



## RESEARCH ARTICLE

## Variables Affecting Regional Balance in East Asia

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Despite its strategic importance economically, militarily and geographically, East Asia is a region riddled with regional and international tensions and conflicts that have posed a range of transnational regional and international challenges that have affected the region's security stability. Conflicts in the region have included conflicts over regional sovereignty and the continued threat of use of weapons of mass destruction, affecting the nature of regional balances in East Asia. Regional conglomerates are attempting to strengthen cooperation mechanisms to maintain regional stability in the region and to balance China's aspirations to dominate the East Asian region through enhanced trade and bilateral and collective dialogue, which are critical to overcoming the dual constraints in the region and increasing economic development there, similar to ASEAN. Variables in the regional arena have significantly affected East Asia's equilibrium, threatening the security environment in the region and prompting the United States to play a greater role in balancing China's expansion in East Asia.

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col.edu.iq**INTRODUCTION**

East Asia has historically suffered from conflicts and crises that have affected regional stability in the region. The Territory has undergone major transformations since the beginning of the Cold War as a result of the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the growing strength of China. Until today, China is one of the major and influential forces in the form of the international system in general and regionally. Its desire to impose its territorial control to serve as a gateway to building an influential global force in the future, based on this vision. Major powers interact with variables affecting the realities of regional security in the context of regional hegemony and the regional arena in East Asia is undergoing new changes affecting the security environment, which in turn led to the determination of the course of regional balances between the actors there. Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, events have accelerated. Between one force trying to impose its territorial dominance and another trying to counterbalance that dominance. Its strategic depth in East Asia, Japan and South Korea want to maintain the status quo South Korea", while looking to strengthen its regional standing with its conventional and strategic military capabilities. The United States aims to create a more stable environment for preserving its strategic interests in the region by supporting its allies in East Asia, highlighting a range of problems that highlight East Asia's importance. Where are the places of conflict in East Asia? How did it affect the form of regional balance in the region?

This study attempts to understand the importance of East Asia and the nature of conflicts and conflicts in the region, and how they have affected the formation of balances in the region.

### FIRST: SOUTH CHINA SEA

The sovereign conflict over the South China Sea is one of the most prominent in the continual and complex changes and fluctuations in the Pacific and Indian region, in which seven countries are battling (US, India, Australia, Japan, South Korea, China, and Vietnam) for claiming sovereignty over the sea, as well as external interventions aimed at protecting its strategic interests and driving China's risk there, including conflicts over critical strategic areas such as the Spartley Islands, Parcel Islands and coral reefs, as well as where energy sources are located. Despite the historical background of the nature of the conflict in the South China Sea<sup>1</sup>, China's publication of the nine-line map below has heightened tensions, with China demonstrating its sovereignty over 90% of the sea, and the conflict escalated in 2015 when China began building artificial islands in an attempt to progressively extend its territory and control over the sea. The Chinese Government considers that a large part of its internal legitimacy is linked to the extent to which it continues to maintain its acquisitions in the South China Sea, prompting it to continually engage in exploitative business in the region to control it<sup>2</sup>.



Figure 1: <https://qph.fs.quoracdn.net/main-qimg-c0762e255bc09764bfc3343cb5b0ae0d-c>

China has failed to comply with the decisions of the International Court of Justice (The Hague) stemming from the suits brought by some South China Sea states against China's policies there, as China's vision of the conflict crystallizes as a historic sovereign conflict rather than the work of the International Court. The conflict's dimensions have expanded to include issues such as sovereignty and human rights, as well as geological issues and their economic and military dimensions. The conflict in the South China Sea fuels the national and national sentiments of the peoples of the States bordering the South China Sea; Leading to stringent behaviour by the Governments of these countries at the border level, China justified its expansion into the South China Sea based on its large coastal area on the sea<sup>3</sup>.

The security concerns that dominate Chinese thinking about the South China Sea make a lot of sense. Because the closure of the Malacca Strait has led to the contraction of China's economy, given the economic importance of the sea to which it is referred, It allows the United States to overtake it in

<sup>1</sup> Dana Ali Sarhan, US-Chinese conflict in South China Sea, Cairo, Arab Renaissance House, 2022, p. 95.

<sup>2</sup> Sharifa Kalla, US-China Dispute Over Control of the South China Sea, Algeria, Ammar Thalji Elagout University Faculty of Law and Political Science, Journal of Legal and Political Thought: International Journal of Court, No. 2, 2021, p. 14.

<sup>3</sup> Rana Abu Umra, Regional Disputes and Disputes: Challenges to Chinese Ascent, Cairo, Al Ahram Foundation, International Policy Journal, No. 233, 2023, p. 121.

the maritime space in the Pacific and Indian oceans and offers Japan a greater chance to be a global trading hub in Asia rather than China. He sees a group of thinkers according to the theoretical vision of the Earth's heart theory. The South China Sea also represents the heart of the sea, and those who control the heart of the sea control the Pacific and Indian oceans, and thus control the key to global trade under the inevitability of geo-economic conflicts internationally and regionally<sup>4</sup>.

Based on the foregoing, we can say that the South China Sea region is a fundamental pillar of geopolitical, economic and military volatility. Increased security concerns from regional and international parties in the control of one another and caused an increase in the frequency of economic conflicts and security competition as well as an increase in the pace of the arms race in the region in accordance with the power balance mechanism and the balance of interests in the region, Japan fears Chinese attempts to take control of the South China Sea and thus its territorial dominance and fall under its strategic umbrella, causing a contraction in Japanese influence and its regional role. As well as Korean fears stemming from its security vision and relationship with North Korea, and its uncertainty and uncertainty about the possibility of Chinese support for its North neighbor to overwhelm South Korea and unite the two Koreas according to communist principles. Taiwan Island and Spratley Islands are also the most important hotbeds of the conflict in the South China Sea, which we will address below from our demand.

### **Strategic Importance of the South China Sea**

Based on its strategic standing and given the South China Sea's significant economic resources, fish wealth, minerals and energy resources, as well as the distinctive location linking Southeast and North Asia across the Taiwan Strait, the South China Sea is one of the most prominent areas of conflict affecting regional balances in East Asia<sup>5</sup>.

Geographically, the South China Sea is located in China's southern part, stretching from the Taiwan Strait to Singapore with an estimated area of 3.4 million km<sup>2</sup>, located between the Pacific Ocean East and India West, and a link point between northeast China and the East and southeast China Sea across the Taiwan Strait. The Philippine Islands and the Great Sondi Archipelago dividing the South China Sea and the Indian and Indian oceans. The South China Sea has more than 5,000 islands with a total area of 80,000 km<sup>2</sup>, the majority of which is less than one km<sup>6</sup>.

Economically, the South China Sea has the abundance of economic resources necessary for economic development, a region rich in fish and development livestock, as well as the energy and rich minerals necessary in the technical industries. Given its geographical location and economic resources, the South China Sea has made it a place for competition and conflict between international and regional powers, which have directly affected the nature of the balances in the region. Its strategic position makes it an important point in the transit of commercial goods, representing the proportion of commercial goods through which it passes approximately 60%. While undiscovered sources of oil and gas have an estimated 11 billion barrels of oil and 400 trillion cubic meters of gas that contribute to increasing the productivity of the country they control, As well as animal wealth, which is a giant economic source for China and neighbouring seafront countries and reaches 3 million fish species and nearly 4 million bird species<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> Mazen Hamid al-Bakri, Security dilemma in the international system and the future of global strategic balance, Oman, Amjad Publishing and Distribution House, 2023, p.283.

<sup>5</sup> Iman Fakhri, South China Sea potential clash between Washington and Beijing, Cairo, Al-Ahram Publishing Foundation, International Politics Journal, vol. 56, No. 223, 2021, p. 182.

<sup>6</sup> Kamel Sameen Ibrahim, Chinese Strategy in the South China Sea, Baghdad, Ayam Publishing and Distribution House, 2023, pp. 23.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, p.27.

## Taiwan's crisis

The Taiwan issue is one of the most prominent and influential issues in East Asia's regional balance process the United States and its allies, Japan, South Korea and the Philippines, In order to overlap the strategic interests of these States, Taiwan's geographical location and strategic importance in South-East and East Asia constitute sufficient reason to threaten the balance in the region<sup>8</sup>, Taiwan has an important strategic position at the regional level, owning its views of the South China Sea. The East China Sea, as the Pacific Ocean borders west between the Philippines and Japan, While it is not far from China's southern coast population ", with a boundary of 180 km and a total area of 36.19 km with a population density of 23.5 million<sup>9</sup>.

China is aware of the fact that it will not be a superpower unless it can return Taiwan under its authority and sovereignty. which will be a major reason for China's dominance in East Asia, Which could militarize the regional system in the region, and engage in an arms race between the major regional powers if China attempts to recapture Taiwan militarily, With the presentation of Taiwan's strategic importance to the United States from the point of separation between the United States presence or not in the Pacific and Indian oceans<sup>10</sup>.

China's control of Taiwan means almost total control of Southeast and North-East Asia. as well as its control over the world's most important commercial strait, the Malacca Strait, Enabling it to form a maritime chain from the Strait of Malacca to the Taiwan Strait through the Hian Islands and Taiwan control of one third of the world's trade in oil, natural gas and coal, As well as Taiwan's vast fisheries wealth, electronic segments are essential in the global industries produced by Taiwan. It also enables China to ensure its security in South-East Asia to North-East Asia and to monitor all regional security operations and arrangements against it in the region, particularly from the Japanese side in North-East Asia<sup>11</sup>.



**Figure 2:** [https://akm-img-a-in.tosshub.com/indiatoday/images/bodyeditor/202008/LOCATION\\_MAP-x660.jpeg](https://akm-img-a-in.tosshub.com/indiatoday/images/bodyeditor/202008/LOCATION_MAP-x660.jpeg)

China has stressed the need for Taiwan's reunification and annexation under its historic sovereignty, as Taiwan represents a turning point in China's political system and foreign policy and affirms its legal entitlement to use all legal and military means if it deems it necessary to do so, Heightened Japanese fears of Chinese dominance in the region should it take over Taiwan Island It also reacted negatively to China's military moves on Taiwan and its attempt to impose an economic and military blockade by forcing Taiwan to bow to Chinese demands and accept its proposal of a state with two

<sup>8</sup> Ahmad Jalal Mahmoud Abdu, the impact of the Taiwanese crisis on the strategic balance in East Asia: (Sino-American relations 2016-2022: case study), Suez, University of Suez, Journal of Political and Economic Studies, Issue 4, 2022, p. 135.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, P.113.

<sup>10</sup> Abdelkader Denden, Geopolitic Conflicts in Asia Continent, Mustafa Shabwa, Taiwan Burden of History and Geopolitics, Cairo, Arab Knowledge Bureau, 2021, p. 150.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, P.157.

systems as applied with Hong Kong, It prompted Japan to take strict security measures to defend its security and interests in the region<sup>12</sup>.

China exercised a more aggressive policy towards Taiwan after the Russian-Ukrainian War Chinese aspirations to retrieve Taiwan under its umbrella increased with American preoccupation in the Russian War, The latter prompted an official visit to Taiwan by former U.S. Speaker of the House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi. s military and naval power in order to deter the United States from other provocative actions it might engage in towards China on the Taiwanese issue and other conflict issues<sup>13</sup>.

China's dominance of Taiwan means some regional powers losing their economic and security interests in South-East and East Asia in particular Japan, which considers Taiwan to be the cornerstone of its trade with the world's countries and South-East Asia, This prompted it to increase its military budgets in conjunction with the Russian-Ukrainian war and successive threats from the Chinese Government towards Taiwan For the United States, Taiwan is a strategic pillar of the offshore island chain to the Pacific and Indian Oceans. China's control over it meant the beginning of the end of the United States presence in the region and its loss of economic and technical gains and delayed access to modern technology by Taiwan, which had caused the technological development of the United States by providing it with precision semiconductors<sup>14</sup>.

That the recent US fears of Chinese moves and its fear of penetrating into Taiwanese depth as in the case of Russia with Ukraine United States of America ", caused the United States to increase its military forces in the Pacific and Indian oceans and to increase its military personnel in the Guam Islands, As well as joint military exercises with both the Philippines and Vietnam aimed at deterring China from any military attempt that threatens U.S. interests in Taiwan and undermines Taiwan's territorial security and integrity. US President Joe Biden also stated in a month (write down the exact date) that the US would commit to enter a direct confrontation with China if the latter attempted a military invasion of Taiwan. In the same vein, the United States pushed all of Japan and South Korea to increase their defence military spending in order to deter any attempt by the Chinese side to move militarily towards Taiwan. Japan introduced military technology into its defence policy against China and North Korea and their provocative moves towards Taiwan. The United States is trying to create a kind of peace between China and Taiwan in order to balance the region's actors in order to protect the island chain from Japan and Taiwan through the Philippines and Indonesia. It also provided China's neighbours with state-of-the-art military techniques and targeted radars for any possible future Chinese movement. North Korea's movements were supportive of Chinese policy towards Taiwan, where it engaged in minor military skirmishes near the Taiwanese coast, consisting of launching ballistic missiles in the region and supporting China's anti-American hegemony policy<sup>15</sup>.

From the foregoing, we can say that the Taiwanese crisis has directly affected the nature of regional balance, resulting in political tensions between major regional powers and heightened political tensions between China, Japan and South Korea, creating a chaotic political environment, as well as creating economic instability and turmoil in trade exchanges. Militarily, the uncertainty between China and the major regional powers has heightened military rivalry to result in an arms race

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<sup>12</sup> Sabah Jasim Mohammed al-Janabi, Influence of the Geopolitical Variable in China's Foreign Policy towards Taiwan, Berlin, Arab Democratic Center for Strategic, Political and Economic Studies, 2021, p. 112.

<sup>13</sup> American Policy in Support of Friends, Baghdad, Hamurabi Center for Research and Strategic Studies, 2022, p. 4

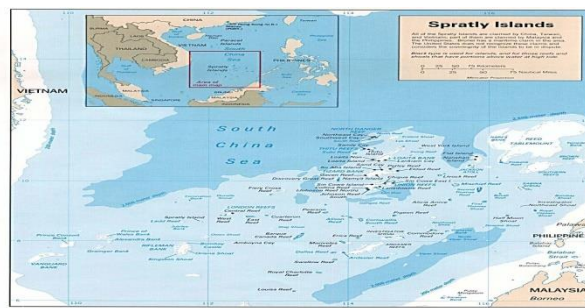
<sup>14</sup> Sujan Chinoy, The Factor in the US's Regional Posture, Delhi, Published by ORF, Issue Brief, NO.679, 2023, p.7

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, p.9.

between the parties involved in this conflict in order to deter any attempts by the Chinese side to overrun Taiwan militarily, and the United States has played the most prominent role by supporting its allies in the region militarily and economically to confront China's creep threatening regional stability.

### Spartley Islands crisis

Located in the South China Sea between the Philippines, Vietnam, China, Brunei and Malaysia, the Spartley Islands have a total area of 4 km<sup>2</sup> spread over a sea area of 410000km<sup>2</sup>, comprising approximately 30000 atolls and coral populations, the Spartley Islands bow along the southern edge of the South China Sea, and few islands are located in China's exclusive economic zone<sup>16</sup>. The nature of the conflict over the Spratly Islands stems from the importance of its position in the South China Sea. In spite of the geological nature of the Spratly Islands, which is rocky and unpopulated, the South China Sea States believe that the Islands' control can claim full sovereignty in the South China Sea for their strategic position of mediation at sea and proximity to exclusive economic zones<sup>17</sup>.



**Figure 3:** <https://th.bing.com/th/id/R.c9188f7a276ee6a669396a5bda2c5824?Rik>

The dispute over the Spratly Islands dates back to the Cold War period, following Japan's announcement of its abandonment of its colony, with China asserting its historic sovereignty over the entire South China Sea and its islands. Conflicts between China and Vietnam have arisen mainly recently, with Vietnam becoming the second most powerful military force in the South China Sea after China, taking more hostile action to gain control over the islands of Spartley, Parcel and surrounding coral reefs, while China has taken effective means of building security bases on those islands. There is less conflict between China and other States, as Brunei's claims are shy in their entitlement to the islands, while Taiwan continues its legal claim over the islands in question despite the risks of Taiwan itself falling under Chinese control. Unlike Vietnam, these countries have not taken any resolute diplomatic and military actions demanding sovereignty over the Spratly Islands because of their growing fears of more hostile reactions by China militarily and economically<sup>18</sup>.

To summarize the foregoing, China's claims in the South China Sea have as their primary purpose the total control of the Asian territory, China cannot exercise its territorial dominance in the Hadi-Indian region since it has not been able to control the South China Sea and therefore, regional and international powers are trying to limit China's practices by engaging it in persistent conflicts to reduce its chances of dominating and balancing its power in the region.

<sup>16</sup> Lily B. Libo-on, *The Brunei-Malaysia Dispute over Territorial and Maritime Claims in international law*, U.K, Published by international boundaries research unit, 2008, P.51.

<sup>17</sup> Benjamin J. Sacks, *The Political Geography Of The South China Sea Disputes*, U.S, Published by Rand, 2022, p.15

<sup>18</sup> Amna Mawawat, *South China Sea spiral of conflicting claims, geopolitical conflicts in Asia continent, liberation of Abdul Qader Denden*, Cairo, Arab Knowledge Bureau, 2021, p.228.

## SECOND: CONFLICT ISSUES IN THE EAST CHINA SEA

### Strategic importance

Consistent with its designation, the East China Sea is located in the east of the People's Republic of China, occupying 103 million km of Pacific area, the Taiwan Strait connects it to the South China Sea, while the Korea Strait is with the Sea of Japan, and opens to the Yellow Sea North. The sea overlooks four countries (China, Japan and the Koreans), and also has a sea view of Taiwan. It includes several rocky islands that have made it the subject of conflict between China, Japan and South Korea and threaten the nature of the region's security stability<sup>19</sup>.

The East China Sea is a productive and efficient economic zone, a region rich in oil and gas power lands. Estimated 60-100 million barrels of oil and 1-2 trillion cubic meters of natural gas as well as being an area rich in the livestock products of the bordering States, As well as being a transit centre for giant merchant vessels that are no less than the South China Sea. Regional powers are grappling with their control over the sea and achieving their strategic objectives, as well as protecting themselves from military dangers that may result in a future war between riparian states, especially with China's expansionist ambitions, and North Korea's ongoing attempts to impose itself as a functioning regional force in the region<sup>20</sup>.

### Senkaku islands (diaoyo)

The Senkaku Islands chain is a series of five islands full of fish and oil riches, islands located in the disputed East China Sea by China and Japan, with an area of 5.43 km<sup>2</sup> It has been under Japanese control since 1972, and is called the Senkaku Islands in Japanese, and Diaoyu in Chinese<sup>21</sup>.



Figure 1: <https://officerspulse.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/pasted-image-0-34.png>

The conflict over these islands dates back to the United States' submission of these islands to Japan in 1972, which caused a major rift between China and Japan, and the renewed nature of the conflicts between the two countries in 1990, 1996, 2004, 2010 and the last of 2012, which restored tension between the two countries to the forefront, highlighting the contents of the conflict especially after Xi Jing assumed power in China. At first glance, it was Japan that ignited the conflict on the islands after the quiet bilateral relations around these islands Economic and Social Council ", which constituted successive and successive crises between China and Japan that threatened regional

<sup>19</sup> Al-Amin Cruise, East China Sea Differed Nomenclature and Problem One, Geopolitics Conflicts in Asia, Editing Abdul Qader Denden, Cairo, Arab Knowledge Bureau, 2021, pp. 206.

<sup>20</sup> Nabel Akram, Geostrategic Importance and natural Reserves of east China Sea, article publish by Modren Diplomacy, 2022, accessed 4/6/2024, [www.ModrenDiplomacy.eu](http://www.modrendiplomacy.eu/) (<http://www.modrendiplomacy.eu/>)

<sup>21</sup> Kazim Helan Mohsen and Luwai Thajil Juma, reflecting the issue of the disputed islands between Japan and China on the normalization of relations between the two countries (1972-1978) and the American position thereon, Basra, Basra University, Journal of Basra Research for Humanities, No. 1, Journal 43, 2018, p. 310.

stability in the region, The American attention was drawn back to the need to intervene in the Asia Pacific region in its national strategy put forward by Barack Obama at the time. to create a balance between Japan and China in East Asia, The threat posed by China's rapid rise in the international system has been driven in various aspects of security and economic importance after Japan's overthrow in 2010 and its second place globally in its gross national product (GNP) after the United States<sup>22</sup>. Japan's control of the islands posed a growing threat to regional security in East Asia, where China's maritime movements are increasing in the region, with China demanding its historic title to these islands, but it has not filed a formal legal claim for the restoration of these islands, raising doubts and increasing fears of possible future attempts by China to capture these islands by coercive means<sup>23</sup>.

Both China and Japan have taken different approaches to these islands. While Japan's decision makers have put pressure on successive U.S. administrations over their title to these islands and the United States responds unequivocally and without issuing a clear and formal statement, China has taken a deterrent military approach against Japan. The nature of the conflict between the two countries continued politically, with each country emphasizing its sovereignty over the Senkaku Islands or the so-called Diaoyu Islands and the nature of bilateral relations between the two countries. Japan fears China's targeting of its fishing vessels through the Chinese Coast Guard deployed in the neighbouring territory of the Islands and its attempt to capture the Senkaku Islands by military means after the promulgation of a new law in China allowing Coast Guard vessels to shoot foreign fishing vessels that affect their territorial security and territorial territories over which they claim sovereignty Japan therefore strengthened its defences on these islands to deter Chinese coast guard navy vessels from any possible provocative attempts in the region. For its part, China made clear military moves in 2016 in adjacent waters, deploying Class I military frigates around the Senkaku Islands and combat vessels. In 2018, Japan announced the crossing of military submarines of the Chinese Army near the islands' coasts, as well as China's enactment of the aforementioned Coast Guard Law contrary to international high seas law to deter Japanese fishing vessels on these islands<sup>24</sup>. The US role is most evident through its support for Japan and its push to intensify the conflict with China with a view to strengthening its presence and alliances in East Asia in order to preserve its interests and strengthen its strategic presence in the region<sup>25</sup>. China increased its military movements in the East China Sea in general and around the Senkaku Islands in early 2023, as China's navy entered the island's territorial waters, as well as its air control via stealth warplanes. (XV) This is in addition to deploying its air defence system against any possible air military operations by the United States to deter China from imposing its control and sovereignty over these islands. China has also strengthened its military manoeuvre with Russia at the maritime and air levels

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<sup>22</sup> Tiantian Diao, *The Domain of the State: Interpreting the 2012 Senkaku/ Diaoyu islands Disputes at liberal-oriented Chinese commercial Newspapers, China, Media, And International Conflicts*, Edited by Shixin Ivy Zhang And Altman Yuzhu Peng, London, Published by Routledge, 2023, p.98.

<sup>23</sup> Chin-Chung Chao & Dexin Tian, *Dispute over the Diaoyu/ Senkaku islands: Communication Tactics and Grand Strategies*, Nebraska, Published by UNO, *Journal of International Relations and Foreign Policy*, vol 2, NO.2, 2014, P.29

<sup>24</sup> Yoichiro Sato & Astha Chadha, *Understanding the Senkaku/ Diaoyu Island Dispute: Diplomatic, Legal, and Strategic Context*, Published by E-International Relations pdf on the internet, 2022, p.4, Accessed: 25/1/2024, [www.e-ir.info/2022/06/23/Understanding-the-Senkaku](http://www.e-ir.info/2022/06/23/Understanding-the-Senkaku)

<sup>25</sup> Bahir Murdan, *China: A global rise in strategic vulnerability variables, in the international system and major powers reflections on the new global geopolitical theatre, the liberation of Ali Bashar Aguan, Oman*, Sand Publishing and Distribution House, 2019, p. 347



in 2022, with increased Chinese assertiveness in its attempt to dominate the Asian territory at the expense of the region's major regional powers<sup>26</sup>.

Overall, the Sino-Japanese conflict over the Senkaku Islands affects not only the nature of relations between the two countries, but also the threat to security stability in the pan-Pacific and Indian Ocean and in East Asia in particular. It has reinforced the recent crisis of bilateral relations between the two countries to increase U.S. presence in the region, and intense moves by North Korea through the launch of its ballistic missiles to deter the United States, leading the latter to support South Korea to raise its military budget and counter any security threat that China and North Korea may cause both in the East China Sea.

### Second: The takshima islands crisis

The history of the conflicts between South Korea and Japan is a reflection of the remoteness of the Second World War and Japan's practices against the Korean peninsula at the time, which continued despite the normalization of bilateral relations in 1965. "The Sunshine", which has widened their differences. The Korean side believes that Japan's practices at the 2020 Olympic Games are provocative in which Japan tries to remind East and South-East Asian states of its historical control over nations<sup>27</sup>. Acts of violence against Korean women at the time, with the Japanese army exploiting Korean women in sexual acts for pleasure and entertainment, as well as forcing them to work in brothels, Disagreements have spread on the tourist and cultural side, with Japan deciding to suspend its flight to South Korea following the latter's demands for Japan to pay financial compensation for Japan's crimes during its control of the Korean peninsula. The nature of the differences between the two countries affected the nature of trade relations. Japan imposed trade restrictions on exports used in South Korea's microchip technology industries. The nature of the differences between the two countries and South Korea's lifting of the dispute to the World Trade Organization to resolve the trade dispute between the two countries Japan's actions were politically motivated rather than economically motivated. The most prominent issues between Japan and South Korea are the Takshima Islands. s Islands ", which are located in the Sea of Japan about 158 km<sup>2</sup> west of the Oki Islands and are part of Okinoshima, Shimani prefecture, About 213 km from mainland Japan, consisting of two small islands with an area of 23 km<sup>2</sup> weeds ", an abstract rock island that is unfit for growth with the exception of some wild herbs that grow on both sides of the island<sup>28</sup>.



Figure 5: <https://japan-forward.com/wp-content/E5%B0%96%E9%96%A3%E8%AB%B8%E5%B3%B6.jpg>

<sup>26</sup> Teshu Singh, *The East China Sea Dispute: Impactions For the Indo-Pacific Region*, Delhi, Published by Indian Council of World Affairs, article Publish On the Internet, 2023, Accessed:25/1/2024, [www.icwa.in](http://www.icwa.in/) (<http://www.icwa.in/>)

<sup>27</sup> Anthony Kuhn, *Japan and South Korea address a dispute over their bitter past*, Article Published by NPR NEWS on the Internet, 2023, Accessed: 31/1/2024, [www.npr.org/2023/03/06/1161248145/japan-and-south-korea-address-a-dispute](http://www.npr.org/2023/03/06/1161248145/japan-and-south-korea-address-a-dispute)

<sup>28</sup> Tetsuya Nakano, *Loss of Title to Territory: The Implication of the order prohibiting passage to Takeshima in light of international law*, Osaka, Published by Kansai University, 2021, p.38.

Japan and South Korea have disputed territorial sovereignty over the Takshima Islands since Korean President Singhman Ri made a declaration referring to Korea's sovereignty over the island in 1952, and since then South Korea has illegally occupied Takshima Island. It conducted all its business and military activities on the island with Japanese objections to Korean actions in the region s Republic of Korea ", and its international claim to resolve the dispute with Korea after filing complaints with the Court of Justice indicating Japan's entitlement to Takshima Island at the expense of South Korea. Japan fears any future military actions that South Korea may take in the event that the two Koreas unite under a government that is ideologically different to the nature of South Korea's current regime, making it in front of the ballistic missile range and easy to occupy by Korea. So Japan is trying hard to take control of the whole sea of Japan by diplomatic means. and impose economic restrictions on South Korea in order to pressure it and reverse its decisions regarding its provocative practice in Takshima<sup>29</sup>.

In summary, the nature of the conflicts between Japan and South Korea is about future security risks, Despite US attempts to place all of Japan and South Korea in common security alliances to push back against China's growing tide However, the failure to resolve borderline disputes and rational trade issues between the two countries threatens the realities of regional security and gives China greater opportunity to impose its authority and territorial integrity in the future.

### **THIRD: NORTH KOREA'S NUCLEAR PROGRAMME**

International order and global security are at greater risk due to the proliferation of nuclear weapons Those weapons threaten the nature of the international regime's security environment because of their serious strategic implications for some States to deter other States from any future attempts by an enemy State to assert control over nuclear weapons, Despite the conventions on the prohibition of weapons of mass destruction and the prohibition of nuclear proliferation, some States have not attached great importance to those conventions. North Korea has endeavoured since the 1990s to possess a nuclear weapon that increases its international standing and protects it from its southern neighbour and American ally. first nuclear test, followed by several tests in 2009, 2013, 2015, 2016 and 2017<sup>30</sup>.

North Korea's international isolation with its outside world does not provide access to accurate information explaining the nature of North Korea's nuclear programme nuclear weapons ", causing confusion among scientific and research institutions in determining precise timing from the beginning to the end of work on the nuclear programme and the number of nuclear warheads and other tactical nuclear weapons it possesses, However, this does not negate the fact that North Korea poses a threat to the nature of the region's balances<sup>31</sup>.

North Korea believes the deployment of nuclear weapons enhances North Korea's security from Japan, South Korea and their American allies But the reality is the opposite, and the certainty is that North Korea's deployment of its nuclear weapons confuses security stability in the international system in general. in East Asia in particular, which has exacerbated a range of security and strategic

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<sup>29</sup> Tariq Mohamed Dhanoun Al-Tai, *International Security in the 21st Century What it Is, His Global Intellectual Approaches, His Unconventional Challenges, and His Future Prospects*), Oman, Dar Al-Academics Publishing and Distribution Company, 2019, p. 172.

<sup>30</sup>Bo Hassan and Bonoir Ben Saim, *Implications of North Korea's Nuclear Program for Regional Security Northeast Asia Model*, Algeria, *Journal of Legal and Political Research*, Issue 2, vol. 7, 2022, p. 459

<sup>31</sup> Utpal Vyas et al, *The North Korea Crisis And Regional Responses*, Hawaii, Published by East-West Center, 2015, p.53

problems and dilemmas faced by the States of the region economic sanctions imposed on North Korea's political system<sup>32</sup>.

Regardless of whether or not a nuclear weapon can be used by North Korea nuclear weapons ", but North Korea's possession of nuclear weapons was the result of growing suspicion, This, in turn, has led to the East Asian regional powers' attempt to increase their military capabilities and technology and to introduce them into their military system to create a counterbalancing and deterrent force for North Korea's nuclear weapon, which is always waved against Japan, South Korea and the United States. nuclear weapons ", and prompted the southern Government and people to increase their demands about their possession of nuclear weapons and deter North Korea<sup>33</sup>.

Security tensions in East Asia have reached their highest levels since North Korea conducted its sixth nuclear test in 2017, with nuclear researchers and specialists believing that North Korea's latest nuclear test was the closest to the fact that it had a hydrogen bomb. Recent nuclear tests also attribute the concerns of both China and Russia. s economic support to North Korea, What has created a rift between the two camps is often due to growing concern over any actions the Korean government may take towards the biosecurity of both China and Russia in the future<sup>34</sup>.

According to the foregoing, North Korea's nuclear capabilities influenced the nature of security balances and arrangements in East Asia, where North Korea was in a more powerful diplomatic situation than ever before, as well as its military strength of nuclear capabilities, prompting other countries to reconsider their security alliances and defense arrangements in order to confront North Korea's nuclear power.

#### **FORTH: ASEAN**

Economic conglomerates and partnerships play a prominent role in determining the world's regional balances, influencing and influencing the nature of bilateral and collective relations to maintain the status quo whether it be conflicting or cooperative relations. Given the importance of East Asia and China's growing rise under its hegemonic ambitions The importance of the role of economic blocs and partnerships in East Asia in reducing China's rise and its attempt to control the Asian region, on the one hand, has emerged. Maintaining regional stability and military, economic and political security arrangements on the other hand We will therefore address in this request the importance of the ASEAN bloc in maintaining regional stability in the East region. and the role of economic relations in maintaining the region's power balance system<sup>35</sup>.

The Association of Southeast Asian States (ASEAN) was founded at the end of the 1960s, specifically in 1967 in the Thai capital Bangkok, representing a new image of collective security in the Asian region that brought South-East Asian nations together in one bloc with the aim of deterring communist rise and growing global strength. ASEAN has 10 countries (Vietnam, Indonesia, Thailand, Singapore, Philippines, Myanmar, Philippines, Brunei, Cambodia and Laos). It is one of the most important conglomerates in the Asia-Pacific region aimed at integrating into the regional and

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<sup>32</sup> Younis Mwadeh Younis, Impact of North Korea's Nuclear Capabilities on Strategic Balance in East Asia "North Korea Model", Turkey, International Journal of Crisis and Policy Research, Issue 2, vol. 2, 2018, p. 123

<sup>33</sup> Elina Sinkkonen, The North Korean Conundrum international Responses and Future Challenges, Helsinki, Published by Korea Foundation, 2017, p.45

<sup>34</sup> Ataad Awad Abdul Hamid and Sarah Salah Hadi, Justification for the Orientation of Asian Powers (China-Japan-India) towards Alliances, Partnerships and Economic Conglomerates, Baghdad, Hamurabi Center for Research and Strategic Studies, Hamurabi Journal, No. 46, vol. 2, 2023, p. 64. 64

<sup>35</sup> Sam Kalakesh, Economic Diplomacy in the Era of Globalization, 2, Beirut, Arab Science House Publishers, 2021, p. 110.

international variables of the twenty-first century. ASEAN countries have moved to standardize manufacturing and trade liberalization mechanisms as well as protect emerging industries. ASEAN is also one of the most dynamic, active and dynamic agglomerations in the region and the world, as it constitutes a vibrant economy at the regional and international levels, with total domestic output reaching (3.452) trillion dollars, up from 2.582 in 2014, prompted the States of the region to strengthen bilateral relations and push for more cooperative relations among Asian Powers, and to reduce regional competition in the region<sup>36</sup>. ASEAN formed a pivotal framework on which it relied in defining the general orientations of ASEAN countries, and the nature of their relations from treaties of cooperation and friendship, to form a new pattern in the promotion and establishment of regional peace and stability, emphasizing the need to settle disputes and disputes in peaceful ways without resorting to violence. ASEAN played a central role in playing a regional role of paramount importance in the management of security, economic and political arrangements economic conglomerate far from military alliances, However, it has prompted States in conflict with each other to maintain the unity and stability of the region in order to avoid any attempts and prospects of a future war between States aimed at regional hegemony. s economic environment that contributes to the development of mutual dependence and supports regional stability, thereby preserving the nature of strategic balances in the region while deterring any Chinese attempt towards territorial control in South-East and East Asia<sup>37</sup>.

ASEAN member States suggested that ASEAN should commit itself to working on regional integration and cooperation mechanisms, in other words, comprehensive regional economic negotiations and partnerships are a project to integrate each free trade agreement. (ASEAN + 1) signed during the 2000s with six Southeast Asian powers in a massive East Asian regional trade agreement as part of the ASEAN-focused regional architecture. Thus, although their economic size is lower than that of China and Japan in the region, ASEAN member States have tried to maintain their influence to determine the course of the regional comprehensive economic partnership negotiations. Furthermore, the leaders of the Association of Southeast Asian States (ASEAN) announced the establishment of the Asian Cooperation Council, which consists of the following three pillars: the ASEAN Security Political Group, the ASEAN Economic Community and the ASEAN Social and Cultural Group. At the same time as the announcement of the Adaptation Committee's establishment, they revealed a new blueprint, the ASEAN 2025 blueprint, which includes objectives to be achieved and concrete actions to be taken, and the maintenance of regional balances in accordance with the balance of interests mechanism<sup>38</sup>.

In light of security tensions on the Korean peninsula, ASEAN member states stressed the need to deal with the Korean issue according to a mechanism that strengthens bilateral relations and reduces the growing risks of North Korea's military use. which in turn threatens regional security in East Asia and Southeast Asia and the joint statement also stated the need for restraint and not to be drawn into direct military confrontations, This followed the exchange of artillery between the two Koreas, as well as the establishment of a set of defence and bilateral security contexts in order to resolve border differences in the South China Sea, Its attempt to discourage China from any regional military threat undermines security stability in the region with the inclusion of major international powers in their international conferences for the purpose of enhancing security cooperation in the region within

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<sup>36</sup> Kazim Hashim Nimah, Power Competition for the Southeast Asian Region "ASEAN", Riyadh, Diplomatic Institute, 2023, p. 77.

<sup>38</sup> Mia Oba, Further development of Asian regionalism: institutionalhedging in an uncertain era, US, Publish by Routledge, JOURNAL OF CONTEMPORARY EAST ASIA STUDIES2019, VOL. 8, NO.2, 2019, p.131

ASEAN + 3 and ASEAN + 7, notably the Federal Russia guarantor in North-East Asia of possible Korean nuclear threats<sup>39</sup>.

In line with the foregoing, the Association of Southeast Asian States (ASEAN) has contributed significantly to the establishment of peace and has worked to achieve security stability in the region and deter Chinese ambitions. It has worked to balance China economically, with a set of mutual considerations and domestic laws that prevent any country from threatening stability. ASEAN works to find solutions to regional problems by strengthening bilateral and collective relations within and outside ASEAN.

## CONCLUSION

East Asia is of great regional and global importance. This importance has been reflected in the region's military, economic and political nature, and many places of conflict have been created between the States of the region and the major States of the world because of the nature of the region and its distinct geographical location and the overlapping interests of the various actors there. It can therefore be said that East Asia has had a history of regional and international conflicts that has made it imperative for the actors there to adopt power balance policies between their interests and those of the States parties and actors in the region in order to avoid crises that could return to tensions that are detrimental to the interests of the States parties. In particular, the interests we mean there are important, political, military, economic and historical, linked to the national security of East Asian States, specifically China.

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<sup>39</sup> Ernest Bower, *Balance & Good Health Come From a Strong Core: Is The ASEAN Secretariat Properly Resourced?*, U.S, CENTER STRATEGIC INTERNATIONAL STUDIES, VOL.1, No.34,2010, p.13.

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