CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

All phenomenon in the world happen with some reasons behind it. Those reasons could happen, regardless of the intention or goals behind it. War as an example; do not just happen for any reason underlying its existence. There are many things that trigger a war; the goals of actors in it are strong reasons of the explosion of the war. A state, as the main actor of international relations, conducting their activities on the objectives to be achieved as ideals, in the state of life in its territory or in conjunction with other states in the international system. The objectives to be achieved, especially aspired to a state, subsequently included into the national interest which is basically just owned by the state as the primary actor in international relations.

National interests are in practice not only studies or dimension to one thing only, but involves a lot of things that cannot be specifically defined. The national interest of a country is considered as one of the most powerful reasons for a country to interact with other actors in international relations. National interest itself is defined as a tool to explain, justify, offers, and rebuked the foreign policy behavior of a state. The matters related to the national interest are often seen as an initial goal of foreign policy.
Morgenthau stated that the interest of each country is the pursuit of power, that is anything that can establish and maintain control of the state over other states. As being considered as the pillars of Asia, both Japan and China surely have their own national interests. But, the interests of states are likely to collide each other, which resulted conflict. As for the national interest of each state, the phenomenon also related to security issue. Asia is beset by security dilemmas.¹ The need for natural resources has given rise to conflicts in many parts of the world.²

As the World Commission on Environment and Development points out, “nations have often fought to assert or resist control over war materials, energy supplies, land, river basins, sea passages and other key environmental resources”.³ Natural resources play a significant role in the economic growth of those countries. Those factors being mentioned before can also lead to the security dilemma which also can trigger to territorial dispute. The security dilemma, also referred to as the spiral model, is a term used in international relations which refers to a situation in which actions by a state intended to heighten its security, such as increasing its military strength or making alliances, can lead other states to respond with similar measures, producing increased tensions that create conflict, even when no side really

desires it. To be clarified, the civilian leaders in China and Japan do not desire a conflict or a serious deterioration in bilateral relations. Each country gains much from economic cooperation with the other. Yet even if objective interests dictate a mutual retreat from the brink, they might be unable to do so. Once a clash occurred, other factors would come into consideration: military rules of engagement, strategic cultures, civil-military relations, civilian crisis management mechanisms, and domestic politics. In the end, leaders may lose control and regard some outcomes, especially the appearance of capitulation, as worse than a growing conflict.

In this case, both Japan and China are engaged to the security dilemma in which military capabilities, recent experiences on specific issues, and sentiments about past history shape the perception of each of the intentions of the other. Neither system has shown itself adept at responding to situations of stress that do not rise to the level of seriousness of a military clash. Neither, therefore, is likely to do well in the conflict scenario envisioned here. Those concepts are applied in practice of the Senkaku Islands dispute between Japan and China that are prolonged since years ago up until now.

For nearly three decades, the territorial dispute over the Senkaku (in Japanese – 尖閣諸島) or Diaoyutai (in Chinese – 釣魚台列嶼) Islands among People’s Republic...
of China (PRC), the Republic of China (ROC) on Taiwan, and Japan has constantly re-erupted and become one of the most politically and emotionally sensitive conflicts between Japan and China since the end of World War II. The origins of this longstanding dispute can be traced back to the late 1960s, when the reports by the United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and Far East (UNECAFE) suggested that there is possibility of the existence of the large amount of hydrocarbons.\(^8\) Hydrocarbons derived from fossil fuels or coal, petroleum, and gas. In different processing levels of this element is able to produce various commodities essential for human needs. Such as gasoline, diesel fuel, heating oil, lubricating oils, wax, asphalt, plastics, textiles, even though pharmaceutical needs.\(^9\) Since then, the Senkaku Islands dispute has flared up repeatedly in a series of crises – in 1970-1972, 1978, 1990, 1996-1997, 2000 up until now.

During each crisis, however, the aforementioned government have tried to keep the islands dispute as low-profile as possible for the sake of preventing a deteriorating of wider political relations. As a result, the dispute over the islands has been repeatedly set aside and never been resolved.\(^10\) While it is true that the Senkaku Islands dispute initially surfaced due to the discovery of potentially large oil reserves

---


10 Ibid.
surrounding the islands, the significance of the islands may hold. Clearly, the Senkaku Islands controversy has turned into nationalistic dispute.

For the Chinese in particular, the Senkaku Islands have become an important nationalistic symbol which reminds them of Japan’s past military aggression, frequent evasion of war responsibility, and possible military revival. Moreover, national pride on both the Chinese and Japanese sides has made any solutions to the dispute difficult, including such compromises as a two-way or three-way joint exploitation of the natural resources, surrounding the islands, as none of the disputants is willing to put aside sovereignty claims.

Today, the Senkaku Islands dispute continues. While the dispute no longer receives the kind of public attention in Japan it did two decades ago, it continues to be a highly sensitive issue for the Chinese community. This is demonstrated by the wave of anti-Japanese sentiment that swept Hong Kong, Taiwan, and China in 1996 and up until now. It has The name of the Senkaku Islands or Diaoyutai Islands has been recorded in Chinese literature since 15th century, which at that time the name of the Islands were Diaoyu (釣魚) in Chinese and Uotsuri (魚釣) in Japanese which had the same meaning, fishing.

The relation between Japan and China is increasingly heated up. Besides the historical factors into the background of the tension between two countries, the seizure of Senkaku Islands Issue became a problem that continues until today. Both

11 Ibid.
12 Seokwo Lee. Territorial Disputes among Japan, China and Taiwan Concerning the Senkaku Islands. International Boundaries Research Unit Volume 3 Number 7, p. 2.
of Japan and China are the claimants of the Islands. Senkaku Islands which became the object of the dispute between Japan and China (and Taiwan) are located approximately 170 km from the nearest undisputed Japanese Island to the South (Ishigaki – 石垣), approximately 370 km from the nearest Mainland China to the West, and approximately 180 km from the nearest Coast of Taiwan to the South-West. They are tiny and have little intrinsic value; 9 uninhabited islands and rocks with a total surface area of approximately 7 km$^2$.

The Senkaku Islands conflict between Japan and China has reached to the crisis stage, which both countries seek to maintain claims on the disputed Senkaku Islands since the 19th century. These conflict management efforts undertaken by the two countries at this crisis stage is through negotiations agreed in 2007 through the basic framework of "Sea of Peace, Cooperation and Friendship". As advanced in the basic framework of the two countries met again in 2008 and reached an agreement to resolve the conflict through the Senkaku Islands Joint Development Agreement is implemented in the field of natural gas Shirakaba (白樺) or Chunxiao You Qitian (春晓油气田). But in its development efforts Senkaku Islands conflict management experience many difficulties caused by several factors. Both countries have yet to reach an agreement on contingent shelf boundary and EEZ around China Sea Joint Development. In other hand, Joint Agreement development that has been agreed by both parties came to a halt due to the Chinese government's efforts to petition the Partial Submission to the Convention on the Law of the Sea (CLCS) in which China
applying the contingent off line until the Okinawa trough, causing deadlock agreement.

This issue is worth to explore since there must be important factors of the explanation about the national interest between disputed parties and also the role of the mediator as of this case is United States of America. In order to understand the important factors behind this long standing dispute, this research entitled, “THE NATIONAL INTEREST OF JAPAN AND CHINA TOWARDS THE CASE OF SENKAKU ISLANDS DISPUTE AND THE INVOLVEMENT OF AMERICA AS MEDIATOR IN THE 2008-2013 PERIOD” was made.

1.2 Research Questions

From the issues and background discussed previously, the research would be discussing about two major points as stated in the followings:

1.2.1 What becomes the national interest of both Japan and China as the disputed countries toward Senkaku Islands issue?

1.2.2 What has been the position of the United States Government and its role on the Senkaku Islands dispute?

1.3 Goals and Significance of the Research

1.3.1 Goals

This research has two main goals:
1.) Explaining about the national interests of both Japan and China as the disputed countries toward Senkaku Islands issue.

2.) Explaining about the position and the role of America on the Senkaku Islands Dispute.

1.3.2 Significance

Based on the theoretical framework, the research is significant to contribute to the knowledge principles of International Relations in the application of neorealist theory in describing and analyzing the problems of the issue as going to be discussed further in this research. Besides, this research is hoped to be significant endeavor in completing the data of the solving the dispute process about Senkaku Islands issue.

1.4 The Organization of the Thesis

This research is divided into five parts as follows:

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

The first chapter of this research is an introductory part that explained about the brief background of the research issue, research problem, research goals and significance, as well as the organization of the thesis.
CHAPTER II CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The second chapter of this research will be discussing about several theories and concepts related to the Senkaku Islands dispute issue. The key concept used is neorealist perspectives, the nature of state and its sovereignty, security dilemma, national interest, territorial dispute, and conflict resolution. There will be explanation about the theories used to explain the process and outcomes of the issue. The entire concepts and theories are used as the framework that helps to understand this research.

CHAPTER III RESEARCH METHODS

The third chapter of this research mainly discusses the scope of research, research type and method, type and source of data used this research, the techniques of collecting the data and as well as the technique of data analysis.

CHAPTER IV ANALYSIS

The forth chapter contains the entire data and analysis to answer the research questions. Firstly, it will discuss about the geographical and historical backgrounds of the dispute over the Senkaku Islands. Second, goes to the legal arguments for claiming sovereignty over Senkaku Islands. Thirdly, the interpretation of the territorial clauses of the San Francisco Peace Treaty regarding to the Senkaku Islands and the involvement of the United States. Finally, defining the national interest of both states for claiming the Senkaku Islands.
CHAPTER V CONCLUSION

The fifth chapter of this research is the last part of the series of chapters in this research. It will consist of conclusions, summary of the research and also recommendations to the research topics.