

Beyond Offensive Realism: Why Leadership Matters More than Structure in the Security Environment of East Asia

*Li Yongcheng**

School of International Relations and Diplomacy,
Beijing Foreign Studies University

Abstract

In recent years, relations between China and Japan/US and the security environment in East Asia as a whole have aroused serious concerns around the world. Offensive realism structurally ascribes this regional geopolitical evolution to the rise of China and the distrust it causes in Tokyo, Washington and capitals of other neighbouring countries, which is a very influential explanation. However, offensive realism does have some theoretic blind spots. This paper offers a leadership theory of foreign policy to illuminate the blind spots, arguing that the immediate cause consists in the lack of diplomatic leadership and the ensuing compromise deficit in regional geopolitical arena that in larger part gives rise to the worrying situation. This leadership theory is composed of four core arguments: 1) foreign policies are made by top leaders; 2) leaders do make different policies in response to the same international changes and pressures; 3) leaders are better-informed than any elite or mass groups to know where the boundaries of political compromise lie; 4) only leaders are in the capacity to help shape international politics. Therefore, the key to a better security environment of East Asia is held in the hands of the leaders. Relations between nations rely largely on interaction and understanding between their leaders, so more summit meetings between Chinese and Japanese leaders are a necessary condition for smarter handling of bilateral territorial disputes. If four prerequisites are met, leaders can better manage power-security competition between their countries, so as to minimise the risks of violent conflict, and make regional peace sustainable and lasting. The prerequisites are: 1) when leaders are prudent; 2) when leaders resist nationalistic pressure of public opinion; 3) when leaders are strategically pragmatic and patient; 4) when leaders are strategically tolerant.

Keywords: *China, East Asia, Security Environment, Leadership Theory of Foreign Policy, Compromise Deficit*

1. Introduction: The Worrying Security Environment of East Asia Today¹

About twenty years ago, an international political scientist, Richard Betts of Columbia University, described the post-Cold War East Asia as “a bad combination” of “a more important interest to the United States” and “less stable as an arena of great power interaction”, largely because China and Japan might form in the region “the most probable bipolar pair, and potentially the most antagonistic”, which “would be the one with most potential for war among great powers”, if the two countries failed to establish an unlikely “condominium” (Betts, 1993-94: 34, 70). Today, the predicted scenario seems to be in the making, because East Asia has been in increasingly serious geopolitical trouble since 2010, and its precarious security environment has kept leaders, diplomats, government officials, experts, analysts, professionals and even average people worried about the possible deterioration of power-security competition between nations like China, the US, Japan, Vietnam, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, and Democratic People’s Republic of Korea.

For example, in August, 2012, Graham Allison, a well-known senior Harvard international relations professor, published an op-ed piece in the *Financial Times*, arguing about the future chance of a dangerous “Thucydides’s trap” between China and the United States (Allison, 2012). Not coincidentally, in its late September issue in 2012, *The Economist* produced a cover story titled “Could China and Japan really go to war over these?” – meaning over Diaoyu Islands. On the cover picture, a turtle swimming not far away answered “Sadly, yes.” (*The Economist*, 2012) About two years later, the *Financial Times* published a piece written by Gideon Rachman, with the title “Keep the lid on Pandora’s box or Asia will pay dearly”. According to Mr. Rachman, East Asian powers had been for many years pursuing a serious “getting rich” approach, behaving like the Atlanta’s slogan “too busy to hate”. However, Rachman regretted, “there are now alarming signs that East Asia’s giants are pursuing dangerous new priorities, and diverting their energy into angry nationalism and territorial disputes”. He continued to warn that the increasing rise in regional tensions was so “palpable” that the geopolitical sirens were sounded by a number of senior political figures, some of whom made such comments as it “looks like Pandora’s box is being opened” in Asia (Rachman, 2014). In September 2014, *The National Interest*, one of American leading foreign policy magazines, published an analysis on its website, saying a US-China war was “Asia’s Greatest Fear”, with speculations on “how would it start? who would win?”, and made a pessimistic prediction of a possible “World War III” (Farley, 2014).

No matter how different their wording was, all four pieces had it in common to see the security environment in East Asia as full of risks.

Unsurprisingly, there have been many other similar viewpoints expressed everywhere from government offices to think tank podiums and university classrooms, from traditional mass media to the Internet platforms. For instance, as the top two forces within East Asia, China and Japan have had pessimistic assessment of regional security environment ever since a couple of years ago. In its *Diplomatic Bluebook 2013*, Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (JMOFA) grew even more pessimistic with its security environment, saying “the security environment of the region around Japan has become more challenging than before” (JMOFA, 2013: 10). North Korea, China and Russia were mentioned as the major traditional security concerns. The *Diplomatic Bluebook 2014* claimed that “China’s advance in military capabilities without sufficient transparency and unilateral attempts to change the status quo”, which contributed to “increasing severity in the East Asian security environment” (JMOFA, 2014: 4).

Similarly, in its National Defense White Paper 2013 titled *The Diversified Employment of China’s Armed Forces*, China officially described its security environment as “complex and volatile”, “still faces multiple and complicated security threats and challenges”, among which are “the issues concerning China’s territorial sovereignty and maritime rights and interests”. On those issues, the White Paper attached great importance to the argument that “some neighboring countries are taking actions that complicate or exacerbate the situation, and Japan is making trouble over the issue of the Diaoyu Islands” (China Information Office of the State Council, 2013). American Department of Defense straightforwardly described the situation as “a deteriorating security environment” in its latest report on “Military and Security Developments Involving the People’s Republic of China 2015” (Office of the Secretary of Defense, 2015: 3).

Obviously, when it comes to the East Asian security environment, the trajectory of China-Japan relations has been one of the key determinant factors for a couple of years, and the case will remain the same or the impact may even grow bigger down the road. Then, questions arise. What is the root cause of the worrisome security environment and geopolitical situation in East Asia today? Is there a way out? If yes, what is the key to the way out?

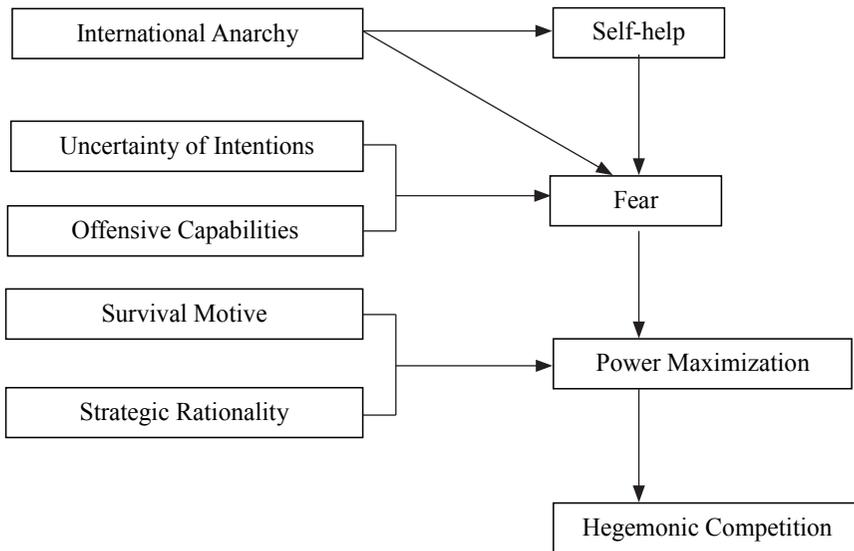
2. What Are the Driving Forces? Offensive Realism as Structural Explanation

To answer the above questions, one needs to turn to International Relations (IR) theories. There have been a great many academic efforts made to help people explain and understand the driving forces of regional security problems in East Asia ever since the end of the Cold War in the early 1990s. For example, the late Harvard professor Samuel Huntington focused on cultural

differences among nations, and his most famous and controversial theory of “clash of civilizations” presented a robust explanation for and prediction of recent South China Sea situation almost 20 years ago (Huntington, 1996: 218-237). Some scholars took the neoliberal institutionalist approach, arguing that the absence of regional collective security institutions was to blame for the geopolitical trouble in this region. For instance, Georgetown University IR Professor Charles Kupchan, maintained in his recent book that a “security community” is key to a “stable peace” in East Asia, claiming that “if East Asia is ultimately to enjoy a security community similar to the one that has evolved in Europe, states of the region – China and Japan, for example – may well be a more suitable anchor than the United States” (Kupchan, 2012: 66). Zheng Yongnian, one of the leading China experts in Singapore, published a paper advocating that collective security regime be established to improve the security relations between China and neighbouring countries (Zheng, 2011). Still some others, mostly American China experts, maintained that China’s assertiveness or new assertiveness in peripheral diplomacy (Johnston, 2014) and naval nationalism in maritime disputes were the drivers of the unpleasant situation (Ross, 2009).

However, offensive realism is widely regarded among scholars and diplomats as the most influential account for the dynamics of geopolitics in East Asia today, which was vividly demonstrated by some articles that believe China’s rise and its consequential impact on China-US and China-Japan/neighbours relations are the touchstone for the theory (Betts, 2010), and by the fact that Professor John Mearsheimer, the father of offensive realism, was invited to countries like Australia, China and Japan to give talks on the likely scenarios of regional security competition in East Asia. Offensive realism is a structural theory that typically focuses on great powers and systemic balance of power. According to the theory, great powers live in an anarchic international community, having no night watchman to turn to for safety and justice. They primarily struggle to survive as a sovereign entity, busy with security goals like territorial integrity and political autonomy. Furthermore, great powers by definition possess destructive offensive capabilities that can do great harm to each other, while they are not certain about the intentions of each other. Therefore, great powers are driven by both their first will to survival and strategic rationality to behave in such ways as self-help, fear, and power maximisation. In other words, states as rational security maximisers fear each other, and they never let go of any opportunity to pursue their own security maximisation. Because power remains the only and most reliable means of achieving national security in international politics, great powers as self-helpers seek to maximise their power so as to maximise their security, their ultimate mutual interactions being directed to the hegemonic competition at the expense of their rivals (Mearsheimer, 2014:

Figure 1 Offensive Realism



30-36). The theoretic logic of offensive realism can be graphically presented in Figure 1.

Obviously, great powers in an offensive realist world are destined to engage in lasting power-security competition, and this inherent international-political logic of competition serves as the essential driving force to pull great power politics into the direction of a tragedy. When offensive realism is employed to explain East Asian geopolitics, it offers a robust mental picture to observers.

Why does the constant power-security competition in East Asia pick up a seemingly faster pace in recent years? The offensive realist answer goes very structural: because mainland China has overtaken Japan economically to be the world's second largest economy, and with its accelerated modernisation of military might, especially its development of a powerful blue-water navy, the global and regional balance of power have been undergoing a big change in China's favour. As a natural result, China is seen as a potential regional hegemony-seeker by Japan and some neighbouring countries, and treated as a likely peer competitor by the only status quo superpower, the United States. Those nations that feel threatened by a rising China think it necessary to take early hedging actions to deal with the uncertainties brought about by China's new and assertive moves in East and South China Seas. Thus, the US has adopted an Asia-Pacific rebalance strategy, Japan a hardline maximalist position on Diaoyu Islands, the Philippine a unilateral tactic of

using international law to settle disputes with China, and Vietnam a policy of hardening nationalist sentiment.

In response, China has employed a combined strategy whose elements include: 1) internal balancing of military modernisation; 2) establishing an East China Sea air defense identification zone (ADIZ) covering Diaoyu Islands; 3) founding Sansha city to enhance administrative management over small islands and reefs that China has held actual control in the South China Sea; and 4) making some maritime oil and gas explorations out there. Unfortunately, the actions and reactions on all sides have reinforced each other's suspicion and caused dangerous tensions between China and its neighbours, with a spiral of accidental escalation appearing to loom. However, according to Mearsheimer, all the above risky interactions are just phenomena on the surface, their deep-rooted causal logic lies in the essential power-security competition among great powers and lesser states. The sad story here is that the East Asian tragedy of great power politics is just a matter of "when" question rather than a "yes-or-no" one. No effective and workable measures can be invented to help China, Japan, the US and other local nations escape this "downright depressing" scenario (Mearsheimer, 2010: 396).

3. Beyond Offensive Realism: Bringing Leaders Back in

At the system level, offensive realism paints a very gloomy theoretical picture about the possible evolution of security competition in East Asia down the road. Pessimism notwithstanding, John Mearsheimer's grand theory does offer a formidable structural explanation for the recent state of security environment and geopolitical situation in East Asia, in the sense that the majority of regional countries and outsiders feel pressured by the power-security competition between such major actors as the US, Japan, and China. For example, Japan views the shift of regional and global balance of power as one of the two major challenges facing this world for the several decades to come. The country expressed this concern in its *Diplomatic Bluebook 2011*, "the current international community faces two major changes: (1) the shifts in the international balance of power caused by the rise of emerging countries and (2) the increasing influence of myriad non-state actors caused by globalization. The nature of the basic structure upholding international society is quietly but certainly changing." (JMOFA, 2011: 2) In the meantime, Chinese leaders have kept urging Japan to reflect correctly on its dark history of imperial invasion of its neighbours prior to 1945 for fear of the possible resurgence of Japanese stubborn and savage militarism, which is "the only one single question China worries about Japan", to quote Deng Xiaoping's comment in May, 1987 (Deng, 1993: 230). When President Xi Jinping met Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in Indonesia in this April, he reiterated that "the

history question is one important principle issue that remains closely pertinent to the very political basis of China-Japan relations. Japan is expected to take into serious account the concern of neighbouring countries, and convey positive message to the outside world that Japan sincerely faces up to its history” (Du and Yu, 2015: 2).

However, offensive realist approach has its obvious weaknesses and disadvantages in explaining the fact that it was neither China nor America who initiated recent tension of maritime disputes, and it was not Japanese national leaders but the former Governor of Tokyo Shintaro Ishihara, one of the most infamous Japanese nationalist politicians who started the new subtle confrontation with China on Diaoyu Islands dispute. Therefore, the origin and formation of current security environment in East Asia is less an international-political problem, but more a problem of foreign policy choice due to inadequate diplomatic leadership and ensuing big compromise deficit. Such theoretical blind spot of structural explanations encouraged scholars to work out “neoclassical realist” theories that aimed to fill the gap focusing on “state” or “more specifically the decision-makers and institutions that act on their behalf”. They particularly address the domestic variables such as “the extractive and mobilization capacity of politico-military institutions, the influence of domestic societal actors and interest groups, the degree of state autonomy from society, and the level of elite or societal cohesion” (Lobell, Ripsman and Taliaferro, 2009: 1, 4). Although the neoclassical realists treat leaders together with institutions as an important factor that pulls the foreign policy train of countries, they fail to go far enough to acknowledge the decisive and distinctive role of heads of state and government play in the final decision-making of their national security strategy and specific foreign policies. Thus, the major contribution of this paper is to highlight their role, to bring leaders back in international politics and hold them first and foremost responsible for bad decisions that may exacerbate the East Asian security environment. In other words, it is the lack of leadership among leaders in different capitals that makes difficult diplomatic and security situations in East Asia.

Why do leaders matter more than the international structure or the effect of global and regional power transition? Why a leadership theory of foreign policy can do the job to illuminate the theoretic blind spot of the structural explanation of offensive realism? The logic is simple and can be reduced to four points. *First, because foreign policies are made by leaders, they are in larger part the result of how leaders observe and understand the international-political laws and specific development of events, incidents and accidents.* So conditional, situational, and structural forces of international politics all work through leaders. Good and great leaders are those who perform quality leadership, capable of leading their respective nations through

foreign policy troubles by making necessary compromise. On the contrary, the more nationalistic the leaders are, the more difficult for countries to reach diplomatic compromises, thus giving rise to crisis management hard to achieve and work.

Second, leaders do make different policies in response to the same international changes and pressures. Structural theorists of international politics have been the most important mainstream scholars since Kenneth Waltz and his *Theory of International Politics* published in 1979. In addition to John Mearsheimer, other major scholars like Robert Keohane and Alexander Wendt, who are well known for their institutionalist and constructivist approaches respectively, also frame their theories at the structure level. As a result, leaders are mostly not seen as the determinant factor in international politics. However, according to Fred I. Greenstein, a senior scholar of American presidency studies, in several historical episodes in American history, if another person had been in the White House, some of the decisive foreign policies in post-war American history might have been different or even the opposite. For example, when President Eisenhower decided not to get military involvement in Vietnam in 1954, his vice-president Richard Nixon disagreed and favored military action. In 1965, when President Johnson made up his mind about getting into the Vietnam civil war, his vice-president Hubert Humphrey expressed his disagreement and urged his boss to resort to diplomatic strategy in a confidential memorandum to Johnson, which displeased Johnson so much that he excluded Humphrey out of meetings respecting Vietnam policy for quite a while. If Nixon and Humphrey had been the final decision-makers in 1954 and 1965, then the outcomes of international politics in those two decades might have been different (Greenstein, 2009: 1-2). Similarly, President Obama voted against US war with Iraq when he was a senator in 2003. If he were in the Oval Office then, things might have been not the same. So, the key point is that IR research should reintroduce American presidency studies into the field to explain world politics in a better way.

Third, leaders are better-informed than any elite or mass groups to know where the boundaries of political compromise lie. Top politicians and diplomats attach great importance to compromise in all forms of politics, including both foreign policy and domestic politics. For example, former US president Ronald Reagan mentioned “compromise” 32 times in his *The Reagan Diaries*, though most of which referred to domestic political issues such as “budget compromise”. He gave the terminology “compromise” such a definition that “a compromise is never to anyone’s liking – it’s just the best you can get and contains enough of what you want to justify what you give up” (Reagan, 2007: 86). Meanwhile, former US Secretary of State and now the 2016 presidential candidate Hillary Clinton talked about “compromise”

52 times in her recent book *Hard Choices*, most of which were about compromise between states (Clinton, 2014).

Fourth, only leaders are in the capacity to be heroes that help shape international politics. When conflict is looming, it is leaders who are in the position to take the duty and do their job to manage the crises and save peace. Diplomacy is peaceful by definition. Henry Kissinger defined the essence of diplomacy as “the adjustment of differences through negotiation” (Kissinger, 1973: 2), and his emphasis on leaders’ role in diplomacy was explicitly shown in his masterpiece *Diplomacy* when he connected such statesmen as Richelieu, Metternich, and Bismarck with the shaping of international systems in the 17th and 19th centuries (Kissinger, 1994: 17). In his recent book *World Order*, Kissinger’s focus was exclusively on leaders and their policies, without a single quotation of any important IR scholars, which implied his conviction that leaders matter more than any other factors in international politics (Kissinger, 2014). Besides Kissinger, classical realist scholar Hans Morgenthau also found that “the essence of diplomacy” was “the promotion of the national interest by peaceful means” (Morgenthau, 1985: 563). According to Morgenthau, leaders of nations should understand that the means of diplomacy are “persuasion, compromise, and threat of force”, and “the art of diplomacy consists in putting the right emphasis at any particular moment on each of these three means at its disposal” (Morgenthau, 1985: 565). For sure, Morgenthau’s “art of diplomacy” meant diplomatic leadership and was naturally designed for leaders to learn and employ in tough relations.

It is possible that the impact of international structural change be managed by leaders, but it requires quality leadership which is badly in shortage in today’s regional security politics of East Asia. As Graham Allison wrote in his eye-catching op-ed piece, “to recognise powerful structural factors is not to argue that leaders are prisoners of the iron laws of history. It is rather to help us appreciate the magnitude of the challenge. If leaders in China and the US perform no better than their predecessors in classical Greece, or Europe at the beginning of the 20th century, historians of the 21st century will cite Thucydides in explaining the catastrophe that follows. ...In light of the risks of such an outcome, leaders in both China and the US must begin talking to each other much more candidly about likely confrontations and flash points. Even more difficult and painful, both must begin making substantial adjustments to accommodate the irreducible requirements of the other” (Allison, 2012).

The same logic applies in the case of China-Japan strategic relations. The question is how leaders of both countries can figure out a way to develop their diplomatic leadership in addressing bilateral relations. First, it is a necessary condition that as many summit meetings as possible are to be held. Relations between nations rely largely on interaction and understanding

between their leaders. Chinese and Japanese leaders must meet in person regularly and on institutionalised basis, so as to appreciate their counterparts' leadership style shaped by the factors such as era, values and defining moments of history. Warren Bennis, a famous leadership theorist, recently pointed out that era, values and defining moment are important factors that shape leadership. According to his analysis, leaders like President Harry Truman "were shaped by World War I, the growth of big business, and the idea of the melting pot", while subsequent leaders such as John F. Kennedy and George Herbert Walker Bush "were formed in the crucible of World War II and came of age in a nation unified by its fight for its very survival", and President Clinton, Vice President Al Gore, and President Bush the younger "were all children of the 1960s, who grew up in a nation divided over the Vietnam War, in a nation of divided families" (Bennis and Thomas, 2002: xiii-xiv). Although they grew up in different political cultures and values, President Xi and Prime Minister Abe are of almost the same age and witness the same era and defining moments of world history, so they have a good starting point to listen and talk to each other, discuss problems in the language of their own generation, find commonalities and transcend differences. Anyway, it is easier for them to establish a personal contact than leaders of different generations, which is good news for bilateral relations of the two countries.

Second, the best leadership quality is closely related to their way of addressing nationalism in both countries. John Mearsheimer once made a very important observation about nationalism in international politics, arguing that "nationalism is probably the most powerful political ideology in the world" (Mearsheimer, 2001: 365). Nationalism can bring leaders and their populace closer, but the problem is that the political force of nationalism can be manipulated to cultivate a sentiment of xenophobia and populist hatred against certain nations. In recent years, Japanese and Chinese have accumulated pronounced mutual nationalistic dislikes toward each other, which seem to have been reinforced by the lack of summit diplomacy between the two countries.² But history shows summit diplomacy helps improve overall bilateral relations and ease emotional tensions between the two peoples. For instance, Japan's *Diplomatic Bluebook 2011* wrote, "though Japan-China relationship became tense when a Chinese fishing trawler collided with two Japanese patrol vessels ... in September, it has been improving again since the holding of the bilateral summit meeting and foreign ministers' meeting during APEC Economic Leaders' Meetings in Yokohama in November" (JMOFA, 2011: 10). Similarly, after the Xi-Abe meeting in Indonesia in April 2015, there have been positive signs of an improving China-Japan relationship, and some postponed visits and security talks have been resumed, together with people-to-people exchanges on the rise.

4. The Way Out: When Leadership Works?

East Asian geopolitics is in serious lack of compromise among countries like China, Japan, and the Philippines. Therefore, troubles constantly arose. In order to find a way out of this awkward geopolitical situation and prevent the deteriorating security environment, leaders in Beijing and Tokyo (and Manila also included) must create conditions for better management of security competition, which require they work better together to demonstrate their quality leadership. The conditions for quality leadership to unfold itself are created when four prerequisites hold their root in East Asian politics.

First, when leaders are prudent. Prudence means leaders are willingly prepared for diplomatic solutions to the disputes and divergences with other countries. Stephen Walt of Harvard's Kennedy School of Government once reminded his readers in his op-ed article, that "if leaders are prudent, the rivalry may be managed. But reckless leaders on either side could increase the danger of war" (Walt, 2012). In international relations, being prudent requires that leaders put diplomatic means ahead of military ones, and constantly keep in mind the limit of the use of armed force when they make significant foreign policy decisions. Hans Morgenthau meant almost the same when he said, "the armed forces are the instrument of foreign policy, not its master" (Morgenthau, 1985: 590). When leaders rely excessively on the minister or secretary of defense, diplomatic compromise is more difficult to strike.

Second, when leaders resist nationalistic pressure of public opinion. Competition can be destructive for involved parties, especially for the more vulnerable ones. Quality leadership in diplomacy naturally means the leaders' capabilities of understanding international politics as security competition and avoiding violent conflict and war. In order not to be dragged backward by populist and nationalist pressures from pushing diplomacy in the dangerous direction of confrontation and conflict, leaders must take brave steps to engage in persuasion and reach compromises, so as to de-escalate tensions among their nations. However, history shows nationalism, especially hyper-nationalism and populist nationalism, work against reasonable compromise between leaders and states, thus confrontation and conflict follow. When he mediated between Spain and Morocco over the Parsley crisis/ Perejil Island crisis in July 2002, then US State Secretary Colin Powell said, "I decided that I had to push for a compromise fast because otherwise pride takes over, positions harden, and people get stubborn" (Zakaria, 2009: 216). Hans Morgenthau once said "government should be the leader of public opinion, rather than the slave to it" (Morgenthau, 1985: 591).

The reality of politics tells us that average people in different countries, whether they are labeled as "voters" or "the mass", do not have much say in domestic and foreign policy making processes. Joseph Schumpeter famously

said that “voters do not decide issues”, their choice of their representatives to form the parliament are “shaped”, not “flow from its initiative”, because in all normal cases, “the initiative lies with the candidate who makes a bid for the office of member of the parliament and such local leadership as that may imply”. The true political situation of voters is they “confine themselves to accepting this bid in preference to others or refusing to accept it” (Schumpeter, 2003: 282).

Third, when leaders are strategically pragmatic and patient. Because countries possess legitimate sovereignty, in no case do leaders have the capability of imposing upon their counterpart their own way of finding solutions, the spirit of compromise, pragmatism and strategic patience should be always with leaders. Deng Xiaoping, one of the smartest international strategists and most successful Chinese top leaders in foreign policy after 1949, made it very clear more than 25 years ago, that compromise must be made on immediate interest to find a way acceptable to both sides, and the problems would be eventually solved and long-term and vital interests be served (The Editing Working Group, 2000: 143-145). For example, international history shows that no great powers are willing to subordinate to international legal rules when territorial dispute cases are involved. It is fine for leaders in some countries to pursue the way of arbitration and legal action, but the fact is that no unilateral method should be imposed on the other party when it refuses, regardless whether the other party is great or small. Diplomacy takes two or more parties to work problems out hand in hand. If countries cannot agree on a peaceful and feasible way of solving maritime and territorial disputes at present, the best pragmatic and patient strategy is to leave the status quo untouched. According to Deng’s logic of strategic patience, solutions will be sooner or later found by the better wisdom of the future leaders (Deng, 1993: 87). History will help those who help themselves to find a win-win solution.

Last, but most important, when leaders are strategically tolerant. Strategic tolerance means the willingness of a leader to engage and exchange ideas with counterparts he or she politically dislikes. Leaders with strategic tolerance will by all means hold one-on-one meeting to know their counterparts and the leadership style so as to establish sufficient “personal contact” for their countries to get along with each other. As Eisenhower once wrote in his letter before his trips to Asia and Europe, “I have found from experience that there is no substitute for personal contact in furthering understanding and good will” (Galambos, 1970: 1382). George W. Bush agreed with Eisenhower on this point when he wrote similarly that “to develop close relations with China’s leaders, helped to develop and strengthen ‘trust’ between the two countries” (Bush, 2010: 425-426), which contributed to good US-China relations, a positive legacy of the Bush administration (Barnett, 2009: 8-9).

Therefore, no matter how disappointed Chinese leaders are with Japanese leaders, or vice versa, they need to put aside their displeasure and reach out their hands. One of the best ways is a state visit of President Xi to Tokyo, aiming to explain China's strategic intentions toward Japanese people and promote a stable China-Japan relationship of "Mutually Beneficial Relationship Based on Common Strategic Interests".

5. Conclusion

The core logic of a leadership theory of foreign policy presented in this paper is that leaders are responsible for the foreign policies that a nation makes in response to the change and continuity of international politics. Even though the root cause of geopolitical difficulties in East Asia can be partly attributed to the objective "structural law" of a rising China that is regarded to be bound to challenge the America-led regional order in Asia, the immediate cause is largely a problem of compromise deficit resulting from inadequate diplomatic leadership. Compromise is the essence of diplomacy. Quality leadership requires responsible leaders to be prudent, de-nationalistic, strategically pragmatic and patient, and strategically tolerant. Then, leaders in East Asian nations can work hard together to manage security competition, solve the "compromise deficit" in regional geopolitics, and make regional peace sustainable and lasting.

Notes

- * Dr. Li Yongcheng is an associate professor of International Relations with the School of International Relations and Diplomacy, Beijing Foreign Studies University, and he can be reached at <liyongcheng@bfsu.edu.cn>.
- 1. This paper is the final product of a research program on "East Asian Security Environment", which was financially funded by the Center for World Asian Studies, Beijing Foreign Studies University, China. It is also supported by my research program on "Peace, Development and China's International Leadership" (12KDB017) granted by Beijing Social Sciences Fund (BSSF). The original ideas of this piece were presented at the Conference on "Malaysia, China, and the Asia-Pacific in the 21st Century", held by the Institute of China Studies, University of Malaya (UM), October 2014. My sincere thanks go to the conference organisers and fellow participants in the symposium, and to the Confucius Institute at UM that sponsored my airfare to the conference. The opinions expressed are the author's own, and any faults are his own responsibility.
- 2. It is reported that a survey, co-sponsored by the Japanese non-profit organisation Genron NPO and *China Daily*, revealed that about 86.6 per cent of Chinese respondents dislikes Japan, while 93 per cent of the Japanese respondents view China unfavourably. See The 10th Japan-China Public Opinion Poll, "Analysis

Report on the Comparative Data (Sept. 9, 2014)", http://www.genron-npo.net/en/poll/docs/10th_Japan-China_poll.pdf (accessed May 9, 2015).

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