

**THE UNRESOLVED ISSUE IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
BEFORE COVID-19 AND DURING „COVID SITUATION“
(The unresolved issue in North-East Asian countries
on the position of Dokdo and the United States)**

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Abstract

The Dokdo problem has long plagued both Koreas and is trying to solve the problem through negotiations, roundtables or scientific conferences.

Despite South and North Korea's unequivocal position on the Dokdo issue, there are large states with their own interests in the region (because the Dokdo problem goes beyond Korean-Japanese relations), such as China, Japan, Russia, and the United States, among which negotiations must be held. The next possible step in resolving this issue should probably be the unification of the two Koreas, which has also been on the agenda for a long time in South Korean academic circles.

Resolving the Dokdo problem, of course, is very tangible, but recent North and South Korean rapprochement trends, and the US role in this rapprochement, give some hope that the issue will be resolved in favor of Korea in the future.

However, what will happen sooner is– the unification of the two Koreas, or if the official assignment of the Dokdo Islands to Korea is, still a controversial topic. However, at the 2018 conference, organized by the North East Asian Fund, researchers noted that the issue – the Dokdo problem – should be resolved through negotiations between four countries – Japan, China, Russia and the United States.

The Dokdo problem goes beyond the territorial problem in terms of both Korean states, and it is linked to the issue of protecting Korean identity, which is the basis of national unity for Koreans. However, this issue is increasingly straining relations between the Northeast Asian states and the world's superpowers. The United States sees a solution in a reasonable compromise.

Key words: International relations, Covid-19, resolve problem, Dokdo, territorial problem.

1. Introduction

In the modern world, there are officially two Koreas, the North – communist and the South – capitalist. Although Korean history spans millennia, there has never been a precedent for the northern and southern parts of the country was cut off from each other.

It was ideological differences and other additional factors that influenced the two sides of the same country

to develop differently, including diplomatic, information or military war to this day, and border clashes of various scales are commonly perceived as a phenomenon.

According to experts, the patriotism, love of the country and faith in the people of South Korea would be seen. Perhaps these qualities made the southern part of Korea today more advanced in all areas of the public sphere than the North.

According to 2010 data, South Korea is among the countries with full democracies according to the World Democracy Index, and it is ahead of countries such as Japan, France and Italy.

Scientists note that in a few decades, South Korea, as one of the poorest countries, has achieved such success, not only in terms of economic but also in terms of the development of democracy. In terms of challenges, the biggest problem is the protection of territorial integrity (divided state of Korea) and identity in East Asia. The future prospects of the country also depend on the answers to these challenges, which are in the interests not only of the South Korean government, but also of the entire population.

2. Presentation of the main research material

It all started in 1905, when Japan won the war with Russia, it decided to conquer Korea. According to experts, Japan was interested in South Korea, because it is a more favorable area than the North due to natural or other conditions. Japan had already completely conquered Korea in 1910. As past events show, the southern part of conquered Korea was marked by constant uprisings and guerrilla warfare, something that could not be said of the northern regions. According to experts, the patriotism, love of the country and faith in the people of South Korea can still be seen. Perhaps these qualities made the southern part of Korea today more advanced in all areas of the public sphere than the North.

Added to the existing political culture of citizens living in North Korea was the fact that in 1945, when Japan declared its capitulation in World War II, the northern part of Korea had been completely occupied by the Soviet army. The United States, Britain, and China soon invaded South Korea in response to Stalin's actions. A brief historical overview ends here, with the West blocking the way for the Communists on the 38th parallel, then from the north to the south, so as not to sail.

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South Korea, officially the Republic of Korea, is the undisputed leader of the „Asian Tigers“ countries, as well as the so-called Even among new industrialized countries. Korea is located in East Asia, in the southern part of the Korean Peninsula. The name Korea comes from the Kingdom of Koro.

The country has a land astronomical border with North Korea (north runs along the 38th parallel) and maritime borders with Japan (east) and China (west). More interesting is the fact that the Sea of Japan, located between Korea and Japan, is referred to as the East Sea in South Korea. According to the Korean side, the Japanese Empire gave the name „Sea of Japan“ to the world community. In 1910-1945, Japan intervened in Korea. Therefore, the Korean government's position on the name of the sea was not taken into account when in 1929 the International Hydrographic Society published the publication „Borders of Oceans and Seas“.

However, it should be noted that the name „East Sea“ dates back to about 2000 and can be found on many old maps. E.g. On the travel map of Marco Polo, on the political map of the world translated by Vakhushti

Batonishvili, etc. Currently, this issue is still under discussion: in April 2017 in Monaco, a meeting was held at the headquarters of the organization, where the parties were given 3 years to agree. Also noteworthy is the fact that on maps and globes published in too many countries, as well; Google Maps, Bing. Maps-is, on National Geographic digital maps, bears both names.

Korea's current foreign challenge is the unresolved issue of the Dokdo-Tokto (same as Liankur Rocks) islands, which can be said to have plagued Korean society for more than a century. This issue is still relevant today and is the subject of controversy with the return of the original name of the Sea of Japan – „East Sea“. Both Korean states (despite their hostility to each other) – the North and the South – have agreed that the Dokdo Islands have long belonged to Korea. In addition, even today it is believed that the Dokdo (Tokto) Islands belong to Japan. In Japanese, it is called Takeshima Islands.

War, of course, is out of the question. Japan and South Korea are close economic partners and relations between them have greatly improved in recent years. This year marks the 40th anniversary of the Diplomatic Union and it was hoped that the memories of the brutal 1910-1945 colonization of Korea by Japan would gradually fade.

„I do not understand why the Japanese are claiming the islands themselves now that we have controlled them for so long. It is as if they want to go back in history and re-colonize Korea. „– said Park Sung-Sock, a local councilor who came with colleagues to the Japanese embassy in protest. He was with one of the groups – from historians to former commandos – who went to the Japanese embassy to express their anger. „We take this more seriously than the North Korean nuclear threat,“ said King Hong Koll, one of the Protestants, – „We are the same people as in North Korea and we can normalize our relations with each other. „But Japan is another country and it has occupied us at different times in the past,“ he said.

Dokdo, or Takeshima, as an island, is known in Japan as a perennial and irritating dispute that disrupts better relations with South Korea. The islands are remote, uninhabited, and located halfway between the two countries. However, they are located in rich fishing grounds and there is a lot of talk in this region about potential gas deposits. The dispute resurfaced after the Japanese ambassador to South Korea reopened a historic and legal lawsuit against Tokyo at a news conference in Seoul.

Korea's anger then reached a peak when the Japanese Shemans Prefecture passed a law commemorating the 100th anniversary of its official ownership of the Dokdo Islands since 1905. In the same year, Japan began consolidating its colonial rule over the Korean Peninsula. The South Korean government says Japan's moves are seriously damaging friendly relations between the two countries.

„This is not just a territorial issue, it is just a denial of our history of national liberation, as well as a justification for Japan's past aggression,“ said Chung Dong, chairperson of the National Security Council. South Korea says it will take steps to strengthen its control over islands currently occupied by a naval police squad. There are also great efforts to develop better regional cooperation and mutual understanding. South Korea says it wants to continue developing friendly ties. „Relations in this region are very fragile and historical disputes are the most difficult challenge we face,“ said Ray Jung-ho at a meeting of the Northeast Asia-Pacific Presidential Cooperation Committee. He meant not only relations with Japan but also an emotional, historical confrontation with China, which is also collapsing towards Korean sovereignty.

The governments of the region talk a lot about the need for economic integration and cooperation. However, the old controversies of the past are increasingly hindering the present. Neighboring giants, China and Japan, are still facing each other with old estimates, and the main problem is the resettlement of people. In this respect, the South Korean problem is uncomfortable for them in the middle (Scanlon, 2005).

The Dokdo issue has been a popular area of academic inquiry in both Korea and Japan, but several studies have expanded the scope of their research to the question of who is the legal owner of this island. Whatever the legal claims against Dokdo, the Dokdo issue has expanded to include a significant political focus on the domestic affairs of both countries and to remain a pervasive and irritating topic in Korea-Japan relations. A full understanding of this complex issue is impossible only through legal and historical arguments. In order to overcome the contradictions in Docto's academic coverage, some scholars attempt to identify the dynamics by which extralegal and extra-historical factors interact and complicate this controversial issue (Kozisek David, *Them and Us: Constructing South Korean National Identity 2016 through the Liancou*: 1-1).

Nevertheless, despite many attempts and discussions on this issue in many different formats, no agreement has been reached today. Moreover, the grouping of countries around South Korea is not at all interested in solving this problem in favor of South Korea. On the contrary, the question of doxo is a field of interest for all these countries and they try to find their own benefit. These countries are: Japan, China, Russia and North Korea, although even for North Korea the issue of Dokdo is very important to resolve in favor of Korea (of course, under the auspices of North Korea and its influence).

The only country that will support South Korea in this regard is the United States. That is why we have chosen this issue as a study of the US position on the problem of Doctrine. In July 2018, the East Asia Foundation and the Euro Clio, one of the topics and debates on Dokdo, organized a conference on „Teaching History beyond the World around the World“. Nam Sang Gum, a historian and representative of the aforementioned foundation, highlighted Japan's views on the problems of history in a report presented at the conference on June 18, 2018 in both countries on the question of why you have a bad image of Japan (for South Koreans) and South Korea (For the Japanese). 65.3% of South Korean respondents indicated their negative attitude towards Japan due to the Doctrine Territorial Conflict. In addition, 27.6% of Japanese repeated the same with Koreans (Polina Campbell *Teaching the Borderless History around the World*, 2016: 19-22).

Almost all the participants in the conference from the South Korean side directly or indirectly addressed the issue of Doctrine. Finally, it was concluded that despite the unequivocal position of South and North Korea on the issue of Doctrine, there are large states with their own interests in the region (because the Doctrine problem goes beyond Korean-Japanese relations); Such as China, Japan, Russia and the United States, which should be negotiated on this issue. The next step in resolving this issue probably should be the unification of the two Koreas, which has also been on the agenda for a long time in South Korean academic circles.

Unification of North and South Korea – This scenario is being avoided in Beijing, as there is a high chance that a united Korea will find itself at the American pole. In addition, if the seizure of nuclear status for North Korea has led to the unification of the two countries, the South will swallow the North and not the other way around.

The US will receive a strong satellite in the region, while China's geopolitical situation will deteriorate. Now it is important for China not to lag behind in the processes and to keep North Korea as a strong anti-American state. Regulating relations between North and South Korea does not necessarily help Japan, whose government does not want to take on North Korea, which is integrated with the world, strong and an ally of China. Relations between Japan and China are, to put it mildly, unfavorable, and all the geopolitical scenarios that will strengthen China in the region will weaken Japan. In this case, the Japanese side will be forced to become even more dependent on America.

Resolving North Korea's problem is important for Russia as it acquires a good trading partner in the region

and a balancer in relations with China. The Russian government plans to build a road bridge connecting the Far East with North Korea, on which a large amount of cargo will be able to be transported. It is now possible to transport cargo from North Korea to Russia (or vice versa) by land only through China, and this cargo must pass through 23 checkpoints, which makes the process more expensive and more complicated.

On the other hand, the unification of North and South Korea does not help Russia either, because the existence of a pro-American Korea poses a threat to them as well. Any development of the scenario will, to some extent, benefit South Korea. It will either adopt an unarmed peaceful neighbor, or influence North Korea and further strengthen its partnership with the United States. On the other hand, in case of unification, its economic situation will worsen. Against this background, resolving the Dokdo problem is certainly very plausible, although recent North and South Korean rapprochement trends and the US role in this rapprochement give some hope that the issue will be resolved in Korea's favor in the future. Nevertheless, what will happen sooner, the unification of the two Koreas, if the official attribution of the Dokdo Islands to Korea, is another controversial topic.

However, at the above conference – organized by the Northeast Asia Foundation in 2018 – the researchers noted that the issue – the Dokdo problem – should be resolved through negotiations between the four countries – Japan, China, Russia and the United States.

It is interesting how the US position on the Dokdo problem was formed. First, the territorial dispute over Dokdo / Takeshima arose largely due to inconsistent US policy toward Dokdo / Takeshima from 1945 to 1952. The United States originally developed a return policy for the island to Korea, as it was part of Korea, which was acquired by Japan in 1905 through illegal means.

Moreover, as such, it was necessary for its rightful owner (Korea) to return it according to the Cairo and Potsdam Declarations. In accepting the terms of the surrender provided for in the Potsdam Declaration, Japan agreed to return the territory it had occupied. In addition, several different draft peace treaties with Japan prepared by the U.S. Department of State from 1947 to November 1949 also provided for the return of Dokdo to Korea.

Amid the escalation of the Cold War, the occupation policy towards Japan underwent a significant change after 1948. The US did not want to pursue a punitive policy towards Japan. Instead, he wanted to help Japan rebuild and rebuild its economy.

At the same time, the United States began to reconsider its position on the return of Dokdo to South Korea, given that the security situation on the Korean Peninsula had deteriorated significantly since the victory of the communist regime in China in 1949, as well as the strategic location of the peninsula.

The San Francisco Peace Treaty of September 8, 1951 did not specify Dokdo / Takeshima. Japan clarified that this does not mean that the peace treaty recognized Japan's claim, as it does not provide for the return of Dokdo to Korea. For its part, South Korea has emphasized that although Article 2 (a) does not mention the three major islands of Doctrine that must be returned to Korea, it clearly does not exclude Doctrine from the small offshore islands of Korea.

In any case, the United States has decided to take a neutral stance on the Dokdo / Takeshima issue, given that the US-Japan Security Treaty could not address the Dokdo problem. Although the United States advised Japan to negotiate a Doctrine / Takeshima agreement with South Korea, the United States maintained a neutral position on the Doctrine issue (International Journal of Korean Studies • Vol. XIII, No. 2, 2009).

South Korea and Japan are natural strategic allies when it comes to defending territorial claims against China's ambitions. China has claims over the Japanese Senakaki Islands (territorial dispute over ownership of the Senakaki Islands (Diaou). Japan Chinese Islands) and certain Korean reefs. In addition, China is willing to use economic sanctions for further political purposes, posing a threat to Korea and Japan.

Resolving the Dokdo / Takeshima sovereignty issue will reinforce the situation for crucial border agreements and possible cooperation between Korea and Japan in the future to find resources in this area. Japan should launch this initiative, as its claims on the Dokdo issue are unlikely. The future so-called the deal requires that Japanese leaders be willing to compromise in order to reach an agreement with Korea. In addition, Korean leaders should try to evaluate their own nationalist rhetoric and recognize the friendly relations between the two countries.

Can the political leaders of Japan and Korea accomplish this task and reach an agreement that is necessary to resolve the Dokdo / Takeshima issue? Nevertheless, it should also be borne in mind that such disputes in Asia are numerous and complex and have no easy solution. In the context of nationalism and historical entrails, these territorial disputes create dangerous opportunities for conflict.

3. Conclusion

Thus, it may be time to discuss whether certain principles have been formulated for the peaceful resolution of these issues despite the fact that within the existing political and legal framework, compromise must begin somewhere. The dispute between Japan and Korea over the Dokdo / Takeshima Islands is a unique opportunity for reconciliation. Although their positions are divided and contradictory in the historical context, the two countries are economically intertwined and face similar positions in their attachment to China, which increases the change in regional reality. Thus, a compromise between Japan and South Korea would be more productive in resolving all historical animosities between Korea and Japan. This will allow both countries to better manage their future relations with China and forget about past disputes (Kim, 2009).

Thus, today the Dokdo-Takeshima problem is not solved like many other territorial problems between states in the world. Nevertheless, the Dokdo problem goes beyond the territorial problem in terms of both Korean states, and it has to do with the protection of Korean identity, which is the basis of national unity for Koreans. However, this issue is increasingly straining relations between the Northeast Asian states and the world superpowers. The United States sees a solution in a reasonable compromise.

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