

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Japan (*Nihon* or *Nippon*, officially *Nippon-koku* or *Nihon-koku*) is an island nation in East Asia). Located in the Pacific Ocean, it lies to the east of the Sea of Japan, China, North Korea, South Korea and Russia, and stretches from the Sea of Okhotsk in the north to the East China Sea and Taiwan in the south. Because of its location, Japan has some problems with its neighbors. The problems are especially about territorial disputes. Japan is engaged in several territorial disputes with its neighbors: with Russia over the South Kuril Islands, with South Korea over the Liancourt Rocks, with China and Taiwan over the Senkaku Islands, and with China over the EEZ around Okinotorishima. Japan also faces an ongoing dispute with North Korea over the abduction of Japanese citizens and its nuclear weapons and missile program. The territorial dispute between Japan and South Korea over Dokdo is a matter to be discussed in this thesis.

What is Dokdo? What is the dispute about? How is the dispute now? Recently, this Chapter tries to answer those questions, briefly. Whereas, a more completed discussion will be discussed in subsequent chapters. The First chapter includes the background to the study, research question, theoretical framework, hypothesis, research purpose, research method, research range and writing system.

## A. Background to the Study

What is Dokdo? Dokdo is a group of islets located in the East Sea or Sea of Japan. It is located in 87.4 km south-east to Ulleungdo, 255.9 km away from Pohang, and 157.5 km away from Japanese Island, Oki.<sup>1</sup> It is also 216 km from mainland of Korea and 250 km from mainland of Japan.<sup>2</sup> The islets are visible from Korea's Ulleungdo on fair days, and never visible from Japan's Oki Island.<sup>3</sup> Today, South Korea classifies the islets as a part of Ulleung County, North Gyeongsan Province, while Japan classifies them as part of Okinoshima, in Oki District, Shimane Prefecture. Although claimed by both Korea and Japan, Dokdo Island is currently administered by Republic of Korea (South Korea).

Dokdo is currently administered by South Korea. That is because South Korea controls Dokdo more. South Korea has built a lot of building facilities on it. The building facilities include helicopter pad, Coast Guards, security guards, lodgings, lighthouses, monitoring facilities, antennas, watchtowers, etc. The lighthouses are equipped with internet.<sup>4</sup> Mobile phone services also extend to Dokdo.

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<sup>1</sup> *Liancourt Rocks / Takeshima / Dokdo / Tokto* (accessed February 26, 2011); available from <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/liancourt.html>

<sup>2</sup> *Dokdo – Takeshima Island: A Brief Introduction to Korea's Dokdo – Takeshima Island* (accessed March 03, 2011); available from <http://www.dokdo-takeshima.com/>

<sup>3</sup> *ibid*

<sup>4</sup> *Dokdo: A Profile* (accessed March 20, 2011); available from [http://www.koreaaward.com/kor/dokdo\\_profile](http://www.koreaaward.com/kor/dokdo_profile)

Dokdo is a territory disputed by Japan and South Korea. In Korean, this group of islets is called as Dokdo, and in Japanese, Takeshima. The islets are also called as Liancourt Rocks and other names. The name Liancourt Rocks is usually used by the neutral side. This thesis only uses the name Dokdo to call the islets. Dokdo is not one island, but consists of two large islands; Dongdo and Seodo, and 89 small islands around them and Dongdo and Seodo are 151 meters apart.<sup>5</sup> In Korean, the west islet is called as Seodo, and east islet as Dongdo. In Japanese, the east islet is called Otokojima (Male Island) and Nishi-jima (Western Island) for the east islet. The territorial dispute has taken place for centuries. The dispute happens because both states have the same claim over Dokdo. Each of them claims the ownership of Dokdo. Both nations' insistence on claiming Dokdo is based on the history, and many evidences presented and disputed by both sides.

The territorial dispute between Japan and South Korea over Dokdo has happened since view centuries ago, actually. However, Japan's annexation of Dokdo is considered as the beginning of the dispute. That is because Japan's annexation of Dokdo is the first time for Japan to proclaim the claim over Dokdo. The claim is about Japan's ownership over Dokdo. The annexation happened on February 22, 1905. It was when the Governor of Shimane Prefecture proclaimed the islets to be under the jurisdiction of the Oki islands, under the name

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<sup>5</sup> *Facts about Dokdo* (accessed February 26, 2011); available from <http://www.dokdo.go.kr/eng/html/introduction/introduction.jsp>

“Takeshima”. It has been cited in Shimane prefecture’s proclamation number 40 of that year.

During the dispute, some important events occurred between Japan and South Korea. Those events include the Treaty of San Francisco, Proclamation of the Syngman Rhee Line, Proposal of referral to the International Court of Justice, the announcement of “Takeshima Day”, etc. These events can be considered as the dynamic of the dispute between Japan and South Korea over Dokdo. Further, these important events will be discussed more in the next Chapter.

Besides that, along the dispute there are many resolutions brought by both sides on the dispute. One of them is by using diplomatic ways. One of the diplomatic ways is by having peace treaty among them. One of the examples is when Japan and South Korea agreed to sign the Japan-ROK Basic Treaty. This treaty was made to normalize these both states relations. This treaty does not only include the territorial dispute, but it is also about Japan’s occupation over South Korea. But still, the dispute is not over yet. That is because both states insist on their opinions about the ownership of Dokdo. Moreover, especially Japan does lots of actions to get support for the claim. Japan does lots of actions to get supports from its citizen and other states for its claim.

Japan’s actions are not only taken to get support, but also to show the opposite side and all over the world about it’s insisting on claiming Dokdo. As a

matter Of fact, every Japan's action is always reacted by South Korea. Lots of Japan's actions are reacted extremely by South Korea. One of the examples is in 2005, when Japan proclaimed February 22, as "Takeshima Day". At that time, Koreans reacted with demonstrations and protests throughout the country, extreme examples of which included a mother and son slicing off their own fingers, and a man who self-immolated. However, those reactions do not stop Japan to keep its insistence on claiming Dokdo.

## **B. Research Question**

Related to background to the study above, the research question is:

Why does Japan still insist on claiming Dokdo?

## **C. Theoretical Framework**

To answer the research question above, the writer analyzes using the concept of national interest as follows:

### **Concept of National Interest**

National interest is a concept proposed by Hans J. Morgenthau. National interest is one of the most popular concepts in international relations analysis to describe, explain, predict, or suggest the international behavior. In international relations analysis, national interest is often used as the base to

explain the behavior of a state's foreign policy. Morgenthau's thought was based on the premise that the diplomatic strategy should be motivated by national interest rather than by utopian and dangerous moralistic, legalistic, and ideological criteria<sup>6</sup>. Morgenthau equates national interest with the pursuit of state power, where power stands for anything that establishes and maintains control by one state over another. This power-control relationship can be achieved by coercive as well as cooperative techniques.

National interests are also defined as the goals and aims of a nation which should be followed realistically. Since there is no single "interest", it might be used as plural: "interests". According to Plano and Olton, "national interest is the fundamental objective and ultimate determinant that guides the decision-makers of a state in making foreign policy. The national interest of a state is typically a highly generalized conception of those elements that constitute the state's most vital needs. These include self-preservation, independence, territorial integrity, military security, and economic well-being."<sup>7</sup>

These what occur in the territorial dispute between Japan and South Korea. Both states have their own national interest on the territorial dispute.

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<sup>6</sup> T.A. Coulombis and J.H. Wolfe, *Introduction to International Relations: Power and Justice* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1986), p.85

<sup>7</sup> Jack C. Plano and Roy Olton, *The International Relations Dictionary* (Western Michigan University: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, Inc.,1988), p.10-11

That is the reason why both states still insist on claiming Dokdo. This thesis concentrates on Japan's national interest in the territorial dispute only. Further, from those elements that constitute the state's most vital needs, there are three elements that will be discussed more in this thesis. They are the economic well-being, territorial integrity and military integrity.

### **1. Economic Well-being**

Economic well-being can refer to prosperity. If a state can fulfill the economic needs of its citizen, it means that the state is a prosperous one. Therefore, one of the national interests of a state includes the economic well-being as one of the goals in its policy making decision. That is what happens when Japan claims the ownership of Dokdo. This is because Dokdo has high economic values that can give Japan economic well-being.

Dokdo is rich in natural resources in and around them. In Dokdo, there are very rich fishing grounds and tourism. Moreover, large hydrocarbon deposits around the islets are discovered. These natural resources have high economic values.

Initial surveys from 2000 to December 2004 showed the "Ulleung Basin" around Dokdo and Ulleungdo, its larger companion island, had

large deposits of gas hydrates that could translate into 600 million tons of liquid natural gas (LNG), the Korea Gas Corp. (KOGAS) said<sup>8</sup>. This gas hydrate is believed to be deposited along the broad seabed extending from Dokdo to Guryongpo, North Kyongsang Province. Gas hydrate is a next-generation energy source that could be made into liquid natural gas if adequate technology is made available<sup>9</sup>.

Gas hydrates are located deep underwater where cold temperatures and extreme pressure cause natural gas to condense into semisolid form. South Korea imports an average of around 20 million tons of LNG a year to partly meet its energy needs. If confirmed, the estimated deposit would be equivalent to about 30 years of LNG imports.

By the richness on Dokdo and its surrounding, the claim of Japan on the ownership of Dokdo is something reasonable because by the ownership of Dokdo, Japan can fully explore this richness. This richness can be used by Japan to increase its well-being for the upcoming years.

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<sup>8</sup> *Dokdo Area in Sea of Japan Believed to Contain Gas Hydrate* (accessed March 14, 2011); available from [http://goliath.ecnext.com/coms2/gi\\_0199-3857607/DOKDO-AREA-IN-SEA-OF.html](http://goliath.ecnext.com/coms2/gi_0199-3857607/DOKDO-AREA-IN-SEA-OF.html)

<sup>9</sup> *The Dispute over the Island of Dokdo* (accessed April 21, 2011); available from <http://www.123helpme.com/view.asp?id=108084>



## **2. Territorial Integrity**

Every state in the world must be willing to keep its territorial integrity from any threats. These threats could come from inside of the state itself and also from outside of the state. The threats from outside of the state refer to the ones from other states. This is what happened to Japan. Lots of Japan's territories are separated each other by seas. That makes Japan susceptible of any threats from other states.

Japan is engaged in several disputes with its neighbors. Most of the disputes are territorial disputes. Japan is engaged in territorial disputes with South Korea, Russia, and Taiwan and China. One example is the territorial dispute over Dokdo with South Korea, the topic of this thesis. Since Japan is engaged in several territorial disputes, Japan must do something to keep its territorial integrity. One of the actions is by continuing its claim over Dokdo.

Japan's insistence on claiming Dokdo is one of Japan's actions to keep its territorial integrity. In Japan's opinion, Dokdo is part of its territories, and on the other hand, Dokdo is also claimed by South Korea. Thus, the claim of South Korea over Dokdo is considered as a threat to its territorial integrity over the sovereignty of Dokdo by Japan. Therefore, to keep its territorial integrity, from the threat of South Korea, Japan must

keep its insistence on claiming Dokdo. Moreover, by having stronger position on Dokdo, Japan can also get stronger position on other territorial disputes it is engaged in.

### **3. Military security**

A state's security can be determined by its military power. A stronger military of a state strengthens the state itself. Thus, the state will be secure from any threat and so will Japan, which has some territorial disputes with its neighbors. Two of them are the territorial dispute with Russia over the South Kuril Islands and with China over the EEZ around Okinotorishima.

By fully owning Dokdo, Japan can get lots of advantages. One of them is the strategic location of Dokdo. Further, the ownership of Dokdo can also mean that Dokdo could be the most peripheral area of Japan. It is also Japan's territory nearest to the border of its neighbors', such as South Korea, North Korea, China and Russia. In fact, most of these states have territorial dispute with Japan.

Thereby, the ownership of Dokdo is needed by Japan to put its military base in Dokdo freely. This military base is not only to protect Japan from any threat from those states, but also could add the possibility

of Japan to win the territorial disputes. That is because Japan can observe more its neighborhoods through Dokdo. It is proven in Russo-Japan War.

In Russo-Japan war, Japan put its military base on Dokdo. The military base had a watchtower. The watchtower was built in order to clamp down on Russia's activities (military activities). Base on this fact, Japan's decision to put its military base on Dokdo at that time was considered as one of the reasons why Japan won the war.

From the concept above, the prime goal of the decision makers in determining the goal of government's policy of a state is to fulfill the national interest of the state itself. In the dispute of Dokdo that involves Japan and South Korea, the case is that both states especially Japan have national interests on it.

#### **D. Hypothesis**

According to the concepts above, there are at least two reasons why Japan still insists on claiming Dokdo:

1. The high economic values of natural resources that exist on Dokdo and its surrounding.
2. The military-strategic value of Dokdo

## **E. Research Purpose**

This research is aimed:

1. to find more about Dokdo.
2. to find more about the dispute between Japan and South Korea over Dokdo.
3. to find the answer to the research question.
4. to fulfill the requirement for the degree of Sarjana Ilmu Sosial dan Ilmu Politik of University of Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta.

## **F. Research Method**

The research technique used in this thesis is content analysis. Content analysis is a technique for gathering and analyzing the content of text.<sup>10</sup> The content refers to words, meanings, pictures, symbols, ideas, themes, or any message that can be communicated. Whereas, text is anything written, visualized, or spoken that is saved as a medium of communication. The medium of communication includes books, newspaper or magazine articles, advertisements, speeches, official documents, films, or videotapes, musical lyrics, photographs, articles of clothing, or works of art. In addition, the sources from Internet related to the topic of the thesis are also used.

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<sup>10</sup>William Lawrence Neuman, *Social Research Methods : Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* ( University of Wisconsin at Whitewater: Allyn and Bacon), p.310-311

## **G. Research Time Frame**

This research concentrates only in 2004 - 2009 when the dispute over Dokdo between Japan and South Korea was heated. In order to support the discussion of the thesis, related topic of the discussion before and after 2004 - 2009 is also used. This research is also restricted to only discuss the dispute over Dokdo between Japan and South Korea only from Japan's side. This means the thesis only discusses the dispute in Japan's viewpoint. However, because of the dispute involving Japan and South Korea, some perspectives of South Korea in the dispute, although just a little, is also used.

## **H. Writing System**

Chapter I contains the introduction of this thesis and consists of background to the study, research question, theoretical framework, hypothesis, research purpose, research method, research time frame, and writing system.

Chapter II is the elaboration of background to the study in Chapter I. This chapter explores more about the dynamics of the dispute. It includes some events that show the dynamics of the dispute between Japan and South Korea. Those events include the Treaty of San Francisco, Proclamation of the Syngman Rhee-Line, Proposal of Referral to the International Court of Justice, and 1965 Japan –

R.O.K Basic Treaty. This chapter is also discussing Japan's actions in each event mentioned above and also historical action by Japan.

Chapter III concentrates on the Japan's action in 2005 to ensure its claim over the sovereignty of Dokdo, which is about the designation and the announcement of "Takeshima Day" by Japan. This chapter also discusses about the reason why the designation and the announcement were occurred.

Chapter IV focuses on answering the first and the second hypotheses. The first hypothesis is about the economic value of Dokdo. Thus, the economic value of Dokdo refers to the existence of gas hydrate around Dokdo. The second hypothesis is about the military – strategic value of Dokdo. Further, the military-strategic value includes the military and the strategic value.

Chapter V is the last chapter. This chapter is the conclusion of the thesis. It means that this chapter discusses the conclusion of the whole contents of this thesis, and this chapter is the closing of this thesis.