A COMPARISON OF THE ANGLO-GERMAN RELATIONSHIP IN THE WORLD WAR I ERA AND THE MODERN SINO-JAPANESE RELATIONSHIP: FOCUSING ON IMPLICATIONS FOR EAST ASIAN TERRITORIAL DISPUTES

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I. Introduction

At the Forty-fourth Annual Meeting of the World Economic Forum, Japanese Prime Minister Abe Shinzo compared relations with China to those between the UK and Germany on the eve of World War I (WWI). During a speech in which he briefed journalists, the prime minister said that, like Britain and Germany in 1914, Japan and China were inter-dependent economies—trading partners with vast mutual interests. He added that he saw the 10% per annum increase in China’s defence budget as a provocation.¹ This statement received a huge reaction from throughout the world, especially from China: to put it simply, the speech was slammed. After the meeting, Japanese Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga Yoshihide offered an official explanation insisting that no reference to the China-Japan war was intended.

This paper addresses Prime Minister Abe Shinzo’s words, which created a worldwide stir, especially in Western European countries: what was the actual relationship between Britain and Germany before WWI, and how does that relationship compare with the modern Sino-Japanese relationship? The paper will also discuss implications of on East Asian territorial disputes. The year 2014 marked the centennial of the onset of the Great War, and several studies on this topic were conducted in Europe; however, little research has been done to compare the WWI situation to the modern East Asian territorial dispute. There has been

significant media attention on Chinese expansion and Japanese countermeasures, but academia in Asian countries has largely ignored this topic. Therefore, this paper will compare the aspects of WWI-era imperialism, the Anglo-German naval rivalry, and English security problems with the modern American-Sino power game in East Asia, the Sino-Japanese naval supremacy dispute over the Senkaku Islands area, and Sino-Japanese security problems. The text is organised as follows: chapter II analyses previous studies and introduces the paper’s research model; chapter III examines the relationship between Britain and Germany in WWI; in chapter IV, this relationship is compared to the modern Sino-Japanese relationship; to conclude, chapter V, based on the results of the comparison presented in the previous chapters, attempts to determine the implications of these relationships on current East Asian cases and looks at previous studies on the Anglo-German relationship during the WWI era and on the modern Sino-Japanese relationship in the twenty-first century.

II. Previous Studies and Research Model

A review of studies published on the present topic reveals clear differences between the Korean and the Western literature: beginning in 2012, which marked the centennial of the outbreak of the Great War, several European studies that shed new light on the meaning of WWI² were published. This trend seemed to continue until 2018. However, the Korean literature on WWI, like that of other Asian countries, is scarce: with the exception of Japan, Asian countries had no direct connection to WWI. Despite the small quantity of literature, there is some meaningful research which focused on the British reaction to being left behind by Germany industry during the 1910s (Lee 2003) or focusing on British wartime leadership in WWI and WWII (Lee 2005). There is also research that focuses specifically on the military

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history of the World War in Europe (Kang 2010).

However, a vast number of previous studies on the Sino-Japanese relationship have recently been published in East Asian and Korean academic fields, most of them attempts to find reasons for the Sino-Japanese conflict by focusing on Japanese political dynamics (Lee 2009) or on themed regional territorial disputes, like the Senkaku Islands controversy (Son 2008, Park 2010, Kim 2011, Namkung and Kim 2013, Park and Kim 2013, Choi and Seok 2012). Despite substantive previous studies on the Sino-Japanese conflict, it is very difficult to find one which compares Sino-Japanese rivalry to WWI British-German rivalry, and these studies have received the criticism that their perspective of Europe and East Asia was fragmentary and segmental. In this paper, I try to compensate for this tendency by using a comparative politics and political history view from which to summarize all previous studies and to propose future research topics.

The research model of this paper is basically put WWI Britain and Germany to current East Asian United States and China also put WWI France to current Japan, as explained in Table 1.³

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>World War I</th>
<th>East Asia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Existing Superpower</td>
<td>Britain</td>
<td>United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rising Superpower</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existing Regional Power</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>Japan</td>
</tr>
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</table>

I fully understand and accept criticism (mainly from Japanese-area/studies

³. This model is from around 2006, like “China and Japan's Simmering Rivalry,”
researchers), who would suggest that I should place Japan into the “existing superpower” category, as is usually applied in traditional East Asian area studies, regarding the power shift perspective between Japan and China in East Asia from the 1990s, which is more appropriate to microscopic regional studies. However, in this paper, I chose this research model because I preferred to look at this subject from a macroscopic view which compares Europe and East Asia. Chapter III summarizes the relationship between Britain and Germany in WWI and presents historical background on how Europe fell into the war, with a focus on the British-German relationship during that particular era.

III. The Relationship between Britain and Germany in WWI

Since the outbreak of WWI, there has been a wide range of explanations for its intertwined causes. According to Aaron Gillette, a specialist in historical education, there are “endless permutations” of the historical debate on the Great War (Gillette 2006). The most conventional account of the war’s origin, though it is now regarded by most scholars as superficial and reductive, is that Serbian terrorists provoked the Austrian government at Sarajevo into a retaliatory act, drawing belligerent allies on both sides into a war on a grotesque scale. As the contemporary term “the Great War” implies, humankind had never before experienced such catastrophic warfare. The war culminated in a series of further political upheavals throughout the globe, such as the Bolshevik Revolution, the rise of the far right, and the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire.

The conventional account is followed by more analytical approaches: (1) the war was an inevitable result of imperialism, the last phase of monopolist capitalism; (2) the war resulted from the rise of the left in the domestic politics of Germany; (3) the British were threatened by the German aspiration to expand the country’s overseas territories (or vice versa), and this led to the military clash between the two nations; (4) the naval arms race
between Britain and Germany for the building of dreadnought-class ships led the British
government to join the Triple Entente; (5) as a result, the fear of each other’s military power
and intention led both countries to strengthen their own security levels, worsening the state of
tension between them. As this research aims to analyse similarities and differences between
Anglo-German relations during the WWI era and China-Japan relations in the current realm
of international politics, it focuses on the colonial competition between Germany and Britain,
the naval arms race, and the question of security on the British side.

1. Imperialism and the Anglo-German Colonial Race

Among the external factors, and one of the most fundamental causes of the war, is the
colonial rivalry between Britain and Germany. By the 1910s, the British had already built the
largest empire in history, while the Germans were endeavouring to catch up with them.
German colonies were relatively underdeveloped in economic terms and small in size in
comparison to their British counterparts, which were integral parts of the vast imperial
markets, natural/human resources, and networks. The most powerful strengths of the British
Empire were its adaptability and versatility. John Darwin contends that the British colonizers,
rather than relying on military action, preferred persuading local elites and businessmen to
voluntarily collaborate (Darwin 2012). Germany, like other European powers such as France,
Italy, and the Netherlands, followed in the imperial footsteps of Britain, and their main
competition arena was Africa. Germany, under the rule of Bismarck, had assumed negative
attitudes toward colonial expansion, but Kaiser Wilhelm II, after dismissing his chancellor in
1890, introduced a far more authoritarian rule and bellicose foreign policy. The imperial
rivalry between Britain and Germany on the Dark Continent was the inevitable consequence
of this change.

Scholars who refute this theory observe that by the eve of the First World War, the
partition of Africa had already been consolidated, and thus the conflict between Britain and Germany in 1914 was not sufficiently serious as to lead to full-scale warfare (Vyvyan 1968). Nevertheless, it seems evident that Britain felt threatened by the rise of Germany as a rapidly growing industrial power. The British prestige during the nineteenth century as the “workshop of the world” was gradually eroded by Germany and by the United States. By the 1870s, the former had successfully integrated large areas of German-speaking Central Europe into a powerful nation state, and the latter had maximized its economic potential after the deadly Civil War (1861-1865), while Britain was suffering from a long depression during this period. The trade and industry of Britain in the late Victorian period were harshly challenged by both countries (Lee 2003). The industrial growth rate of Britain began to lag behind that of the two countries after 1880, and with respect to the new industries, steel and chemicals in particular, Britain was no match for Germany (Lee 2003). The sense of crisis was worsened by the incompetence of the British military forces in the Boer War (1899-1902). Germany’s challenge to the British prestige in the imperial race in the years preceding the First World War provides a good point of comparison with the current relationship between China and Japan.

2. The Naval Arms Race between Britain and Germany

The naval arms race between Britain and Germany is one of the most popular topics when discussing the causes of the WWI: Wilhelm II was enthusiastic in his challenge of the naval supremacy of Britain in order to implement his Weltpolitik; this action sparked a competition between the two countries, paving a way to military clashes. The aim of this article is not to reassess the validity of this argument, but to make a comparison between the situation at the time and the current relationship between China and Japan. The origin of the naval arms race between Britain and Germany can be traced back to the Boer War, but the
major competition began in 1906 and lasted until 1912. During this period, Britain built 29
dreadnoughts, raising its naval expenses to 40%, while Germany doubled its expenses by
building 17 of the ships (Maurer 1992). Although some historians point out that the German
navy never posed a practical threat to the Royal Navy, it is more important to note that this
race failed to reach a compromise, unlike the cases of the Bagdad Railway and conflicts on
seaborne trade (Lee 1967). Indeed, Wilhelm II signed the Naval Law in 1898 to strengthen
the German fleet, and its later amendments (1900, 1906, 1908, and 1912) made the Act a
more aggressive one by avoiding financial intervention by the Reichstag and its constituent
German states.

Historians usually divide the course of naval competition into two periods. From
1898 to 1908, Germany focused on strengthening its naval power while avoiding contact with
the British armed forces. The Germans kept a certain distance from other European powers.
While making the negotiation for an Anglo-German alliance (1898-1901) abortive, the
Germans also objected to the intervention of the alliance between Germany, France, and
Russia in the Boer War. This strategy was changed in 1908 when Germany, with its fleet
strengthened to a certain degree, asked for British neutrality in a war between Germany and
other countries. This was proposed in exchange for German’s acceptance of British naval
superiority (Lee 1967).

Although Germany did not appear to be strong enough to replace France or Russia as
the principal military enemy of Britain, and the major theatre of British naval operations was
the Mediterranean and not the North Sea, the growth of the German fleet was alarming to
Britain. The reason for this can be found in the fact that naval supremacy was directly linked
to the survival of the British nation, not least because 84% of domestic consumption of grains
and grain products had to be imported during the war. Sir Edward Grey, the British foreign
secretary, reaffirmed in 1911, “The foreign policy of Britain is determined by the question of sea power” (Committee of Imperial Defence Abstracts 1911.5.26). The British had no doubt that the peace in Europe and the balance of power on the Continent also relied on the naval supremacy of Britain.

Britain did not pay attention to, nor was alarmed by, the German fleet when the Naval Laws of 1898 and 1900 were passed in Germany. However, the ensuing reinforcement of the German navy and the Kaiser’s attempt to form an alliance with Russia against Britain made the frightened British believe that Germany might be preparing for war. Alarm was created in both countries (the so-called War Scare of 1904/5). In 1912, Britain attempted a negotiation with Germany (the Haldane Mission) to end the race, but it failed. As a result, the ratio of battleship tonnage between Britain and Germany shrank from 3.7:1 in 1900 to 2.1:1 in 1914 (Ferguson 2000).

This is solid evidence that the German fleet became a substantial threat to the Royal Navy. Under the circumstance that battleships with heavy-calibre guns, steam turbine propulsion, and oil fuel became a symbol of national power, France and Russia gave way to Germany as the principal military enemy of Britain. The naval arms race continued until 1914, when Germany began to focus on the development of submarines. The growth of German naval strength, in addition to the humiliating experience of the Boer War, was one of the major reasons why Britain gave up its traditional policy of isolation and proactively formed the Triple Entente.

3. The Security Question of Britain

According to Paul Kennedy, Germany’s strong economic developments comprised one the main reasons why the British kept a very tight vigilance on the security situation. The following “antagonism” between the two countries gave rise to the First World War. Even
before the German invasion of Belgium, the British were concerned that Germany might cause severe damage to their security, taking control of the English Channel with its powerful army and navy (Kennedy 1980). The British were clearly aware of the military power of Germany, as they had witnessed it in the Franco-Prussian War in 1870-1871. In order to maintain the balance of power on the Continent, the British had already declared in 1839 that they would take military action against any countries who attempted to invade Belgium, a newly independent country at the time.

In the face of the German menace in the early twentieth century, the British signed a series of agreements related to the question of security: the Entente Cordiale with France in 1904 and the Anglo-Russian Convention with Russia in 1907, after the Anglo-Japanese Alliance in 1902. The agreements between Britain, France, and Russia formed the Triple Entente. Germany had already established a military alliance (the Triple Alliance) with Austria-Hungary and Italy, though Italy eventually changed sides during the course of the First World War. On the eve of the Great War, the security of Europe was relying on the tension between the Triple Entente and the Triple Alliance.

The importance of the Triple Entente and the Triple Alliance in the quest for the origin of WWI is fortified by the evidence that Germany actually felt threatened by the presence of the Triple Entente. The original aim of the Triple Entente and the Triple Alliance was to prevent international conflicts, but in a series of regional skirmishes from 1910 to 1914, it became evident that the former was a substantial threat to German interests. In particular, the Germans abhorred Raymond Poincare, who, as prime minister and president of France, successfully strengthened strategic ties with Russia and Britain (Williamson 2011).

Although the British gave up its traditional foreign policy of isolation from the Continent after the Boer War, they still wanted to maintain the balance of power. What they
feared most was that Germany might take over the economic and military prestige of Britain, which would have broken such a balance. The Germans, on their side, were intimidated that Britain might intervene in the foreign affairs of the Continent, besieging their territory with its French and Russian allies. All these fears were unnecessarily amplified due to the lack of effective communication and distorted information about each other’s intention, which eventually culminated in the horrible war. Such an occurrence, the inadvertent outbreak of war, has a resonance with the recent conflict between China and Japan, on the question of territory in particular. The following section of this paper delves into this topic.

**IV. The Relationship between China and Japan in Twenty-first Century East Asia**

Japan is currently in territorial disputes with every nation around the Korean East Sea (Sea of Japan); therefore, all territorial disputes are linked to each other. However, each set of circumstances are very unique and extremely difficult for Japanese government to manage. For example, Dokdo/Takeshima is effectively occupied by Korea, and the Senkaku Islands are effectively occupied by Japan. The Japanese government does offence and defence at the same time, which makes matters extremely difficult. One territorial dispute influences another simply by being linked to it. In this paper, I focus on the Senkaku Islands dispute because it is an issue between China and Japan; territorial disputes exist not only between certain countries, like Korea and Japan, or Russia and Japan. They therefore have to be understood from a macroscopic view, as the East Asia power balance includes the United States.


Similar to the WWI era’s imperialism and the Anglo-German colonial race as a G2 country, China wants to establish supremacy in Asia, and Japan, a U.S. ally, works as the deputy for the U.S. National (Pacific) Ocean Policy regarding regional power rivalry. From
this perspective, there are many problems and disputes between China and Japan (such as the perception of history, the Senkaku Islands dispute, the matter of Taiwan, and the U.S.-Japan alliance). However, a fundamental area of rivalry exists between Japan as a regional superpower (and also deputy of United States) Japan and the rising superpower, China, who are in competition because China, the traditional Asian superpower, wants to regain its status. In other words, there is great rivalry between G2 United States and China; the issue is not a regional Sino-Japan relationship problem. This perspective was adopted by some previous studies (Sakuwa 2009, Pempel 2011).

According to Sakuwa (2009) and Pempel (2011), the Senkaku Islands dispute in East Asia is a macroscopic fight for hegemony between the United States and China on a worldwide scale; in the opinion of the two countries, it can be anywhere but the Senkaku Islands; therefore, Senkaku is not special, in their opinion. However, in this paper, I cannot fully agree with that opinion because, as I mentioned earlier, the Senkaku Islands dispute is connected to other East Asian nations’ territorial disputes. Nevertheless, from a macroscopic viewpoint, we cannot deny the similarity between imperialism and the Anglo-German colonial race and Chinese Asian-centred policy and the U.S. National (Pacific) Ocean Policy rivalry; therefore, I partly accept that this global power balance theory, with respect to modern East Asia, is correct.

On the other hand, it is very difficult to predict whether the United States feels the same kind of fear regarding a rising China similar to that which Britain felt to the newly industrialized Germany before WWI, and whether this kind of fear could bring them into the same type of serious conflict that occurred one hundred years ago.

2. Naval Supremacy Conflict between China and Japan in and around the Senkaku Islands

The second issue discussed in previous studies, which is generally supported by those
who conduct studies of Japan, is the naval supremacy conflict between the two countries, as represented by the Senkaku Islands dispute. The Senkaku Islands, and the sea around them, are crucial to Japanese security because they serve as a main sea route for Japan. The “Persia-Indian Ocean-the Strait of Malacca-East China Sea-Japan” route is an important point for advancing to China. With and without Senkaku, the Japanese naval territory is greatly changed and they lost way to southern Asia (Kim 2011). Furthermore, Japan is import-dependent on their energy resources, including oil and LNG gas (approximately two hundred and ten million tons per year), and almost 90% of this import occurs via this sea route (NamKung and Kim 2013). After the Great East Japan Earthquake of March 11, 2011, the importance of this route has increased, since nearly all nuclear power plants in Japan have ceased current production; Japan desperately needs this sea route for their energy security.

However, the route is also important to China, who recently (and rapidly) developed as a foreign trade country; China therefore regards securing the safety of this sea route as a national task. The sea route is involved in 85% of Chinese foreign trade. In the past, China was the world’s fifth oil-producing country, with one hundred forty million tons per year. Because of the recent, rapid economic growth and extreme energy demands, China began to import oil in 1994 and, since then, moved toward being import-dependent on oil (Chinese oil consumption almost doubled between 2001 and 2011). Therefore, the importance of the Senkaku Islands’ sea route, as mentioned earlier, became more important to China, as well. The East China Sea is very important because it connects the Northeast, Southeast Asia, Europe, and Africa (NamKung and Kim 2013).

Adding to this economic significance, China declared the concept of a three chain of island concept in 1988 as a long-term development plan for the Chinese navy. According to this concept, the Chinese navy aimed first chain of islands until 2010 (Okinawa-Taiwan-
Philippine-South China Sea the Straits of Malacca), which includes the Senkaku Islands, the second chain of islands (west of the Aleutian Islands-Saipan-Guam-East of Papua, New Guinea) in 2025; and finally, the third chain of islands (north from the Aleutian Islands to the South Pole) is planned for 2050. Under this long-term naval supremacy master plan, the Senkaku Islands serve as an important beachhead for China’s first chain of islands.

In response to this Chinese strategy, Japan rightly has prepared countermeasures, most typically to strengthen the Japanese navy, the Japanese Maritime Safety Agency, etc. Choi claims this situation was well managed under a “peaceful management system” until 2010 without any serious conflict (2013). Under this system, Korea-China-Japan shared the same perspective of diplomacy first, territorial dispute second minded policy; however, this system faced change after 2010 because it was not a permanent solution but resulted in only a temporary, and imperfect, coexistence between the countries. Some researchers argue that there was no “peaceful management system” from the very beginning and that the naval supremacy issue needs further research, since it is a really small problem under a “peaceful management system” or a potential serious threat to the East Asian power balance. My personal opinion is that it is too early to underestimate the importance of naval supremacy, as well as the changes that have occurred since 2010, as we can see in the case of WWI.

3. Security Dimensional Problems of China and Japan

A similarity with WWI, which has been raised by researchers, is the alliance between nations in WWI and current East Asia. Studies have also compared continent nations, such as China and Germany, with island nations, such as Britain and Japan. Japan traditionally had a strong alliance with the United States and Korea, which put pressure on China. However, it is personally very difficult to accept the idea that the current East Asian situation is similar to the Triple Entente or Dreibund of the WWI era. This is usually compared with the rivalry
between improved Chinese-Russian relations and a traditional Korea, U.S., and Japan alliance. It is right that the second Abe government chose to strengthen the traditional Japan-U.S. alliance, unlike the government of the former Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), which leaned into East Asian neighbour countries. However, because of Prime Minister Abe’s right-wing policies, the Korea-Japan relationship is thought to be worse since the Korea-Japan normalization of diplomatic relations in 1965. The Korea-Japan relationship is a part of the Korea, U.S., and Japan alliance; therefore, it is impossible to maintain close cooperation without the help of Korea.

The Abe administration’s foreign policy is too fragmentary despite his portrayal of its results as “terrestrial globe diplomacy.” In reality, however, there are not many actual outcomes, and they are too weak to apply the standard balance-of-power theory, collective security, or the alliance system to the current Japanese situation. We can easily see this in the Japanese reactions to Abe’s World Economic Forum speech. With the exception of some conservatives, most of the Japanese people thought it was a slip of the tongue or an excessive remark; therefore, the prime minister’s official residence had to explain that it was misinterpreted by the interpreter. The chief cabinet secretary also explained that Abe’s lines were crossed but also criticised the prime minister for making the interpreter a scapegoat (http://blogos.com/article/80230/).

In practice, the second Abe administration mentioned two issues as its main diplomatic achievements: a return to the traditional U.S.-Japan alliance from an Asian-centred DPJ policy and an improved relationship with Russia; however, the U.S.-Japan alliance is facing difficulties with the Trans-Pacific-Partnership (TPP) agreement between the two countries despite the summit with president Obama and with the relationship with Russia; because of Ukraine/Crimea conjuncture, Japan, with the United States, had to participate in
sanctions on Russia, paradoxically proving the weakness of the Japan-Russia relationship despite a personal friendship between the president and the prime minister.

Surely there are counterarguments from Japan on these criticisms in light of Japan’s security defence cooperation with Australia, which has favourably progressed since 2011. As Armitage and Nye (2007) stated:

The United States and Japan are arguably the two countries whose interests will be most affected by China’s future direction—and they are also the two countries with the greatest influence to affect that direction. The United States and Japan should consult closely to develop a coordinated alliance approach to China. Part of this approach must acknowledge that China’s interests are converging with those of the United States and Japan in certain areas and thus should seek trilateral cooperation where there are potential gains from such efforts. While Chinese interests may overlap with those of the United States and Japan, they are not identical. The United States and Japan should seek to illuminate a path for China to become a responsible stakeholder, with key points of demarcation requiring more active Chinese cooperation in urging regimes such as North Korea and Iran to change their behavior and employing only peaceful means in its approach to Taiwan.

However, even admitting a successful relationship with Australia, a country strongly supported by the United States (http://www.mofa.go.jp/a_o/ocn/au/page3e_000239.html), it is difficult to accept Australia as an alternative to Russia: especially in East Asia, Russia has far greater influence and power in the region. Therefore, the China-Japan relationship cannot be compared to the WWI the Triple Entente or Dreibund in the post-cold-war era in simple dimension.

After considering the text discussed in chapter III, I compared several situations in WWI with those related to current China-Japan rivalry to determine similarities. The first conclusion, as research has indicated, is that the Chinese Asian-centred policy and the U.S. National (Pacific) Ocean policy are similar to the WWI Britain-German relationship, which is a very interesting point and one that is difficult to deny. A second similarity is that between the naval supremacy conflict between China and Japan in and around the Senkaku Islands
and the naval arms race between Britain and Germany. It is still too early to decide, however, if China’s ambitious push for its chain-of-islands concept in East Asia can be a potential risk factor to regional security. Regional cooperation is needed to avoid the increased possibility of misjudgement between countries, such as occurred in the WWI Britain-German relationship. Finally, a comparison of the WWI British security question and the range of modern security problems of China and Japan revealed that there are many differences in the post-Cold-War era; many international organizations need to consider several cultural, economic, and military factors in the current globalized, multi-dimensional world. It is therefore difficult to find similarities with the WWI Triple Entente or Dreibund system. Table 2 summarizes the above text:

Table 2. Comparison of the Anglo-German Relationship in the World War I Era and the Modern Sino-Japanese Relationship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Power Competition between Two Countries</th>
<th>Naval Supremacy Rivalry</th>
<th>International Security Cooperation System</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Britain-German Rivalry in World War I</td>
<td>There were certain sense of crisis in Britain to Germany.</td>
<td>A naval arms race occurred between Britain and Germany.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modern China-Japan Rivalry</td>
<td>There is competition between Japan (U.S.) and China</td>
<td>Territorial conflict in the Senkaku Islands, Chinese Marine Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Similarity</td>
<td>○ (similar)</td>
<td>▲ (partly similar)</td>
</tr>
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</table>

V. Conclusion

The starting point of this paper was the Forty-fourth Annual Meeting of the World Economic Forum speech of Prime Minister Abe; however, there were many previous

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4. The causes of World War I are obviously multiple; however they should be addressed in further research.
references that illustrated certain similarities in the Anglo-German relationship in the WWI era and the modern Sino-Japanese relationship and comparing South Korea to a country like Belgium. Most of these references were media gossip or articles written solely to arouse interest; therefore, the purpose of this research paper is to academically verify these vague images and then find similarities and differences to determine the potential for misunderstandings that could lead to jeopardy in East Asia, and even throughout the world. The resulting three situations most often raised (as seen in Table 2) reveal similarities in the power competition between two countries and somewhat of a similarity in rivalry with respect to naval supremacy; however, it is very difficult to find any similarity in international security cooperation systems. In modern East Asia, one important variable to be considered is the North Korean nuclear issue, which did not exist during the WWI era. This is a very difficult problem, since North Korea is one of most unpredictable countries in the world. Therefore, if someone argues that this situation is similar to the WWI Anglo-German relationship, one must always consider North Korea, because East Asia currently is one of most complicated international circumstances in human history.

To conclude, similarities exist to a certain extent; however, many aspects of Prime Minister Abe’s speech were certainly misunderstood, as was explained by the Japanese government. Excessive fear of Japan. However, what these findings suggest so far are the following: we regarded territorial disputes in East Asia as separate incidents (e.g. the Senkaku Islands, the Kuril Islands, and Dokdo) and try to resolve these matters as bilateral negotiations; however, moving forward, we have to look at these matters in the context of the whole East Asian power competition between China and Japan (deputy of United States) naval supremacy policy. This paper has limitations with regard to this, and further studies are needed. However, the appropriate choice of a research model (microscopic or macroscopic theory) is debatable, and results can vary according to a particular research model. This study
is only the starting point of applying a WWI model to East Asian research. More studies on this particular theme are needed: we may have to choose a new paradigm with respect to East Asian territorial disputes sooner than we think. We have to prepare for sudden changes in the future.
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