

Karol Żakowski*

HISTORY ISSUES AND JAPAN'S BID FOR PERMANENT MEMBERSHIP IN THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL

Abstract

The article examines the impact of history problems on Japan's long-lasting efforts to gain permanent membership in the United Nations (UN) Security Council. It analyzes both the domestic stimuli behind Tokyo's stance on the UN reform and the external constraints on the UN Security Council enlargement. It is argued that while problems with Japan's bid for permanent membership in the UN Security Council stemmed mainly from divergent interests of member states, history issues constituted an additional obstacle that weakened Tokyo's position in negotiations on the UN reform. The discourse on lack of repentance by Japan for the atrocities committed during the Second World War was instrumentally used by the country's rivals, mainly China and South Korea, all in the effort to hinder Tokyo's efforts on the international arena.

Keywords: United Nations reform, permanent membership of the Security Council, Japan, history problems

Introduction

In the 1990s, Japan started applying for permanent membership of the UN Security Council, which contrasted with its previously passive stance in that regard. Despite long-lasting efforts, however, Tokyo's bid became entangled in a broader discussion on the need for a general reform of the UN system. Among the states which voiced their opposition against Japan's ambition most strongly and most emotionally were China and South Korea. This article examines the reasons of such an inflexible stance on the part of Japan's neighbors.

The slow pace of the discussion on the UN Security Council reform has been explained in various ways by scholars. Hosli and Dörfler (2019, pp. 35–50) pointed to the strong *status quo* bias of UN institutions,

* Uniwersytet Łódzki, email: karol.zakowski@uni.lodz.pl, ORCID ID: 0000-0003-2715-570X.

stemming from a high hurdle for UN Charter revision and veto power granted to the permanent members of the Security Council as well as, *de facto*, to two large UN regional groupings, as the main obstacles to the reform. Similarly, Pimenta Oliveira Baccarini (2018, pp. 97–115) stressed the importance of historical lock-in effect resulting from formal and informal rules and institutions under the UN system. Regarding Japan, Drifte (2000, pp. 52–65) stressed Tokyo's initially insufficient involvement in multilateral diplomacy as well as dependence on the US as the factors that hindered gaining a stronger position in the UN. As an additional impediment, Moni (2007, pp. 133–134) indicated a relatively low domestic support for governmental efforts for permanent membership in Japan due to the public's concerns about shouldering new obligations in the security field.

Without denying the crucial importance of great power politics, clashes of interests of various regional groups, and petrified decision-making procedures in hindering the UN institutional reform, this article draws attention to history issues as an additional obstacle to admitting Japan to the Security Council as a permanent member. The main thesis of this article is that Tokyo was aware of the importance of dealing with the difficult past from the onset of its bid for permanent membership, but its efforts for reconciliation with the neighboring countries turned out insufficient. As a result, the legacy of the war of aggression was instrumentally used by South Korean and Chinese governments, as well as human rights NGOs, to undermine Japan's negotiating position in the UN.

The article is composed of three sections. Relying on UN and governmental documents, as well as memoirs of Japanese politicians and diplomats, they examine the role of history issues in negotiations over the UN reform. The first section analyzes the evolution of Japan's stance on the UN reform, regarding primarily the bid for a permanent seat in the Security Council. The second section describes the significance of history issues as a constraint on Tokyo's diplomatic endeavors. In this light, the third section examines the impact of history problems on the reaction of the international community to Japan's proposal for the UN reform.

Japan and the UN Reform

The UN system, along with alliance with the US, has constituted one of the main pillars of Japan's foreign policy since the post-war period. Japan was allowed to join the UN after normalization of relations with the Soviet Union in 1956 and since then it has served as non-permanent member of the Security Council as many as 11 times. While Tokyo start-

ed appealing for a revision of the UN Charter at the end of the 1950s, it did not submit a direct application for permanent membership in the Security Council until the 1990s (Drifte, 2000, pp. 18–51). Despite long-lasting efforts, however, the UN reform has so far been postponed numerous times, mainly due to divergent national interests of member states.

Permanent membership of the UN Security Council, vested in the US, USSR, China, France, and the United Kingdom, was a relic of the Second World War. According to Article 39 of the UN Charter, the role of the Security Council was to “determine the existence of any threat to the peace, breach of the peace, or act of aggression and (...) make recommendations, or decide what measures shall be taken (...) to maintain or restore international peace and security” (United Nations, 1945). As permanent members were endowed with veto power, their status remained superior to the status of other member states.

During the Cold War, Japan did not officially apply for permanent membership in the UN Security Council, even though it became the second largest capitalist economy in the world at the end of the 1960s. Conducting a potential UN reform was hindered by the fact that any change to the UN Charter had to be ratified by two-thirds of all member states, including all five permanent members of the Security Council. The number of non-permanent members of the Security Council was increased only once – from six to ten – in 1965. In 1979, Japan supported India's proposal to further enlarge the Security Council by four non-permanent members, but this plan was never realized due to lack of interest from the five permanent members and European states (Bourantonis, 2005, pp. 4–26). What additionally motivated Japan to request a revision of the UN Charter was a controversial clause in Article 53, according to which regional security organizations were exempt from the requirement to obtain authorization of the Security Council for an armed peace-enforcing operation against “enemy states,” defined as the enemies of the founders of the UN during the Second World War (Dore, 1997, p. 126). As admitted by Foreign Minister Abe Shitarō in 1984, while Japan was prepared to serve as permanent member of the Security Council, it was unrealistic to hope for a UN Charter revision under the international situation of the Cold War (Abe and Nagano, 1984, p. 205).

The collapse of the Soviet Union, decline in relative power of Great Britain and France, as well as emergence of new regional powers fuelled the debate on UN Security Council reform at the beginning of the 1990s. Initially, Japan refrained itself from submitting a formal application for permanent membership, not to jeopardize its relations with the five permanent members. In 1990, it was not Tokyo, but Rome that made the

first proposal to accept Japan as a permanent member, while replacing British and French seats with one collective seat for the European Community. What hindered Tokyo from playing a more active role in the UN system at the time were the limitations of the Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution, which prohibited Japan from possessing any military potential and waging wars. Only in 1992 did Japan legalize participation of Self-Defense Forces in UN peacekeeping operations, thus gaining better ability to shape the new world order (Bourantonis, 2005, pp. 29–36).

After the resolution of the problem of Japan's participation in peacekeeping operations, Tokyo started openly requesting permanent membership of the Security Council. What further motivated Japanese decision-makers was the fact that by the early 1990s Japan's share in the UN budget had grown to 12.5%, which was the second contribution among all member states. In December 1992, Tokyo co-sponsored a resolution that appealed for re-examination of equitable representation and increase in the size of the Security Council. Initially, the debate focused on enlarging permanent membership by Japan and Germany, but by the mid-1990s it shifted towards a more comprehensive reform of the Security Council. While most of the five permanent members reluctantly leaned towards conducting such a reform, non-aligned states, gathered in the so-called "Coffee Club," started demanding an increase in the number of non-permanent members instead. Multiplication of diverse proposals of the reform made the "quick-fix" solution of simply accepting Japan and Germany as permanent members difficult to implement (Bourantonis, 2005, pp. 39–59).

The unilateral attack on Iraq by the US in 2003 reignited discourse on the necessity to improve the credibility of the Security Council as a peace-guarding entity (Weiss, 2003, pp. 147–161). In 2004, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan established a High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, which concluded that dealing with new international threats necessitated enlargement of the Security Council. In the same year, Japan formed G-4 together with Germany, India, and Brazil. The new group proposed to enlarge the Security Council to 25 members, including six new permanent members without veto powers and four new non-permanent members. In 2005, "Coffee Club" countries, such as Argentina, Mexico, Algeria, Italy, Spain, Pakistan, and South Korea, in turn issued a report entitled "Uniting for Consensus," in which they appealed for increasing the number of non-permanent seats alone by 10. As the African states did not share the stance of any of the two groups, negotiations ended in an impasse. In 2009, the Intergovernmental Negotiations Forum on the UN reform was established, but despite numerous

rounds of negotiations it did not lead to any compromise on the composition of the Security Council. When in 2013 the Advisory Group of Intergovernmental Negotiations issued a document referred to as “Non-Paper”, it was welcomed by the G-4, US, UK, and France, but treated with reserve by Russia and China, and rejected by the “Uniting for Consensus” group (UfC) as well as by the African and Arab countries (Pimenta Oliveira Baccarini, 2018, pp. 99–101).

In a pamphlet published in 2011, the Japanese government cited numerous arguments for gaining permanent membership of the Security Council. It pointed to the fact that Asia was underrepresented in that organ – while having more than half of the world’s population, it held only one-fifth of the seats. Tokyo stressed that its status of one of the largest economies in the world and the second-largest contributor to the UN budget, coupled with extensive experience in peacekeeping, peacebuilding, disarmament, and nuclear non-proliferation, made it a viable candidate for permanent membership (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2011). Nevertheless, Japan’s efforts did not translate into progress in talks on the UN reform. At the Informal Meeting of the General Assembly on the Intergovernmental Negotiations on Security Council Reform in May 2019, Japanese representative Bessho Kōrō expressed his “deep disappointment and dismay” with the fact that almost none of G-4’s suggestions were reflected in UN documents, as well as dissatisfaction with the non-transparent decision-making process (Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations, 2019).

The lack of progress in discussion on the Security Council reform resulted from the complexity of contradictory interests of member states. Candidacy for permanent membership of each of the G-4 countries encountered opposition from its neighbors belonging to the UfC – Pakistan in the case of India, Argentina and Mexico in the case of Brazil, Italy and Spain in case of Germany, as well as South Korea in the case of Japan. What facilitated Tokyo’s rivals to undermine the Japanese bid were the controversies over Japan’s atonement for its difficult history of territorial expansionism.

History Problems as a Constraint on Japan’s Position in the UN

While Japan’s efforts for permanent membership of the Security Council started gaining momentum in the 1990s, Tokyo was faced with its own history issues which correspondingly put severe constraints on its diplomacy towards the neighboring countries. China and South Korea, among others,

started multiplying demands towards Japan over the apologies, history textbooks, “comfort women,” and the Yasukuni Shrine problems. As a result, Tokyo’s chances for gaining a permanent seat were held hostage, pending an appropriate response to these unresolved and thorny issues.

Japan’s efforts for the UN reform almost coincided with the reemergence of history problems. Difficult geopolitical situation in East Asia during the Cold War led to the suspension of the question of Japan’s apologies for the colonial rule and the war of aggression waged during the period of territorial expansionism. Both Taipei and Beijing, eager to draw Tokyo away from supporting the other side of the civil war, agreed not to demand war reparations nor to insist on explicit apologies when they normalized diplomatic relations with Tokyo in 1952 and 1972, respectively. Similarly, South Korean President Park Chung-hee, anxious to receive financial assistance from Tokyo, was content only with an expression of “true regret” and “deep remorse” for the “unfortunate” past by Foreign Minister Shiina Etsuaburō during normalization of relations with Japan in 1965 (Yamazaki, 2006, p. 34). Yet, the apologies issue returned with new force at the end of the Cold War. In China, the communist government started using anti-Japanese rhetoric as a part of new nationalism, which swiftly filled the ideological vacuum that appeared after the *de facto* abandonment of communism during the period of economic reforms launched in 1978. Democratization of South Korea at the end of the 1980s, in turn, led to emergence of bottom-up human rights movements which requested apologies and compensation from Japan (Hicks, 1994, p. 173).

The first history problems in 1982 and 1986 were related with Japan’s biased history textbooks. Tokyo showed understanding towards its neighboring countries by promising to heed their stance when revising the contents of textbooks in the future (Rose, 1998, pp. 80–120). In 1985, in turn, Japan compromised over prime ministerial visits to Yasukuni – a Shinto shrine in Tokyo that commemorated the Japanese who had died in the service of the emperor, including class-A war criminals convicted by the Tokyo Tribunal in 1948. Not only did Prime Minister Nakasone Yasuhiro abandon the idea of institutionalization of annual state visits to Yasukuni, but it also became an unwritten rule that prime ministers would refrain themselves from paying homage at the controversial shrine (Zakowski, 2012, pp. 47–49). Nevertheless, the end of Cold War caused further unfreezing of anti-Japanese sentiments in the region. In particular, discourse over the compensation of “comfort women” – former sexual slaves abused by the Japanese Imperial Army – gained prominence at the turn of the 1980s and the 1990s.

The Japanese government was fully aware of the fact that the burden of the difficult past might impede Tokyo's bid for permanent membership of the UN Security Council. Kaifu Toshiki, who served as Prime Minister between 1989 and 1991, appealed for implementing the policy of "aspiring diplomacy" (*kokorozashi aru gaikō*), which embedded Tokyo's ambition to play a greater role in the UN both in the willingness to assume more responsibility for guarding international peace, and in the reflection upon the wrongdoings of the past war (Kaifu, 1995, pp. 147–155). Similarly, Hosokawa Morihiro, who served as Prime Minister between 1993 and 1994, combined the request for the UN Security Council reform with the need to finally deal with history problems and holdovers. As he stressed, Japan was far behind other countries in paying war reparations. In contrast, Germany, another state that aspired to a permanent seat in the UN Security Council, had established generous funds for the victims of Nazi concentration camps and forced labor. According to Hosokawa (1993, pp. 213–226), Tokyo should explicitly apologize and promptly pay explicit indemnities to war victims, without camouflaging them as developmental aid.

In this vein, during the session of the UN General Assembly in September 1994, Foreign Minister Kōno Yōhei stated that Japan was ready to assume more responsibilities in the Security Council. At the same time, he reconfirmed that "reflecting with remorse upon the Second World War," Tokyo would contribute to maintaining world peace and prosperity without resorting "to the use of force prohibited by its Constitution" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 1994). As stressed by Kōno (2015, pp. 130–141), Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) bureaucrats were very eager to promote Japan's bid for permanent membership, but the ruling party lawmakers did not necessarily share that enthusiasm. The stance on the UN reform, along with the problem of war reparations, became important topics for discussion between the Liberal Democratic Party and its coalition partners – the Japan Socialist Party and the New Party Sakigake. Eventually, the Murayama administration decided to continue applying for the Security Council permanent membership while trying to compensate the victims of war crimes committed by Japan. Commemorating the 50th anniversary of the end of the Second World War in 1995, Prime Minister Murayama Tomiichi issued a statement that contained unequivocal apologies for the war of aggression and colonialism. In addition, Japan established the Asian Women's Fund that paid atonement money to former "comfort women."

Japan's efforts to apologize and pay compensation to the victims did not bring expected results for two reasons. Firstly, the continuous denial of Japan's responsibility for the past atrocities by Japanese right-wing

politicians put into question Tokyo's sincerity in pursuing reconciliation with the neighboring countries. Secondly, anti-Japanese sentiments were used by Chinese and South Korean statespersons to bolster their popularity. As a result, history problems periodically led to diplomatic crises between Japan and neighboring states. Under pressure from human rights NGOs that requested punishing the perpetrators of the forced conscription of "comfort women," Seoul refused to cooperate with the Asian Women's Fund (Żakowski, 2020, pp. 161–162). In November 1998, in turn, Chinese President Jiang Zemin, during his visit to Japan, reprimanded Tokyo for the lack of explicit written apologies for the war of aggression against China (Lam, 2002, pp. 31–54). History problems reemerged with a vengeance under Prime Minister Koizumi Jun'ichirō, who demonstratively visited Yasukuni on an annual basis between 2001 and 2006. Homage at the controversial shrine was repeated in 2013 by Prime Minister Abe Shinzō, which led to further deterioration of Japan's relations with China and the Republic of Korea.

UN institutions became quickly involved in Japan's history issues. In January 1996, Special Rapporteur of the UN Commission on Human Rights on Violence against Women Radhika Coomaraswamy issued a report, which condemned the recruitment of "comfort women" as a clear example of sexual slavery (United Nations, Economic and Social Council, Commission on Human Rights, 1996). While welcoming the creation of the Asian Women's Fund, she stressed that Japan's responsibility for the atrocities should be extended to the legal sphere, rather than remain limited only to the moral dimension. Coomaraswamy emphasized that the sexual slavery system instituted by the Japanese Imperial Army constituted a crime against humanity, and that the government of Japan should "apply due diligence to initiate prosecution of those responsible for the establishment and running of comfort stations" (United Nations, 1996).

In addition, human rights NGOs, mainly from South Korea, put pressure on various governments and international institutions to promote full compensation to "comfort women." Their efforts brought results especially in Western liberal democracies. In July 2007, the US House of Representatives resolved that Tokyo "should formally acknowledge, apologize, and accept historical responsibility in a clear and unequivocal manner for its Imperial Armed Forces' coercion of young women into sexual slavery" (US Congress, 2007). Similarly, in December 2007, the European Parliament passed a resolution, calling on the government of Japan "to refute publicly any claims that the subjugation and enslavement of 'comfort women' never occurred" (European Parliament, 2007). While history problems played a marginal role in

changing the stance of the US and European countries regarding Japan's bid for permanent membership of the UN Security Council, they created pressure on Tokyo to continue the policy of reconciliation with China and South Korea.

Because reemergence of history issues almost coincided with Japan's application for permanent membership of the UN Security Council, Tokyo treated reconciliation with the neighboring countries as one of the prerequisites for assuming a more responsible role in the international community. Nevertheless, while Japan's initial efforts for paying compensation to the victims met with appreciation, South Korea and China gradually hardened their stances. As such, history problems became one of the key arguments against Tokyo's growing international ambitions.

International Opposition to Japan's Bid for the UN Security Council Permanent Membership

While Japan's bid for permanent membership of the Security Council initially met with understanding from all the five permanent members, history problems made China question Tokyo's credibility on the international scene. Gradually, Beijing and Seoul started citing the lack of repentance for war atrocities as an argument to undermine Tokyo's efforts for the long-delayed UN reform.

The Republic of Korea, as an active member of the "Coffee Club" and UfC, was one of the first countries which voiced objection against Japan's bid for permanent seat in the Security Council. Seoul's initially ambiguous stance on this issue turned anti-Japanese under public opinion pressure. In 1995, a group of 30 politicians of the ruling and opposition parties petitioned the National Assembly to overturn the government's statement on understanding regarding Tokyo's ambition to receive permanent membership of the Security Council unless Japan apologized and compensated for the past crimes as well as returned cultural treasures to Korea (Drifte, 2000, p. 151). Growing anti-Japanese sentiments were an important factor that pushed Seoul towards denying the need for an increase in the number of permanent members. In April 1996, South Korean Ambassador Park Soo Gil stressed that the very concept of permanency of the membership of the Security Council was not only undemocratic, but also inconsistent with the fact that the balance of power in the world changed ceaselessly (Global Policy Forum, 1996).

China's stance on the UN reform was slightly different. Beijing generally sympathized with the bids of Brasilia and Berlin while distancing

itself from supporting the ambitions of New Delhi and Tokyo. This position resulted from China's territorial disputes with India and Japan, as well as from the perception of both countries as allies and/or partners of the US. Over time, China softened its stance regarding India's bid, which was consistent with Beijing's support for greater representation of the developing countries in UN organs. Nevertheless, the PRC remained relentlessly opposed to empowering Japan (Malik, 2005, pp. 19–29). Answering to Japan's argument that Tokyo's share in the UN budget increased to almost 20% at the beginning of the 21st century, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson stated in September 2004 that "The UN Security Council is not like a board of directors of a company and its composition should not be decided according to the financial contribution of its members" (Moni, 2007, pp. 126–127).

Japan's promotion of the UN reform gained new momentum in March 2005, when UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan admitted there was a high probability that a new Security Council permanent membership for Asia would go to Japan. Nevertheless, Tokyo's plans met with vehement protests from human rights activists and nationalists from South Korea and China. What prompted large-scale anti-Japanese demonstrations in these countries was an assertive stance of Prime Minister Koizumi on his visits to the Yasukuni Shrine and Japanese history textbooks. The manifestations were accompanied by the calls for boycotting the purchase of Japanese products as well as acts of violence against Japanese tourists, shops, companies, and restaurants. Most importantly, US-based Chinese activists started collecting signatures under a petition against the UN Security Council permanent seat for Japan. What was unusual was the fact that the campaign was promoted on three popular commercial websites in China. As the Chinese Communist Party maintained strong control over the Internet, it indicated that the government probably tacitly approved of the petition (Shimizu, 2006, pp. 50–59).

Gradually, Beijing started openly referring to history issues as an argument against Japan's application for permanent membership. In March 2005, Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Liu Jianchao stressed: "We understand that Japan hopes to play a bigger role in international affairs. Meanwhile we hope that Japan adopts a correct and responsible attitude towards history issues. (...) We do hope that the Japanese side will deal with the history issues properly in order to win trust from others" (Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the United States of America, 2005). During his visit to New Delhi in April 2005, in turn, Prime Minister Wen Jiabao expressed his support for India's ambition to play a more important role in the UN. At the same time, he referred to history issues

as the main obstacle to giving a permanent seat in the Security Council to Tokyo. As Wen stated: "Recently the civilians in some neighboring countries, including China, voluntarily organized demonstrations against Japan in pursuit of becoming a permanent member in the United Nation Security Council. Facing such a strong response from the Asian people, the Japanese authorities should have profound self-examination. Only the country respecting the history, with the courage to take responsibility for the history and obtaining the trust of the people in Asia and the world, could play a greater role in international affairs" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, 2005).

As admitted by a high-ranking MOFA official Yachi Shōtarō, Japan tried to investigate how many votes G-4's bid for permanent membership would gain among UN member states in 2005. It turned out that it would be extremely difficult to achieve a two-thirds majority, which forced Tokyo to postpone the voting. According to Yachi, it was crucial to win support of the two main opponents of Japan's permanent membership – China and South Korea (Yachi and Takahashi 2009, pp. 153–154). To do so, Koizumi's successor, Abe Shinzō, refrained himself from visiting the Yasukuni Shrine during his first year in office (2006–2007). He also promoted the concept of a "mutually beneficial relationship based on common strategic interests" with China during his visit to Beijing in October 2006. Nevertheless, the East China Sea crises of 2010 and 2012, caused by a collision between a Chinese fishing boat and a Japanese Coast Guard vessel as well as by the nationalization of the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands by the Japanese government, respectively, revived animosities in bilateral relations.¹ Furthermore, occasional reemergence of the territorial dispute over the Dokdo/Takeshima Island² and lack of full implementation of the 2015 agreement on the "comfort women" problem by the Moon Jae-in administration exacerbated frictions between Tokyo and Seoul.³

China and South Korea, as non-permanent member, periodically used their position in the UN Security Council to criticize Japan over the history issues. For instance, the problems of "comfort women" as well as Prime Minister Abe's visit to the Yasukuni Shrine in December 2013 were mentioned by the representatives of both countries during Open

¹ Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands, an uninhabited archipelago in the East China Sea, are administered by Japan, but its political status is contested by China.

² Dokdo/Takeshima is a small island in the Sea of Japan administered by South Korea, but its political status is still contested by Japan.

³ In December 2015, Japan agreed to once more apologize and pay additional compensation to the victims, and South Korea promised to remove the monument of a "comfort woman," erected illegally in front of the Japanese embassy in Seoul.

Debate of the Security Council on the “Maintenance of International Peace and Security: War, its Lessons, and the Search for Permanent Peace,” held in January 2014. Tokyo expressed its “deep displeasure” with the fact that such topics appeared during a debate that was not supposed to serve as a forum for criticizing specific countries, but rather for sharing one’s experience on post-war reconciliation (Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet, 2014).

Beijing’s and Seoul’s opposition against granting Tokyo permanent membership of the Security Council stemmed from their regional rivalry with Japan, but history issues further stiffened their posture. Existence of bottom-up anti-Japanese movements in both countries, though to a large extent controlled by the government in authoritarian China, left little space for any compromise regarding Japan’s bid. Nor sufficient room to aptly maneuver.

Conclusion

Japan’s long-lasting efforts for securing permanent membership on the UN Security Council so far have been futile. While the main cause of this situation were contradictory interests of various groups of UN member states, history problems were used as an argument against the Japanese bid by China, South Korea, and such pressure groups as human rights NGOs. It is Japan’s neighbors that most vigorously lobbied to restrain Tokyo’s ambitions. While the efforts to undermine Japan’s position in the UN on the grounds of history problems among a wider group of countries did not bring any substantial results, the lack of repentance for war atrocities stiffened Beijing’s opposition against Tokyo’s bid. As China is a permanent member of the UN Security Council, its potential veto to the reform has remained one of the most significant obstacles against realization of Japan’s diplomatic goal. The highly emotional opposition of Beijing and Seoul against Tokyo’s bid can be explained by bottom-up pressure from human rights activists and nationalist movements in both countries. As such, despite their seemingly low importance in Realpolitik, history issues have put a significant constraint on Japan’s diplomatic efforts.

Acknowledgements

This article is a result of research conducted as a part of project “Neo-classical Realist Analysis of Japan’s Policy on History Problems” financed by the National Science Centre, Poland (DEC-2019/33/B/HS5/00846).

References

- Abe, Shintarō and Nagano, Nobutoshi (1984). *Sōzōteki gaikō o mezashite* [Towards a Creative Diplomacy]. Tokyo: Gyōsei Mondai Kenkyūjo.
- Bourantonis, Dimitris (2005). *The History and Politics of UN Security Council Reform*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Dore, Ronald (1997). *Japan, Internationalism and the UN*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Drifte, Reinhard (2000). *Japan's Quest for a Permanent Security Council Seat. A Matter of Pride or Justice*. Basingstoke and London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the United States of America (2005). "Foreign Ministry Spokesman Liu Jianchao's Press Conference on 24 March 2005," March 24, <http://www.china-embassy.org/eng/fyrth/t188945.htm> (accessed November 24, 2020).
- European Parliament (2007). "European Parliament Resolution on Comfort Women," December 12, <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?reference=P6-RC-2007-0525&type=MOTION&language=EN&redirect> (accessed November 23, 2020).
- Global Policy Forum (1996). "Ambassador Park Soo Gil, Permanent Representative, at the Open-ended Working Group on Security Council Reform," April 26, <https://www.globalpolicy.org/security-council/security-council-reform/regional-representation/32907.html?itemid=915> (accessed November 25, 2020).
- Hicks, George (1994). *The Comfort Women. Japan's Brutal Regime of Enforced Prostitution in the Second World War*. New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company.
- Hosli, Madeleine O. and Dörfler, Thomas (2019). "Why is Change So Slow? Assessing Prospects for United Nations Security Council Reform," *Journal of Economic Policy Reform*, Vol. 22, No. 1, pp. 35-50. DOI: 10.1080/17487870.2017.1305903.
- Hosokawa, Morihiro (ed.) (1993). *Nihon Shintō. Sekinin Aru Kaikaku* [Japan New Party. Responsible Reforms]. Tokyo: Tōyō Keizai Shinpōsha.
- Kaifu, Toshiaki (1995). *Kokorozashi Aru Kokka Nihon no Kōsō* [Concept of Japan as an Aspiring Country]. Tokyo: Tōyō Keizai Shinpōsha.
- Kōno, Yōhei (2015). *Nihon Gaikō e no Chokugen – Kaisō to Teigen* [Frank Talk about Japan's Diplomacy – Memoirs and Suggestions]. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten.
- Lam, Peng Er (2002). "The Apology Issue: Japan's Differing Approaches Toward China and South Korea", *American Asian Review*, Vol. 20, No. 3, pp. 31–54.
- Malik, J. Mohan (2005). "Security Council Reform: China Signals Its Veto," *World Policy Journal*, Vol. 22, No. 1, pp. 19–29.
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan (1994). "Foreign Minister's Major Speeches and Articles at the 49th Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations," September 27, https://warpp.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/11525605/www.mofa.go.jp/announce/announce/archive_3/49.html (accessed November 21, 2020).
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan (2011). "Japan's Position on the United Nations Security Council for the 21st Century," March, https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/un/sc/pdfs/pamph_unsc21c_en.pdf (accessed November 19, 2020).
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China (2005). "Premier Wen Jiabao Meets with Journalists, Talking about 3 Achievements of His Visit to India," April 12, https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/topics_665678/wzlcflly_665842/t191621.shtml (accessed November 26, 2020).

- Moni, Monir H. (2007). "Japan's Fresh Bid for A UNSC Permanent Seat," *World Affairs: The Journal of International Issues*, Vol. 11, No. 4, pp. 118–140.
- Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations (2019). "Joint G4 statement by Brazil, Germany, India and Japan delivered by H.E. Ambassador Koro Bessho, Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations, at the Informal Meeting of the General Assembly on the Intergovernmental Negotiations on Security Council Reform," May 29, https://www.un.emb-japan.go.jp/itpr_en/bessho052919.html (accessed November 20, 2020).
- Pimenta Oliveira Baccarini, Mariana (2018). "Informal Reform of the United Nations Security Council," *Contexto Internacional*, Vol. 40, No. 1, pp. 97–115. DOI: 10.1590/S0102-8529.2017400100005.
- Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet (2014). "Press Conference by the Chief Cabinet Secretary (Excerpt)," January 30, https://japan.kantei.go.jp/tyoukanpress/201401/30_p.html (accessed November 26, 2020).
- Rose, Caroline (1998). *Interpreting History in Sino-Japanese Relations. A Case Study in Political Decision-Making*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Shimizu, Yoshikazu (2006). *Chūgoku ga "Hannichi" o Suteru Hi* [The Day When China Abandons "Anti-Japanism"]. Tokyo: Kōdansha.
- United Nations (1945). "Charter of the United Nations," June 26, <https://www.un.org/en/sections/un-charter/chapter-vii/index.html> (accessed November 16, 2020).
- United Nations, Economic and Social Council, Commission on Human Rights (1996). "Report of the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, Its causes and Consequences, Ms. Radhika Coomaraswamy, in Accordance with Commission on Human Rights resolution 1994/45. Report on the Mission to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Republic of Korea and Japan on the Issue of Military Sexual Slavery in Wartime," E/CN.4/1996/53/Add.1, January 4, <http://hrlibrary.umn.edu/commission/country52/53-add1.htm> (accessed November 23, 2020).
- US Congress (2007). "H.Res.121 – A resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the Government of Japan should formally acknowledge, apologize, and accept historical responsibility in a clear and unequivocal manner for its Imperial Armed Forces' coercion of young women into sexual slavery, known to the world as 'comfort women', during its colonial and wartime occupation of Asia and the Pacific Islands from the 1930s through the duration of World War II," 110th Congress, July 30, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/110th-congress/house-resolution/121/text> (accessed November 23, 2020).
- Weiss, Thomas G. (2003). "The Illusion of UN Security Council Reform," *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 26, No. 4, pp. 147–161.
- Yachi, Shōtarō and Takahashi, Masayuki (2009). *Gaikō no Senryaku to Kokorozashi. Zen Gaimu Jimujikan Yachi Shōtarō wa Kataru* [Strategy and Ambition in Diplomacy. Narrated by Former Foreign Administrative Vice Minister Yachi Shōtarō]. Tokyo: Sankei Shinbun Shuppan.
- Yamazaki, Jane W. (2006). *Japanese Apologies for World War II. A Rhetorical Study*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Zakowski, Karol (2012). "Reaction to Popular Pressure or a Political Tool? Different Interpretations of China's Policy Regarding Koizumi's Visits to the Yasukuni Shrine," *Journal of Contemporary Eastern Asia*, Vol. 11, No. 2, pp. 47–60.
- Żakowski, Karol (2020). "'Comfort women' Problem as a Catalyst for Civil Society and Nationalism in Japan and South Korea," *Rocznik Orientalistyczny*, Vol. 73, No. 1, pp. 154–168. DOI: 10.24425/ro.2020.134050

Problemy historyczne a starania Japonii o stałe członkostwo w Radzie Bezpieczeństwa ONZ

Streszczenie

Artykuł analizuje wpływ problemów historycznych na długie starania Japonii o uzyskanie stałego członkostwa w Radzie Bezpieczeństwa ONZ. Badane są zarówno wewnętrzne uwarunkowania stanowiska rządu w Tokio wobec reformy ONZ, jak i czynniki międzynarodowe hamujące proces powiększenia składu Rady Bezpieczeństwa. Dowodzi się, że o ile problemy z realizacją japońskich planów uzyskania stałego miejsca w Radzie Bezpieczeństwa ONZ wynikały głównie z różnorodnych interesów państw członkowskich, o tyle kwestie historyczne stanowiły dodatkową przeszkodę, która osłabiała pozycję rządu w Tokio podczas negocjacji na temat reformy ONZ. Dyskurs dotyczący braku skruchy ze strony Japonii za zbrodnie popełnione w czasie drugiej wojny światowej został wykorzystany przez rywali Japonii, głównie przez Chiny i Koreę Południową, do podważenia starań rządu w Tokio na arenie międzynarodowej.

Słowa kluczowe: reforma ONZ, stałe członkostwo w Radzie Bezpieczeństwa, Japonia, problemy historyczne