize-winner used a footage of an anti-terrorist operation in his report to illustrate the savagery of Ukrainian soldiers.³⁰

We should also take into consideration that Russian people are more used to different media roles than people socialized in the West. Studies conducted recently revealed that during the Soviet period, people regarded media rather a guidance than an institution that has the role of questioning the central opinion. Although they did not believe obviously false reports – for instance data of unreal economic growth – presented by the propaganda, they appreciated the efforts to present their nation's greatness.³¹ The older generation, generally characterised by gaining information from a narrower range of sources (for instance only from state-owned national television channels), might still be affected by this phenomenon. Sociologically there is a confusing difference between the developments of journalism: in the Western world it was rather the means of broadcasting various opinions, while in the Soviet bloc it was used to represent the ideal behaviour of a citizen. It is further intrigued by the fact that in the last decades before the dissolution of the Soviet Union, it was an established practice for journalists to criticise certain people, who were later prosecuted or dismissed by the authorities. It seemed that the initiative was brought up by the reporters, but in reality, it was ordered and carefully planned by the Party, to manipulate people into thinking that it was their interest to displace certain people from a particular position.³²

³⁰ Johnston, Cameron (2015): "Russia's info-war: the home front." *European Union Institute for Security Studies*, URL: http://www.iss.europa.eu/uploads/media/Alert_18_Russia_s_info_war.pdf. Accessed: November 11, 2015.

³¹ Oats (2007).

³² Koltsova, Olessia (2006): *News Media and Power in Russia*, Routledge, London, 43.

CONCLUSION

Although time is still needed for being able to observe the long distance effects of the propaganda war that is parallel to the events of the Ukrainian crisis, it is already obvious that a strong psychological division appeared in Eastern Europe regarding the topic. The case study of the unmarked soldiers in the regions shows that heavy pro-Russian propaganda influences are present, which aim at painting a euphemistic image of the Russian Federation and its possible goals. Although there is confusion about in what extent soldiers need to distinguish themselves and display national insignia according to international law, there are aspects that cannot be argued: so-called ‘Western sources’, such as media outlets from the USA, European Union or Western Ukraine are undoubtedly regarding this case as breaching accords, acting hostile and unlawfully. From their viewpoint, the referendum and the annexation of Crimea to the Russian Federation is unacceptable according to international standards.

On the other side, pro-Russian propaganda and ordinary nationalism made it possible to see the mentioned soldiers as ‘polite people’, bringing truth and redemption, while demonizing Ukrainians (and the West), depicting them as evil, oppressing and inhumane Neo-Nazis. And it is made possible due to the fact that there has been little rest in Eastern Ukraine in the past two years, thus media stance usually represents a rather partial take on events, and in Russia several new laws and regulations were introduced on the media, pushing the country further down on the list of countries regarding media freedom.

For the years to come, armed fights will not be the only problem to solve, but social harm caused by divisive information wars will be an issue as well. Some people are already experiencing difficulties in everyday society due to the psychological effects of concentrated propaganda: according to a family psychologist based in Moscow, even close family members got into quarrels and became estranged from each other.³³ Furthermore, showing the international significance of the situation, the European Union has set up plans to counter the

³³ Ennis (2015).

unleashed disinformation wave coming from Russia. In March 2015, the European Council created the East StratCom Task Force with the aim of promoting EU policies and fighting the massive inflow of false news.³⁴ The task force has a Russian language website, though no official television channel belongs to it. The institution has two methods of operation: disinformation digest and disinformation review. In disinformation digests, experts analyse pro-Kremlin news, and then let independent Russian opinions be voiced besides them, while disinformation reviews collect and organize pro-Kremlin articles from Europe.³⁵ It is important to emphasize that not only the state-owned media outlets of Russia are examined, but a wider scale of Russian language platforms - even in Eastern Partnership countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine) - are analysed as well.³⁶

Despite all the efforts to counteract disinformation in Eastern Europe, the problem is expected to prevail as long as the hostilities are present in the region. The issue is further aggravated by the outlined tradition of media acceptance in Russian-speaking territories: it is improbable that attempts from foreign actors can end such a war on information. Easement, on the other hand, is possible, though not simple: the mitigation of Russia's relative isolation in the international society.

³⁴ Questions and Answers about the East StratCom Task Force. *European Union External Action Service*, November 26, 2015. URL: http://eeas.europa.eu/top_stories/2015/261115_stratcom-east_qanda_en.htm. Accessed: March 17, 2016.

³⁵ EU vs Disinformation. *European Union External Action Service*. URL: <http://eeas.europa.eu/euvsdisinfo>. Accessed: March 17, 2016.

³⁶ Bentzen, Naja – Russell, Martin (2015): “Russia’s disinformation on Ukraine and the EU’s response.” *European Parliamentary Research Service*, November 11, 2015. URL: [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2015/571339/EPRS_BRI\(2015\)571339_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2015/571339/EPRS_BRI(2015)571339_EN.pdf). Accessed: March 17, 2016.

ESSAY

THE JAPANESE QUEST FOR SECURITY

Luca Dorottya PIHAJ³⁷

ABSTRACT

For decades, Japan was considered a military dwarf with its defensive armed forces; and pacifist constitution. However, recently the Japanese political elite attempted to lessen the legal constraints on the Self-Defense Forces in order to respond more efficiently to the change in the international environment. Therefore, the Japanese security policy came under close scrutiny, and labels such as militarization and normalization have been attached to Japan. Especially after the government's decision, that was issued in May 2014, which touched such taboos as the right of collective self-defense and the rules of engagement during peacekeeping operations. This study aims to contribute to this debate, by highlighting another interpretation of the government's security strategy. In order to provide coherent argument, the strength and weaknesses of the Japanese security position will be observed through the Japanese Self-Defense Forces and the security aspects of the alliance to the United States of America. The sensitive nature of the Japanese

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security environment will be highlighted by the examination of the Sino-Japanese relations. Finally, three possible strategies for Japan will be presented: one which has been employed, one which is often mentioned concerning Japan and finally the argument favored by this research.

Keywords: Japan, Japan-U.S Security Alliance, security strategy, military capabilities, collective self-defense

INTRODUCTION

Following the Cold War, due to changes in national security and threat perception, legislative reforms were made in Japanese foreign and security policy making. Factors leading to these changes include: the dissolution of the Soviet Union, growing economic interdependence in the region, the rise of the People's Republic of China and international pressure for greater part in burden sharing, all representing challenges Japan has faced. The difficulty of any adjustment lies in the unique Constitution, which highly restricts the nation's sphere of military actions, whether it is the legitimacy of the Self-Defense Forces, or its dispatch outside of the Japanese border. Nevertheless changes occurred, even if in small measured steps such as the International Peace Cooperation Law in 1992, which enabled the SDF to contribute to the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC).³⁸

The Japanese Constitution prohibited the establishment and maintenance of an army or any other military forces. The strict, word by word, interpretation of this article, begs for a question concerning the legitimacy of the SDF. Only eight years after the Constitution the Self-Defense Forces Act was signed in 1954, thus establishing the SDF, which is divided into ground, maritime and air branches, in spite of the fact that this was banned specifically in the Constitution. Nonetheless the majority – even among the fierce protectors of the Constitution and pacifism – accepts the legitimacy of the SDF, and only radicals demand the immediate disarmament of the forces.

³⁸ Please note that Japan has sent civilian personnel before 1992, but this law enabled the government to send military personnel as well.

Throughout the years, whenever a challenge has risen, instead of constitutional amendment the government chose reinterpretation as a last resort to strengthen legislative reforms because the amendment process is long and bears high political risks. So gradually from establishment to the dispatch of military personnel to United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (with restrictions), the SDF gained rights similar to those of other national armies.

These reforms were employed, because, after the Gulf War, the Japanese political elite sought to respond in a more efficient way to such international crisis, where Japanese participation is demanded. The above-mentioned law was the first step in that direction, so Japan was able to contribute to UNPKOs³⁹ and the US-led 'War on Terror' to a various degree. The last was legitimized by The Anti-Terrorism Special Measures Law⁴⁰ in 2001 and Law concerning the Special Measures on Humanitarian and Reconstruction Assistance in Iraq⁴¹ in 2003, which also enabled the SDF dispatch to missions where the five principles of the International Peace Cooperation Law were not realized.

In 2007, the Defense Agency was also upgraded to ministerial level and became the Ministry of Defense. This can be interpreted as the marker of increasing importance of defense, at least among the decision makers. In the same year an Advisory Panel on Reconstruction of the Legal Basis for Security was established by the then Prime Minister Abe Shinzō, but he resigned before the report of the panel was issued, and the next Prime Minister never acted on its recommendations. However, after the successful reelection of the LDP and Abe as its Prime Minister again in 2012, the advisory panel was also reestablished in 2013. The Panel realized the new final report in May 2014, and the government (mostly) in alignment with the report announced the reinterpretation of the Constitution.

The announcement highlighted the changes in security perception, mostly since the end of the Cold War. It identified new risks, which Japan faced in the recent years; for example shifts in the global power

³⁹ For further facts on Japanese contribution to UNPKO's see: URL: <http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/un/pko/pdfs/contribution.pdf>. Accessed: March 26, 2016.

⁴⁰ For the unofficial English translations see: URL: http://japan.kantei.go.jp/policy/2001/anti-terrorism/1029terohougaiyou_e.html. Accessed: March 26, 2016.

⁴¹ For the Japanese version see: URL: <http://law.e-gov.go.jp/haishi/H15HO137.html>. Accessed: March, 26.

balance, the development and spread of mass destruction weapons and ballistic missiles and terrorism. Correspondingly, the Cabinet stressed the need for increased Japanese contribution to the Japan-United States Alliance and to the "peace and stability of the international community", the new concept of 'Proactive Contribution to Peace' was introduced, which is based on international cooperation.

Both internally and externally an intense debate began about the legitimacy of the decision and its interpretations. Many criticize the vague wording of the self-defense reinterpretation, stating that it gives room for purely political decision of what warrants the use of force and what does not. The end of pacifism in the foreign policy debate has also gained ground and the fear of a militaristic and nationalist Japan resurfaced. Meanwhile other voices try to reason that this change is a realistic conclusion of the security position and its changes and the international pressure for burden-sharing in international conflict management.

In order to understand the implication of such decision in the security policy of Japan, the military capabilities of the country will be observed, mainly the JSDF and Japan-U.S Alliance. The problematic characteristic of any adopted security strategy will be explored through the nature of the Sino-Japanese relation. Finally, a possible strategy for Japan will be introduced from the current debate.

JAPANESE SELF-DEFENSE FORCES (NIHON KOKU JIEITAI)

As a result of being virtually defenseless during the Korean War (1950-1953) the enactments of the Self-Defense Forces Act (Act No. 165 of 1954)⁴² established the Japanese Self-Defense Forces. The SDF have caused controversy ever since.

Article 9 would not permit such forces if strictly read, but it was acknowledged that while the purpose of said article was to create the Switzerland of East Asia, the security environment was far from that of Switzerland. A minimum defense capability could be accepted even under Article 9, while still maintaining the aims it provides, because

⁴² For the Japanese version see: URL: <http://law.e-gov.go.jp/htmldata/S29/S29HO165.html>. Accessed: March 26, 2016.

the national defense forces were established under heavy civil and legislative controls. This was said to be one of the closest examples of the liberal-Whig model. This model indicates relatively small military establishment, which is under civilian control and the civilian values have been deeply integrated into the corps and their leaders.⁴³ Furthermore, the Japanese Constitution prohibits the development of offensive military capabilities, such as long-range ballistic missiles and bombers, or aircraft carriers.

Despite being controlled both in size, and sphere of action, the SDF is a modern, and one of the best military forces in the East Asian region. A few argue that the recent military purchases should be regarded as the extension of offensive capabilities, verifying their argument with reasoning that the Japanese warships are called helicopter destroyers only because those are not considered offensive by international standard. Such warship is the Izumo – the largest since the World War II –, classified as a helicopter destroyer, so has no launch catapult on the flight deck, that means conventional naval aircrafts cannot operate from its deck, hence it is not considered offensive. The F-35B variant, which is capable of short takeoff and vertical landing, could be launched from the Izumo's deck, but so far Japanese investments favored the F-35A variant which is a “conventional take-off landing” type aircraft. Therefore, the previously mentioned arguments are operating with possibilities while actions say otherwise.

The SDF has three main branches: the ground force (GSDF), maritime force (MSDF) and the air force (ASDF), with a total of 247,160 personnel. More than half of the military personnel serve at the GSDF. Their main priority is the maintenance of inner security, which means a response to an attack from ballistic missiles, guerrillas, or special forces. GSDF also plays an important role in disaster relief operations like the earthquake in 2011, and with the other two branches together, they are responsible for the protection of the islands in case of armed attack. The GSDF's combat units are distributed through the country under five headquarters. Under the new “National Defense Program Guidelines for FY 2014 and beyond”

⁴³ Bush, Richard C. (2010): *The Perils of Proximity: China-Japan Security Relations*. Brookings Institution Press, Washington, 44-87, 87.

the GSDF will establish a “Ground Central Command” which will command the regional armies at a nation-wide level. Additionally in case of an armed attack, the GSDF introduced a new response mechanism which would mean better countermeasure upon a wide variety of contingencies.

As an island nation, Japan's defense is highly dependent on its maritime and air deterrence. The MSDF in both eras has strong equipment capabilities: attack submarine, helicopter destroyers, landing ship and destroyers. Sōryū-class submarines entered service in 2009 and are one of the most advanced among the non-nuclear attack submarines, they can remain underwater longer than most diesel-electric submarines.⁴⁴ Additionally, two classes of the destroyers, the Atago and Kongō have an Aegis combat system: so these ships can successfully function in multiple areas like maritime battle management, area air defense, and ballistic missile defense. The air defense capability of the system is an essential support during the patrol, in warning and surveillance operations and in case of an armed attack, and additionally it can add to air superiority.⁴⁵ The majority of the ships was developed for antisubmarine warfare but has two classes of helicopter destroyers, the previously mentioned Izumo class and its predecessor the smaller Hyūga class.

The ASDF also has strong platforms with F-35A and upgraded F-15 fighter aircrafts⁴⁶ coupled with various warning and anti-aircraft assets. The ASDF is also responsible for the ballistic missile defense (BMD) system, even for the ground-based subsystems. The BMD system was developed in a close cooperation with the U.S in response to the DPRK's long-range ballistic missile program; however, it is also capable to deter Chinese missiles, in the case of attack.⁴⁷ The BMD system relies on the aircraft warning and control units radar system, Aegis system, Patriot PAC-3 system, and PAC-3 and SM-3 missiles to defend against ballistic missiles.

While the SDF is modern especially in the East Asia region, it has to face the reality that this advantage is rapidly eroding because of the

⁴⁴ Mizokami, Kyle (2014): “Five Japanese Weapons of War China Should Fear.” URL: <http://nationalinterest.org/feature/five-japanese-weapons-war-china-should-fear-10660>. Accessed: March 27, 2015.

⁴⁵ Bush (2010), 44.

⁴⁶ Defense Programs and Budget of Japan: *Overview of FY2015 Budget*.

⁴⁷ Bush (2010), 47-48.

expansive Chinese military budget. The Chinese strategy of area denial used against the U.S navy could have merits to Japan if the conflict around the islands would escalate. However, such strategy adopted by Japan has to deal with the constitutional constraint which prohibits offensive weapon such as middle and long range missiles. Nonetheless, the MSDF has submarines which are one of the most developed in their category, as it was above mentioned. On the other hand, the development of a military capability which could counteract the area denial strategy of the PRC is also a possible route for the SDF, such technology is being developed by the U.S

Overall, the JSDF is marked by modernity, a constraint in the sphere of actions and the lack of retaliatory force, but it is not the only contributor to the Japanese security. The alliance provided Japan with a nuclear umbrella while enabling it to adopt the three non-nuclear principles concerning nuclear weapons, moreover the U.S was committed to guarding the territorial integrity of Japan through the Cold War.

JAPAN-U.S. SECURITY ALLIANCE

The security alliance with the U.S. provided the bulk of the Japanese security policy since 1952, it made possible for the war-ridden Japan to focus on economic development instead of increasing the security budget during the Cold War. On the other hand, arguably the U.S.'s influence is at least partly responsible for the weak security footing of Japan, by insisting on Article 9 and a peaceful Japanese nation, after the end of World War II.

Japan became the U.S.'s base in East Asia, troops stationed in Japan played a triple role: protecting Japan from external aggression, providing the necessary bridge to the region and ensuring that uncontrolled Japanese militarism would not occur. The end of Cold War meant that the recalibration of the alliance was needed, and after the new guideline in 1997, Japan has taken a role of the U.S.'s supporter not only regionally but globally as well.⁴⁸ The legislative modernization of the SDF was often encouraged by the U.S and the

⁴⁸ Inoguchi, Takahashi – Ikenberry, John G. – Sato, Yoichiro (2010): *The US-Japan Security Alliance: Regional Multilateralism*. Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 4.

decision of the Cabinet was also backed up by the government's press release.

The alliance remains the primary bilateral relation of Japan and a very important one from the American perspective as well. In 2014 spring during his visit to Japan, President Obama assured Japan that the Senkaku/Diaoyü islands are under the protection of the Japan-US Treaty, marking the first time in history when such promises were made concerning the islands. The guidelines of the security treaty came under renegotiation since 2013. The new guideline stresses the global nature of the Japan-U.S. Alliance, it indicates that Japan will endeavor to support the U.S globally, thus playing a more active international role. The review was necessary since new areas emerged and became emphatic since the last review in 1997, such as: international terrorism and the growing importance of the cyberspace and space security. The document also reflects the decision of the Japanese Cabinet issued in July 2014 by regulating the so-called grey zone situations - when the Japanese security is threatened, but there is no actual armed attack -; and the actions in response to an armed attack against a country other than Japan.

CHALLENGES AHEAD OF CREATING AN INTERNATIONALLY MORE ACTIVE JAPAN

Many newly emerged points of this new guideline are hypothetical, as the document mentions it does not create legal rights or obligations for either government. While Prime Minister Abe seeks to change the defense setting of Japan, and for that purpose reinterpreted the constitution concerning three areas: 1) the grey zone situation, 2) the rights of the SDF while participating in a UN lead mission and 3) introduction of the right for collective self-defense with restriction. Although these aims are identical with those contained in the guideline, legislative reforms need to follow this decision in order to enable Japan to act as described in both documents.

Whereas the political willingness is high, internal and external support is more fragile. Before the Cabinet decision was official, the final report of the Advisory Panel on Reconstruction of the Legal Basis for Security was issued in May 2014. Asahi Shinbun's poll showed that

55% of the responders opposed the right of collective self-defense which in essence would mean the change of Article 9 and only 29% was in favor, moreover 67% found it inappropriate that the government chose to reinterpretation instead of amendment.⁴⁹ The Nikkei also operated with similar questions and reported a similar result: 57% opposed the reinterpretation method, but compared to the Asahi poll 10% more (28%) of the respondents approved it.⁵⁰ Concerning the right of collective self-defense 47% opposed and 37% favored the use of it. However, it should be noted that the wording of the questions can lead to significant differences; also the respondents never represent all of the voters. Depending on the question, opposition changes between 51-58% and approval differs from 30-36%. On the other hand, Sanke Shinbun and Yomiuri Shinbun⁵¹, who are both classified as having a right orientation on the political scale, used a three answer system. The question was similar, the right of collective self-defense should be used: 1) to its maximum, 2) to its minimum or 3) not at all. The responders favored the second option that, collective self-defense should be used to its minimum. Moreover, it is not quite clear what a minimum means which the majority (52% and 60%) prefers.⁵²

Any actions made concerning the security of Japan often triggers criticism from the neighboring countries, because of the shared memory of Japanese aggression in the 20th century. Additionally, territorial disputes also hinder bilateral relations with Republic of Korea and PRC. The Sino-Japanese relation is one of the most pressing problems in the East Asian region, two major countries with strained bilateral relations and clashing sphere of interest.

⁴⁹ Shinbun, Asahi (2014): “Yoronchōsa ishitsuomon to kaitō (Poll - Questions and Answers).” URL: <http://www.asahi.com/articles/ASG5T5DW8G5TUZPS006.html>. Accessed: January 22, 2015.

⁵⁰ Shimbun, Nihon Keizai (2014): “Kenpō kaishakuhenkō “hantai” 51% shūdanteki jiekankōshi de honsa yoronchōsa (Constitutional interpretation change, 51% oppose the right of collective self-defense).” URL: http://www.nikkei.com/article/DGXNASFS2501Z_V20C14A5MM8000/. Accessed: March 12, 2015.

⁵¹ The Asahi Shinbun, Nikkei, Sanke Shinbun and Yomiuri Shinbun are all leading newspapers of Japan, often publishing polls and statistics.

⁵² Haggard, Stephan – Stahler, Kevin (2014): “Japan’s Constitutional Re-Interpretation II: The Domestic Front.” URL: <http://blogs.piie.com/nk/?p=13315>. Accessed: June 29, 2015.

THE SINO-JAPANESE RISK

Japanese-Chinese relations are constrained over, territorial disputes, wartime memories, and strategic confrontation. After the rapid growth of the Chinese economy which resulted in the overtaking of Japan's position as the second biggest economy of the World, the PRC strived to translate this economic power into greater influence in the region, so closer ties with the ASEAN and the ROK were established, however, the Shino-Japanese relations remained cool.

Since the beginning of the Koizumi Cabinet, the bilateral relations are probably worse than ever. While periodic relief was achieved, the results are usually not long-lasting. On one hand, the root of the problem lays in the nationalist propaganda launched by the Communist Party of China to deal with the decentralization and corruption of the political party, but most importantly with the weakening of the communist ideology. This propaganda stressed the role of the party in the fights against the Japanese Imperial Army, to strengthen their own legitimacy.⁵³ Therefore, the Chinese identity is being constructed vis-à-vis Japan and the suffered humiliation by them and western powers.⁵⁴ That way the Chinese Japan policy is quite a touchy process, and the public pays great attention to how it is concluded. On the other hand, while between the normalization of the bilateral relations and the end of Cold War, Japan took up an apologetic attitude toward the PRC and assisted to its economic development, and took up the role of a repentant state. This attitude towards PRC changed with the Koizumi Cabinet and did not reemerge since then.⁵⁵

This partly nationalist and anti-Japanese attitude of the PRC coupled with its aggressive military buildup is often the center of the Japanese security policy. Notwithstanding that the Japanese SDF is more advanced than the Chinese counterpart as of right now, however, the technical superiority is rapidly eroding as the result of a massive Chinese military expenditure. Conflicts around the maritime borders

⁵³ Ryōsei, Kokubun (2006): "The shifting nature of Japan-China relations after the Cold War." In: *Japan's Relations with China: Facing a Rising Power*, ed. Peng Er Lam, 22. Routledge, New York.

⁵⁴ Rozman, Gilbert (2010): *Chinese Strategic Thought toward Asia*. Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 161.

⁵⁵ McCourt, David M. (2009): "What was Britain's 'East of Suez Role'? Reassessing the Withdrawal, 1964-1968." *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, Vol. 20, No. 3, 453-472.

are more frequent and, as a result, national navies are more acutely present, raising the risk of confrontation in the recent years.

In such environment, any decision needs to be sensitive of this strained relationship, despite Prime Minister Abe's intention to improve national security. He is more sensitive to regional balance than his first predecessor Koizumi was. During both premierships, he reached out for the PRC and pursued closer ties in trilateral relations with ROK as well, and focused on the ASEAN while maintaining the strategic partnership with the U.S. After the cabinet decision was issued, Japan reached out to the PRC and ROK for the renewal of trilateral meetings. Prime Minister Abe seems to recognize the danger of nationalist endeavors and security build up without any counseling with the neighboring countries.

JAPANESE SECURITY STRATEGY

The Japanese security position is quite unique, the "only self-defense" approach of the armed forces, between four countries which developed nuclear weapons and with only one major non-regional ally. In order to ensure security in this kind of environment, there are certain strategies one can obtain.

Such possible strategy is the formal Fukuda doctrine, which was based on three elements: 1) the reassurance that Japan is set to be a peaceful nation, and will not become a military power, 2) serving as an economic model in the region (especially for Southeast Asian countries) and provide help to achieve this through ODA and FDI and 3) focus on Japanese soft power. Up to the end of Cold War, the Fukuda doctrine was mostly successful, but it was highly dependent on the Japanese economic miracle. Therefore after the burst of the bubble effect, this role model-like position wavered and it was further weakened by the ever growing and developing Chinese economy, which recently took over the Japanese position both regionally and globally.

The doctrine was also a possibility in the past, partly because the U.S was willing to provide the bulk of the armed security of Japan through the Japan-U.S. Alliance. During the Gulf War it became clear that Japan needs to take a more active role both in the alliance and in international matters. The revision of the Japanese strategy was also

supported by the recent changes in the American foreign policy. While the recently announced Asia pivot was considered positive in the alliance relation since the main partner in the East Asian region is Japan. However, the multilateralism favored by the Obama administration also meant that while Japan is an important partner, it is not the only one. For example, the ROK also could provide as a base for American troops, and has no similar constitutional constraint on its military, while having the third biggest economy out of the East Asian countries. Not to mention the American efforts to reduce the military budget or the increasing U. S. attention drawn to the conflicts in the Middle East and Europe.

As an option Japan could choose the Chinese way of unilateral military buildup for increased security. So far, the Japanese armed forces were in advantage, because of their modern platforms and well-trained officers; however this advantage is rapidly diminishing. If we consider the recent purchases of the Japanese military, we can see that they keep up with the modern but limited and minimalized armed forces. Why is that? Because in a security environment where the risk is the strained bilateral relations with an evolving military (super)power, it would be highly risky to expand the armed forces. Also, as it was already mentioned, the memory of Japanese aggression is shared throughout East Asia, thus a militarizing Japan might be unfavorable for other nations too. Not to mention the material shortage of Japan. First, Japan is an aging island nation, therefore, cannot be a match for a bigger national army, the human capital limited. Secondly, Japan lacks rare earth metals and energy sources albeit both are important for the military industry. Finally, the Japanese economy is in a regression for more than two decades, and in such situation the increase in military expenditure is beyond possibility.

Therefore, I would like to argue that the consideration of the collective self-defense by the Japanese Cabinet is a result of a strategic thinking instead of nationalist aims, while notwithstanding that certain level of nationalism is not alien to the Prime Minister or to the Liberal Democratic Party (the governing party of Japan in coalition with Kōmeitō). However, since the internal tools for increased security are limited in case of Japan, external possibilities are needed, since Japan has positive memory of alliance through its alignment to the

U.S, it is a favorable alternative. Hence, I argue that the right of collective self-defense was introduced in order to enable Japan to build alliances in the region.⁵⁶ Such strategy can be successful because the rapidly increasing Chinese influence created uneasiness in the region, especially in few Southeast Asian countries. The PRC has territorial disputes on the South China Sea with Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines and Vietnam, these countries might favor an alliance with Japan instead of the PRC, but only if the Japanese party is able to commit to the security aspects to the alliance as well. While it is true that the chain-gang⁵⁷ scenario is a possible negative aspect of alliances, however, the deterrence capability of such formation is more significant at least in the short run.

CONCLUSION

Due to the defensive nature of the JSDF and the security guarantee of the Japan-U.S. Alliance, the adoptable Japanese security policies are limited, moreover, the changes of the recent years called for the review of such policies. The government seems to be willing to address formally taboo questions, and to take more proactive actions. However, does this mean a full rearmament or the complete revision of the Constitution and especially the abolishment of the pacifist norm standing in Article 9? No. While it is true that the new areas introduced by the decision were considered taboo, but they are far from radical nationalist aims.

Of course, the political elite seek to answer both the U.S demand for a more independent Japan from security aspects and the newly risen challenges of the security environment. However, instead of a unilateral military buildup, they choose a more transparent multilateral alliance-building strategy. The aim of both strategies is the increase of deterrence capabilities; both have their pros and cons. While the former can cause a security dilemma, which can escalate into an armed conflict, the latter is burdened by the risk of chain-gang

⁵⁶ Twining, Daniel (2014): "Is Japan's Grand Security Strategy the Key to Preserving U.S. Power in Asia?" URL: <http://foreignpolicy.com/2014/09/02/is-japans-grand-security-strategy-the-key-to-preserving-u-s-power-in-asia/>. Accessed: August 25, 2015.

⁵⁷ Christensen, Thomas J. – Snyder, Jack (1990): "Chain Gangs and Passed Bucks: Predicting Alliance Patterns in Multipolarity." *International Organization*, Vol. 44, No. 2, 137-168.

effect. If applied to the Japanese case, the danger of security dilemma is higher than the chain-gang since the conflicts are frequent with the PRC over disputed territories. Moreover, material factors are also against a massive military expenditure while alliance building bears a significantly lower cost. Not to mention that militarization means the amendment of Article 9, but the final decision is concluded by a national referendum. As it was shown in the polls the approval of the Japanese people is still lacking, and on the short run no change is feasible.

Therefore, it is most unlikely that the Abe Cabinet would adopt such strategy, despite the unambiguous opposition of the voters; extremely modern but minimalized Japanese armed forces are more realistic. Militarization and normalization are only possible in the long run, and only in case of change attitude among the voters, till than alternative strategies are more favorable.

ESSAY

THE WILD WEST OF CHINA: THE UIGHUR MINORITY AND CHINA'S CONSIDERATIONS OF SECURITY

Kinga SZÁLKAI⁵⁸

ABSTRACT

The issue of Uighur separatism is of key importance for China for decades. However, the past years added a new emphasis to this question, as they brought new tendencies of opening towards the inner regions of Asia, which can be accessed through the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region. For this reason, the Uighur community is extendedly perceived as a threat to China's security with its Muslim Turkic identity and separatist tendencies. In this article I presume that the presence of the Uighur minority is perceived as a threat in four sectors of China's security, namely in the sectors of society, military, politics and economy. This presumption leads to the claim that the balanced and consistent management of Xinjiang is an essential condition for China to reach its foreign policy priorities and to maintain its security.

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Keywords: Copenhagen School, sectoral theory, separatism, Uighur, Xinjiang, China

UIGHUR INFLUENCE ON CHINA'S SECURITY

The rising China of the twenty-first century has four main foreign policy priorities. These are the securing of access to energy resources, isolating the Uighur minority from its Central Asian roots, improving trade and economic relations between China and Central Asia, and reiterating China's readiness for a global role.⁵⁹ These elements are tightly interconnected. The Uighur minority is located not only geographically, but also in terms of ethnic relations between China and Central Asia. As the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region is the most important link to the huge markets and energy resources to Central Asia, it is necessary to maintain peace in this area. However, the Uighur community is perceived as a threat to China's security with its Muslim Turkic identity and separatist tendencies. On the one hand they have to be isolated from their kins in the neighboring Muslim Turkic countries in order to prevent those countries from encouraging separatist initiatives. On the other hand, too harsh oppression may lead to the condemnation of China among Central Asian countries that may have a negative effect on trade and economic relations. Certainly, the proper management of the region is essential for China to reach its priorities.

There is a broad literature on Uighur separatism and resurgence, as well as on China's growing influence in Central Asia and its intertwining with the presence of the Uighur minority. Many prominent scholars discussed the roots of the conflict and the identity-related questions in the region. All in all, there is considerable research analysing separate threats coming from Xinjiang. However, the number of those aiming to emphasize the complexity of these threats on Chinese security in a comprehensive way is not significant. This article aims to contribute to the filling of this gap.

I presume that the presence of the Uighur minority is perceived as a threat in four sectors of China's security, namely in the sectors of

⁵⁹ Kavalski, Emilian (2010): "Shanghaied into Cooperation: Framing China's Socialization of Central Asia." *Journal of Asian and African Studies*. Vol. 45, No. 2, 131-145, 131-138.

society, military, politics and economy. This presumption leads to the claim that the balanced and reasoned management of the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region is an essential condition for China to reach its foreign policy priorities and to maintain its security. To support my claim, in the first part of the article I analyse the situation of the Uighur minority in the sectoral theory framework of the Copenhagen School and describe how the presence of the Uighurs can lead to security issues. In the second section of the article I briefly describe the roots of the Uighur question, then I follow with the detailed analyses of security threats sector by sector to give a comprehensive picture about how the presence of the Uighur minority threatens the priorities and the security of China.

SECTORAL THEORY AND ITS RELEVANCE TO THE UIGHUR ISSUE

Looking at the complexity of the interconnected priorities in the Xinjiang region, it seems obvious that the single framework of the traditional notion of military security is not appropriate for the analysis of the situation. Instead, the framework of the sectoral theory of the Copenhagen School, which includes a specific extended notion of security, can aptly be applied to the multidimensional effects of the Uighur minority on the security of China. The Copenhagen School makes a distinction between security threats with regard to the nature of the threat and the referent object and splits security into five different sectors. The perceived threats in the military sector are very similar to those in the traditional understanding of security; they endanger the survival of the military and so to the state or another political entity. In the fields of political security, a constituting principle of the state such as sovereignty or ideology is threatened. As for the economic sector of security, the core question is the survival of the national economy or the parts of it. The range of referent objects in the sector of environmental security is wide; it includes e.g. the survival of certain species and the whole biosphere as well. The sector of societal security is a bit different from the others, as it can function independently from the state within the state, as it can be seen in the case of the Uighur minority. Societal security is linked to the

maintaining of identities. The elements of identity are hard to identify and subjective, therefore the identification of the threats on the survival of the identity is a complex issue as well.⁶⁰ According to Barry Buzan et al., societal security is comprised of “the abilities to maintain and reproduce a language, a set of behavioral customs, or a conception of ethnic purity can all be cast in terms of survival”.⁶¹

In the following parts of the article I analyse how this framework can be applied directly on the Uighur question in China. The article deals in a more detailed way with societal security, because I consider it as the main origin of all other security issues. Threats on military, political and economic sectors can all be traced back to the threat on the survival of the Uighur identity. I should also discuss the fifth sector of security, environmental security, because of the rapid industrialization and its devastating effects in the area. However, as it is not directly connected to the presence of the Uighur minority, this article does not deal with this issue. With the analysis of the mentioned four sectors, the article attempts to give sufficient evidence to the fact that the presence of the Uighur minority has a great impact on the fulfilment of China’s priorities and the maintaining of the security of the country. However, before I move on this topic, in the next section I introduce the roots of the Uighur question to broaden the understanding of the importance of the issue.

THE ROOTS OF THE UIGHUR QUESTION: ‘THE SIXTH CENTRAL ASIAN STATE’

Seventy percent of the minorities in China is concentrated in the Western part of the country.⁶² The Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region, known as East Turkistan or Uighuristan among many Uighurs, is also situated here. The area of the autonomous region covers one sixth of the territories of China, and, with its borders with seven neighboring countries and Kashmir, serves as the gate of China

⁶⁰ Buzan, Barry – Waever, Ole – de Wilde, Jaap (1998): *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*. Lynne Rienner, London, 21-23.

⁶¹ Buzan (1998), 23.

⁶² Chaudhuri, Debasish (2005): “A Survey of the Economic Situation in Xinjiang and its Role in the Twenty-First Century.” *China Report*, Vol. 41, No. 1, 1-28, 2.

to the West.⁶³ The population of Xinjiang is estimated at 18 million people. Almost the half of them (recently outnumbered by migrating Hans), belongs to the Uighur minority.⁶⁴ There are many cleavages between the ruling Hans of China and the Uighurs. The most important difference is that Uighurs are of Turkic origin, and follow Islam as their religion. Although China accuses them with Islam fundamentalism, the Uighurs belong to the most liberal Islamic groups in the world, and the majority of them are immune of fundamentalism.⁶⁵

As it can be seen, the Uighur minority has a stronger sense of belonging to the Muslim Turkic nations of Central Asia than it ever had to China. The division of Central Asia is originated in the so-called Great Game between Britain, Russia and China in the 19. century. As imperial wars did not consider the ethnic divisions of inhabitants in the conquered regions, the borders were established arbitrarily and divided the territories of the Uighurs.⁶⁶ This is the reason for the fact that a significant number of Uighurs live in the neighbouring countries, among them 210 000 people in Kazakhstan and 46 000 people in Kyrgyzstan.⁶⁷ On the course of history, the Uighurs had flourishing trade relations with other Central Asian nations based on kinship and the geographical situation of their territories. The Maoist China eliminated these connections during the Sino-Soviet split at the time of the Cultural Revolution until the end of the 1980s.⁶⁸

As a response to the serious oppression, the opening of the borders in 1987, and the changes in the international environment after the collapse of the Soviet Union led to the formation of a separatist movement among the Uighur minority.⁶⁹ However, this separatist movement is seriously divided. There are many factions with different aims and agendas, which sometimes work against each other and set

⁶³ Chaudhuri (2005), 3.

⁶⁴ Spechler, Martin C. (2009): "Why Does China Have No Business in Central Asia?" *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly*, Vol. 7, No. 2, 3-16, 11.

⁶⁵ Menon, Rajan (2003): "The New Great Game in Central Asia." *Survival*, Vol. 45, No. 2, 187-204, 198.

⁶⁶ Raczka, Witt (1998): "Xinjiang and its Central Asian Borderlands." *Central Asian Survey*, Vol. 17, No. 3, 373-407, 376.

⁶⁷ Spechler (2009), 11.

⁶⁸ Roberts, Sean R. (2004): "A Land of Borderlands: Implications of Xinjiang's Trans-Border Interactions." In: *Xinjiang: China's Muslim Borderland*, ed. Starr, S. Frederick, 216-240. M.E. Sharpe, Armonk, 218.

⁶⁹ Roberts (2004), 219.

back the articulation and representation of the Uighur interests. Moreover, the oppression of the Chinese authorities is especially high concerning the organizations of Uighurs, as it is obvious that the minority means a security threat for the state.

SOCIETAL SECURITY

According to Ole Wæver of the Copenhagen School, security action on behalf of identities typically decreases the sense of security even for those defended because problematizing the security of an identity and triggering attempts to define and complete it tend to expose its contingency, incompleteness and impossibility and thus lead to further action.⁷⁰

The same phenomenon can be observed in Xinjiang as well. On the one hand, the Uighurs, who are practically deprived from their autonomy and on whom there are serious constraints threatening their identity with assimilation, feel a strong pressure to protect themselves. On the other hand, the oppressing Han majority also feels a sense of insecurity due to the perceptions of the Uighur threat to reject assimilation and challenge Chinese identity. There is a societal security dilemma between the two identities that escalates with countermeasures against the perceived threats.⁷¹ Both parts constructed their imaginary “just and good way of life”⁷², that is basically built on the preservation of their identities. The existence of strong stereotypes about the other side illustrates well the irreconcilability of the two identities. Hans treat Uighurs as “ungrateful, lazy, violent, knife-carrying, pocket-picking criminals, in addition to being potential terrorists”⁷³, and Uighurs consider Hans as oppressing colonialists whose policies are designed directly against

⁷⁰ Wæver, Ole (2000): “The EU as a Security Actor: Reflections from a Pessimistic Constructivist on Post Sovereign Security Orders.” In: *International Relations Theory and the Politics of European Integration: Power, Security, and Community*, ed. Morten Kelstrup and Michael Williams, 250-294. Routledge, London. 253.

⁷¹ Roe, Paul (2004): “Securitization and Minority Rights: Conditions of Desecuritization.” *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 35, No. 3, 279-294, 283-284.

⁷² Huysmans, Jef (1998): “The Question of the Limit: Desecuritization and the Aesthetics of Horror in Political Realism.” *Millennium*, Vol. 27, No. 3, 569-589, 570.

⁷³ Millward, James A. (2009): “Introduction: Does the 2009 Urumchi Violence Mark a Turning Point?” *Central Asian Survey*, Vol. 28, No. 4, 347-360, 349.

them, and the threat of their attempts to eliminate the Uighur identity cannot be overlooked.⁷⁴ Both parties constructed the picture of the other as an evil creature, with whom it is impossible to negotiate and engage in discourse about solving the perceived security problems. The presence of the Uighur minority is thoroughly securitized, that is, perceived as a threat against which extraordinary measures are needed, and *vice versa*.⁷⁵ A threatened society has only one choice in this framework: to strengthen its identity. The variety of means can range from cultural methods to weapons.⁷⁶ Under these circumstances the reconciliation of the parts seems to be impossible, at least in the near future.

Moreover, the Han identity is a state identity; therefore an issue perceived as a threat for this identity can also be understood as a threat on the sovereignty of the state.⁷⁷ The extraordinary measures to protect the sovereignty of the state can include many tools such as military actions. Thereby the political and the military sectors of security are also concerned by the Uighur question. Because of the geographical location of Xinjiang as the gate of Central Asian trade routes, the tensions in the region influence the economic sector as well. In the followings I elaborate on the threats in these sectors in more details.

MILITARY SECURITY – THE CONCEPT OF THE UIGHUR TERRORISTS

After years of attempts to understate the tensions in Xinjiang, so as to make the region more appealing to FDI and China more acceptable in the international system, George Bush's War on Terror resulted in Chinese claims about Uighur Islamist terrorists who maintain connections with al-Qaeda and present a real danger in Xinjiang.⁷⁸ The main ground for this argument is the fact that a number of

⁷⁴ Fuller, Graham E. – Starr, S. Frederick (2003): *The Xinjiang Problem*. M.E. Sharpe, Armonk, 6.

⁷⁵ Buzan (1998), 24.

⁷⁶ Roe (2004), 289.

⁷⁷ Waever, Ole (1993): "Societal Security: The Concept." In: *Identity, Migration and the New Security Agenda in Europe*, ed. Waever, Ole – Buzan, Barry – Kelstrup, Morten – Lemaitre, Pierre. Pinter, London, 25-26.

⁷⁸ Millward (2009), 348.

Uighurs were arrested in Afghanistan and were imprisoned in Guantanamo. Although there are only scattered pieces of evidence to support the claim for the presence of Uighur terrorists related to international networks and especially to al-Qaeda,⁷⁹ China managed to convince the bordering countries to cooperate on the fields of surveillance and control of the suspected groups.⁸⁰ In reality, there were no reports of separatist actions or political violence from Xinjiang between 1997 and 2008, and “China’s War on Terror” was widely condemned in the international media.⁸¹

However, it also cannot be claimed that the cease of terrorist attacks means that the presence of the Uighur minority does not mean a threat on the military security in China. As I mentioned before, certain groups of separatists do not reject to engage in armed conflict or use bombings. In July 2009 the growing tensions culminated in violence in Shaoguan and Urumchi. In the unrest 184 people died and more than one thousand injured. The following protests lasted until the end of the year, when Beijing finally managed to break resistance through violent counter-actions.⁸² The Chinese government continuously insists on the existence of organised Uighur terrorist groups and the influence of global terrorist networks on them. It attributed the Hotan and Kashgar attacks⁸³ and the so-called ‘Pishan hostage crisis’⁸⁴ in 2011, the Yecheng attack⁸⁵ in 2012, the Bachu

⁷⁹ Marton, Péter (2010): “A Kínai Népköztársaság ’Af/Pak’-politikája: kínos egyensúlykeresés szabályozhatatlan pakisztáni áttétellel.” *Kül-Világ*, Vol. 7, No. 2-3, 38-59.

⁸⁰ Spechler (2009), 11.

⁸¹ Millward (2009), 348.

⁸² Clarke, Michael E. (2011): *Xinjiang and China’s Rise in Central Asia: A History*. Routledge, New York, 1.

⁸³ O’Brien, David (2011): “The Mountains Are High and the Emperor Is Far Away: An Examination of the Ethnic Violence in Xinjiang.” *International Journal of China Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 2, 389-405.

⁸⁴ Wong, Edward (2011): “Reports Describe Deadly Clash in Restive China Region.” URL: <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/12/31/world/asia/reports-describe-deadly-shootout-in-restive-region-of-china.html>. Accessed: 24 March, 2015.

⁸⁵ Wong, Edward (2012): “Deadly Clashes Erupt in Western China.” URL: <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/01/world/asia/violence-in-western-china-leaves-12-dead.html>. Accessed: 24 March, 2015.

unrest⁸⁶ and the Shanshan riots ⁸⁷in 2013, the Kunming Station mass stabbing⁸⁸ and the Ürümqi bombings in 2014⁸⁹ and several other attacks and stabbing incidents to Uighur terrorist organisations as well.

Therefore, the conclusion can be drawn that even if the concept of an overwhelming Uighur terrorism is not valid, the presence of the minority means a real threat on the military security of China. On the one hand, there is no doubt that some fractions of Uighurs do not reject violent means to reach their aims. On the other hand the constant tensions can easily lead to an unintended wave of violence where the intervention of the armed forces may be necessary. The activities of separatists are also closely linked to the political security of China as well, as it can be seen the next part of the article.

POLITICAL SECURITY AND SEPARATISM

Uighurs do not only challenge Chinese identity or the military strength of the state. After the opening of the Western borders of China, the Uighurs renewed the old kinship, cultural and trade relations with the Islamic and/or Turk countries of Central Asia. On the basis of these relations and encouraged by the independence of Soviet Central Asia, Uighur separatism became more and more extended in the 1990s. Not only the new independent republics, but also Afghani and Pakistani pan-Islamic networks supported the separatists. However, the idea of a Muslim Xinjiang gained not much acceptance, contrary to the idea of an Uighur nation-state. Many nationalist organizations were established with the support of the former Soviet republics, mainly Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. The

⁸⁶ BBC News (2013): "China's Xinjiang hit by deadly clashes." URL: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-22276042>. Accessed: 24 March, 2015.

⁸⁷ The Economist (2013): "Ethnic unrest in Xinjiang: Unveiled threats." URL: <http://www.economist.com/news/china/21580491-more-outbreaks-violence-show-governments-policies-are-not-working-unveiled-threats>. Accessed: 24 March, 2015.

⁸⁸ BBC News (2014): "China mass stabbing: Deadly knife attack in Kunming." URL: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-26402367>. Accessed: 24 March, 2015.

⁸⁹ The Economist (2014): "Attacks in Urumqi: More Uighur anger." URL: <http://www.economist.com.sci-hub.io/news/china/21602751-more-uighur-anger>. Accessed: 24 March, 2015.

separatist movement thereby meant a much bigger serious security threat on the borders and the sovereignty of China then nowadays.⁹⁰

However, the opening of the western borders did not only lead to the intensification of the connections between Xinjiang and Central Asia, but also between China and Central Asia. Through the booming trade relations, China gained the possibility to influence Central Asian states both on terms of economics and politics. Due to this influence, the Central Asian states were made to choose between supporting their kins in Xinjiang and enjoying the benefits of the excellent relations with China.⁹¹ It is not surprising that they chose the latter option. The establishment of the Shanghai Five (1996), then the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (2001) institutionalized the alliance between China and the Central Asian states, and, as it directly declared the cooperation of the member countries against ethnic separatism (one of the three “evils” emphasized by China), reduced the support for Uighur separatism to the minimal level.⁹²

Maybe due to the lack of support, the activity of Uighur separatists declined significantly after 1996. However, the above-mentioned riots, attacks and stabbing incidents (although not each of them can unambiguously be linked to Uighur separatism and can be considered as planned attacks) proved that the tensions coming from Uighur separatism are still present in the region.⁹³

Another threat on the political security on China may be that the oppression of Uighur people can invoke the intervention of Western defenders of human rights. However, this intervention is currently only rhetoric, the condemnation of China in the Uighur issue only arises when the interests of the West suggest it, and the use of this rhetoric has had no practical effects on China’s security so far.

⁹⁰ Roberts (2004), 229-230.

⁹¹ Roberts (2004), 229.

⁹² Chung, Chien-peng (2004): “The Shanghai Co-operation Organization: China’s Changing Influence in Central Asia.” *The China Quarterly*, No. 180, 990-991.

⁹³ Millward (2009), 348-349.

ECONOMIC SECURITY – THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE XINJIANG REGION

One of the main priorities of China is to secure the flow of energy resources to its rapidly growing industry. The hydrocarbon-abundant countries of Central Asia offer an ideal solution for this issue. However, the only route towards these countries leads through the Xinjiang region. The opening of the Western borders and the increase in trade and economic relations between China and Central Asia after the collapse of the Soviet Union led to a significant development in Xinjiang. As the volume of trade through Xinjiang grew, the attention of the Chinese government also turned to the region. New opportunities were initiated in the fields of agriculture, energy industry and construction, and the process of urbanization gained speed.⁹⁴ However, with the growing importance of the region, the tensions between Hans and Uighurs gained more importance and a new dimension as well.

It is namely a debated question whether Uighurs can enjoy the benefits of this rapid economic development or they lost more with the growing importance of the region. Although statistics show that the standards of living are much higher in Xinjiang and the population can enjoy living in a kind of consumer society regardless to ethnicity, the identity of Uighurs suffered more harm than to be able to compensate it with economic goods. With the new employment opportunities a great number of Han migrants arrived to the region as well, and the growing cities lose their Uighur characteristics. Moreover, the rapid industrialization led to serious changes in the environment of the Uighur homeland.⁹⁵ All of these changes may seem threatening in the eye of the indigenous population of Xinjiang and makes them feel marginalized in their own land.⁹⁶ Therefore economic growth can lead to a strengthened resistance against the new effects of Han rule. In the other way round, as their homeland is of greater importance than ever before because of the economic development, their resurgence may lead to much more serious consequences. If and when peace in Xinjiang ceases, the sources of development will cease

⁹⁴ Chaudhuri (2005), 5.

⁹⁵ Millward (2009), 347-348.

⁹⁶ Fuller– Starr (2003), 5.

as well, as high tensions and conflicts will reduce the flow of trade and investments through the region. As this flow of trade and the economic relations through the region is one of the main priorities of China, a resurgence in Xinjiang would possibly have broader consequences in the whole country and can be considered as a threat for the whole national economy.

CONCLUSION

In this article, I presented an assessment of whether the Uighur minority's presence has implications for China's security in the sectors of society, military, politics and economy. The detailed analysis underlines the fact that the management of the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region has a great influence on the fulfilment of China's priorities and the security of the country.

Although Chinese authorities found a way to eliminate Central Asian support for the actions of the Uighur minority, it does not mean that the perceived security problems are solved. Separatism is not eliminated in the region, and the isolation from their Central Asian kins just increased the grievances of the minority. Due to the rise of China, Western support towards them also declines. The violent oppression of demonstrations, the increasing migration and the devastation of the environment also contribute to the grievances. In such a complicated security environment, the perceptions of the Uighur question and its practical manifestations receive more and more attention, especially as China aims to reach the inner areas of Asia through this region. The main principles and directions of Chinese domestic policy concerning the Uighur minority, therefore, mean a crucial question both for China's domestic security and for the realisation of China's trade and foreign policy priorities in the near future.

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