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## ANGAŽMÁ JAPONSKA V SKUPINE G-7 JAPAN'S ENGAGEMENT IN THE GROUP OF SEVEN

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Skupina G-7 je neformálna medzivládna organizácia združujúca do fóra sedem vyspelých štátov na báze západných hodnôt s prevažným vplyvom v globálnej ekonomike a politike. Japonsko je v tomto zoskupení jediným formálnym zástupcom z Ázie. Článok približuje členské zapojenie Japonska v agendách G-7. Po stručnom komparatívnom prehľade vybraných ukazovateľov štátov G-7 je pozornosť venovaná cieľom japonskej zahraničnej politiky a jej úlohám v programoch G-7. Vybrané teoretické pohľady na medzinárodné organizácie a skupinu G-7 nadväzujú na prehľad cieľov zahraničnej politiky Japonska v agendách G-7 a rolí, ktoré Tokio zastupuje v súlade s týmito cieľmi. Členstvo Japonska v skupine G-7 je v ostatných rokoch konštruktívnejšie, angažmá Japonska má potenciál nadobudnúť pragmatickejšie ambície na úrovni formátu G-7.

**Kľúčové slová:** Japonsko, Skupina Sedem (G-7), zahraničná politika, spolupráca, medzinárodné vzťahy

The Group of Seven (G7) is an informal inter-governmental organization that associates seven advanced countries based on common Western values with leading influence in global economics and politics at forum. Japan is the only formal representative from Asia in the G7. This paper examines Japan's engagement in the G7 membership. Attention is given to Japanese foreign policy objectives and roles in the G7 programs following a brief comparison of selected parameters of G7 countries. Selected theoretical views on international organizations and the G7 are followed by an overview of Japan's foreign policy priority objective-projections in the G7 agendas, and the roles Tokyo performs in line with these objectives. Japan's membership in the G7 has been more constructive in recent years, and Japan's engagement may acquire potential for some pragmatic ambitions.

**Key words:** Japan, Group of Seven (G7), foreign policy, cooperation, international relations

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## **1 INTRODUCTION**

In the Cold War period, there emerged the will of seven advanced powers of the Western Bloc with a similar economic (capitalist) system to associate themselves within common mutual economic cooperation. One result of this was the creation of the later-known informal Group of Seven, abbreviated as the G7. Japan entered this informal and prestigious organization in the mid 1973 under the Group of Five (Schultz 1995, p. 147-149). At the time Japan's economy experienced long periods of economic boom and soon, Japan arose to be the second largest economy and became an important and responsible G7 member state supporting Western democratic and capitalist values in Asia.

With its fast development under US umbrella, Japan won back reputation in majority of East Asia and was referred to a model of functioning capitalism and democracy in Asia, an alternative to politically divided worlds of socialism and capitalism in Cold War. In post-bipolar era Japan's economic performance slowed down, and the society has to face aging, transformation of economy, but also growing public debt and poverty. Japan's innovative and technological developments allowed the world to take lessons from Japanese development and transformation.

Next to domestic challenges, mainly after the triple disaster in 2011, there have been movements in Asian political-economic landscape. Japan's postwar peaceful policies are being tested given to changing security dynamics of asymmetric externalities. Recent economic and political emergence of People's Republic of China (PRC) in last two decades brought both regional economic stability in East Asia, but also challenged Japan's traditional position in Asia and world. China's initiative the 'One Belt One Road' introduced grand visionary geo-project of economic integration in territorial Asia. China's Asian Infrastructure and Investment Bank challenges the Asian Development Bank led by Japanese presidents. Changing divisions in international architecture marked a relative decline of Japanese economic and foreign influence, but also led to initiated few reforming steps to overcome the situation.

Increase of North Korean missile provocations in recent years, or gradual saturation of security space given China's reconstructing position in East Asian seas, are two main topics of Japan's security. Given recent unpredictability of world affairs Japan faces multitude of challenges before the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020. For the country that depends on imports of raw materials, the stability in international markets and politics is a key. Ensuring fragile balance often distorted with asymmetrical factors, Japan strives to address these imperatives in foreign policy that mirror explicit and implicit objectives.

The article examines current themes and topics in G7 agenda including Japan's initiatives and ambitions in the G7, how they are constructed, for what purpose, in which context. The aim of analysis of Japanese implicit and explicit foreign policy goals is to shed light on engagement of Japan in the G7 and performing clear membership roles (Kloza 2017).

This paper includes selected theoretical views on foreign politics, international system and organizations, and geo-economics. The text does not aspire to bring new theoretical conclusions but it uses few views and proceeds with identification of the Japanese objectives, priority areas in wider perspective, and the discourse in the G7.

This paper stems methodologically on Japan's foreign policy blueprints, governmental and ministerial documents, and talks as primary sources. The examination of the G7 agenda, goals and implementation with Japan's roles in it follows. Identification of implicit foreign policy goals ensues Japan's general approach to global affairs, using information resources from official ministerial channels and public-diplomatic communication. This helps to track engagement in the G7. This paper brings insights into understanding of Japan's role in the G7 and presents current G7 themes and topics of Japan's engagement in the G7 towards 2020.

With regards to practical merits, the paper sums up understudied theme of Western-Japan's international relations. As will be revealed, Japan scores as an active, constructive, but also pragmatic member of the G7. Few roles Japan performs are hardly substitutable. The text uses common English transcription of rōmaji (Roman letters) for Japanese toponyms and realia.

## **2 FOREIGN POLICY AND INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM**

Foreign policy is a discipline of international relations. The international environment is an arena in which the state defines itself in relation to its international surroundings. Foreign policy defends the interests of the state in relation to external actors and it forms states' foreign priorities for this purpose. It is a subject to various internal (domestic) and external (foreign) influences and factors. Domestic factors include state's geographical location, demographic structure of population, level of economic development, infrastructure, access raw resources, ideologies and shared core values, etc. The states occupy the political map. Political geography is a discipline of human geography, which studies repercussions of state decisions on political differentiation of space (cf. discourse by Kofroň 2017). The political geography is a theoretical umbrella of overlapping disciplines, and the field of international relations defines links on the political map.

External influences are formed in a 'geopolitical' mode that brings relations of actors in international system under dynamic architecture of world order (cf. Drulák – Druláková 2007, p. 9). Hudson deals with foreign policy as a formulated strategy or

a governmental approach seeking to achieve state's goals in relations with external national and transnational institutional entities (Cf. Hudson 2008). Except for the objective of securing state's external interests on which scholars can agree, there is no uniform definition of foreign policy. As for the international environment, it can be described in terms of a system.

Waisová (2005, p. 51) defined the international system as “the largest conglomerate of interactive and interconnected units that have the same status in that system because there is no higher (system) level of relationships or superior entities in that system. The international system is therefore any grouping of independent political entities (tribes, city states, empires ...) that communicate and create relationships of considerable dependence.”

From a view of transregional international division of labor and power, Wallerstein introduced the theory of the World System, which is externally bounded with own rigid structures, cohesiveness and rules of legitimization. It is inhabited by different groups of interests in the world economy since the 15th - 16th centuries until present (Wallerstein 1974, p. 347). In such a setting, the national states and among them the leading economies such as members states of the G7, associations of states have a leading influence in the world division of labor, and potential to boost transformation of world semi-peripheries and peripheries.

States are equal in choosing the objectives of their foreign policy strategy to achieve them, but their governments are not equal in their possibilities to achieve these objectives (e.g. Krejčí 2001, p. 148). Drulák defined four levels of foreign policy analysis: the level of the international system, the state level, the level of domestic influences, the level of the individual. The first level deals with the foreign policy from a view of the international system as a whole, which reveals the behavior of individual states. In contrast, the second level analyzes the state as a whole unit, based on state characteristics and interests at national level. The third level examines the behavior of individual actors within the state who have certain influence on the organization of the state such as interest groups, the media or public opinion, etc. The fourth level examines impacts of a leader at the individual level. It examines individuals who are the state leaders with a certain influence over foreign policy (Drulák – Druláková 2007, p. 10-11).

Drulák understands the objectives of foreign policy as “*the penetration of the desirable and the possible in the efforts of the state.*” Power can be defined as “*the ability of the state, in accordance with its intentions, to influence the behavior of other states, even against their will.*” It concerns basic goals of state connected to survival in international relations (Drulák – Druláková 2007, p. 21-26).

Foreign policy often is projected in symbolical and practical roles, which bring state's expectations and identity to international community. Holsti defines a national

role as a way in which “*politicians at a general level define the decisions, commitments, rules and actions appropriate to their state, the function, if any, to be their permanent exercise in the international system or the subordinate regional system. It is their “image of” appropriate targeting and function of their state in relation to and within the external environment*” (Holsti 2010, p. 74.). The main function of the role<sup>3</sup> is to provide a relatively stable sense of identity. This idea allows one actor to give the meaning and order in external environment (Beneš 2010, p. 74). Theory of role can to a certain extent apply the model of social role to the state as an actor in international relations (Hudson 2005, Beneš 2010, p. 73).

In network of bilateral relations, the state relations generate dynamics between two extreme poles – integration and destruction. Among these limits there are layers standing for cooperation, “no” relationships and confrontation. In bilateral relations, different areas of statehood can be located on different sides of this dynamics. E.g. the relationship between Japan and the USA is very close in the security area, while it can be seen in a confrontational phase in the economic sphere over time on one hand, and cooperation on the other (Druláková – Drulák 2007, p. 18-19).

Wendt who dealt with implications of social theory for international politics, distinguishes three basic types of interstate relations – friendship, rivalry and hostility (Wendt 1999). The difference among these relationships is in resolving disputes peacefully in interstate relations. In rivalry, the rival relations are recognized, but states do not apply force to resolve disputes, and do not seek mutual destruction. This dynamic may be a subject of change however (Druláková – Drulák 2007, p. 18-19). In a new multipolar era, the influence of non-state actors as transnational corporations or non-governmental organizations has been on increase. Political hierarchy is spreading into a decentralized network of relationships involving actors of all social-cultural spheres. This interconnected system of ruling under such architecture is studied by governance (Waisová 2008, p. 20).

### 3 INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND THE GROUP OF SEVEN

International institutions are “...based on a formal system of rules and objectives, having administrative apparatus and formal and material realia”, which refers to organizations of own background, hierarchy, finances, etc. (Waisová 2008, p. 20). International organizations are established on the basis of an international agreement in order to constantly perform certain tasks by the member states in own names (Ondřej 2004, p. 122). The international agreement is based on international law

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. sociological definition of the role as the „system of needs, goals, opinions, emotions, values, and activities that, as expected by members of a particular society, should characterize the typical representative of a certain position, expected way of behaving in a certain position“, (Pedagogicko-psychologická poradna 2017).

and must include at least two member states (Krejčí 2001, p. 210). International organizations can be divided into governmental and non-governmental organizations (NGO). Both, the governmental and the nongovernmental organizations are subjects of international law.

International NGOs can be divided on the NGO of political interest (e.g. the revolutionary movement), the NGO of non-political orientation (unions, churches, associations, etc.) and the multinational corporations that arose in the postwar period. A common feature of all types often are the overlaps of activities across the state borders. Transnational or multinational corporations (MNC), foreign direct investments (FDI) and their impact on the global economy are undisputable (Krejčí 2001, p. 225-230). The role and nature of a MNC as a medium of state power in global economy is studied by geo-economics (Luttwak 1998, Lorot 1999). Governmental organizations help to defend common geo-economic interests in global scale. The members co-generate factors in international system, but also can confront themselves in relative interstate economic competition.

To sum it up, legal formal and informal organizations perform common international cooperation initiatives in order to address various challenges of common concern, mainly promoting stability, prosperity and peace. One such informal international organization is the G7.

The *Group of Seven (G7)* is a group of most economically advanced countries of the western world: Canada, Germany, France, Italy, Japan, United Kingdom and USA. Its forum is also represented by the European Union (EU), represented by the President of the European Commission (Jean-Claude Juncker) and the President of the European Council (Donald Tusk) (see G7 2018 Charleviox 2018). The G7 is an informal international government-type organization. G7 members are linked by economic performance besides sharing common core values such as freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law (Japan GOV / G7 2016a). Unlike other organizations such as the United Nations (UN), the G7 is not a formal institution with a permanent secretariat or statutes. Member state interests are beneficial for them mutually and they are materialized in G7 goals. The G7 declarations also defined the threats which jeopardize common goals and G7 committed itself to achieving greater cooperation and constructive dialogue among the member states to overcome the differences in the economic, political and social levels (v MOFA, Declaration of Rambouillet 2000).

Each G7 member state has a main representative (“Sherpa”) and three sub-representatives (“sub-Sherpas”) (Veselková 2007, p. 12). Group members meet regularly at meetings at ministerial level, at the central bank governors’ level, and at the level of executive bureau of the member states and the EU. E.g., the ministers from 10 different ministry resorts met under the presidency of Japan in 2016 (Japangov/ G7

2016b). The presiding state has a better opportunity to promote topics in line with its state interests. However, selection of topics should reflect current world challenges. As example, the nuclear energy and its security were included among the main topics after the triple disaster in Japan in 2011 (The Federal Government, G7 Germany 2011). Individual agreements concluded at the G7 summits can have significant direct and indirect impacts on majority of world's regions (Global Issues 2008). G7 states accounted up to 50 % of votes in the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and in the World Bank (WB).

The agendas of the G7 summit are not just about economic issues. Great space is given to global political and social themes such as international security, human rights, migration, health, climate and the environment, etc. From the composition of the themes we can assume that the G7 is also an international platform that seeks solutions to global problems. From this point of view, the G7 can be seen as a substitute of the UN in the abovementioned themes. Combining political, economic and military power, the G7 has a great influence in world affairs (Economywatch.com 2017b). In 2009, the USA came up with a proposal to narrow the grouping under the G4 format, which would form the core consisting of the USA, EU, Japan and China. From this view, Japan's concerns from growing influence of the Group of Twenty (G20) are understandable, as a warning to Tokyo's privileged role of the sole representative of Asia in some affairs (iDNES.cz 2009).

#### **4 THE G7 MEMBER STATES**

The following overview presents a brief comparison of Japan with other G7 member states - Canada, France, Germany, Italy, UK, USA. It introduces the G7 member states in selected views based on indicators: population, surface, birth rate, average age, GDP in billion USD, GDP growth (%), public debt (%), exports in billion USD, and military spending in billion USD. In comparison of seven member states in 2017, Japan scored the 2<sup>nd</sup> in size of population, the 4<sup>th</sup> in surface area, the 7<sup>th</sup> in birth rate per year, the 1<sup>st</sup> in the highest average age, the 2<sup>nd</sup> in GDP volume, the 5<sup>th</sup> in the GDP growth, the 7<sup>th</sup> with the highest public debt (also in the world), the 3<sup>rd</sup> in the export volume, and the 4<sup>th</sup> in military expenditures as displayed in figure 1 (World Bank 2016a, 2016b, 2016c, cf. SIPRI 2017).

Table 1: Comparison of G7 member states in selected socioeconomic features.

Country	People, million	Surface th. km <sup>2</sup>	Birth rate, %/year	Average age	GDP, bil. USD	GDP growth, %	Public debt, % GDP	Export, bil. USD	Military exp., bil. USD
Japan	126,5	364	-0,2	47	4,38	+1,2	234,7	641	46,1
US	326,4	9144	0,73	38	18	+2,6	73,8	1 471	606,2
France	64,9	547	0,42	41	2,42	+1,3	96	505	55,6
Germany	80,6	348	-0,06	46	3,36	+1,7	68,2	1 283	41
Italy	59,8	294	-0,01	46	1,82	+0,7	132,5	436	28
UK	65,5	241	0,61	40	2,86	+2,2	92,25	412	54,2
Canada	36,6	9156	0,94	41	1,55	+0,9	98,8	402	15,5

Source: Own arrangement and selection (based on data by Economywatch 2017).

The G7 states used to produce over 50 % of the world's annual GDP, but this ratio has changed to the detriment of the G7, mainly due to the rapid economic growth of the BRISC countries (Brazil, Russia, India, South Africa, China) or the G20 member states such as South Korea, and in general emergent Asia (e.g. ASEAN countries). In 2015, the GDP of G7 member states amounted to 34.067 bil. USD, while the global GDP was 73.171 bil. GDP, accounting G7 for about 46.5 % of share on the world GDP. The share is expected to continue to decline (Economywatch.com 2017a). The International Monetary Fund (IMF) estimated it will have fallen to 44.3 % by 2020 (Economywatch.com 2017b).

## 5 CONTEMPORARY JAPAN'S FOREIGN POLICY OBJECTIVES

*Changes in World Security Environment.* Japan has been striving to flexibly respond to changing regional security dynamics and environment. Japan responded by increasing defense spending, ranking the it among the five countries with the highest



military budget in the western world in 2006. Japan is currently ranked the 7th in the world (after US, Russia, China, India, France, UK), based on more than 50 benchmarks of the global firepower index (Global Firepower 2017).

Japanese official reference to security threats do not explicitly include the territorial disputes over the Southern Kurils/Hoppo Roydo and Dokdo/Takeshima islands, these topics are included separately in the description of bilateral relations with Russia and South Korea. The attention in strategic communication was also given to devoted US-Japanese Alliance and its revision in 2015 (MOFA 2016a, p. 153). New directives reinforce mutual cooperation in areas such as cyber and maritime security, space programs, co-production and coordination of military systems, intelligence and mutual academic exchanges, and are considered the most significant change in Japanese security policy since the end of World War II.

Challenges are emerging in keeping some key international shipping routes free, as via these routes Japan is economically dependent to a considerable degree. One instance is the situation in the South China Sea and East China Sea, but also in the Middle East and East Coast of Africa (Wagner 2015). This demonstrates the growing willingness of Japan to strengthen stability in the Middle East and secure maritime import routes to Japan. The Japanese government approved record defense budget of 43.6 billion USD in 2017, also following DPRK military provocations.

*Active International Membership.* Japan's role in the international community has been constructive. Japan takes active role in international organizations such as the UN, IMF, G7, G20, Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC). Tokyo spends considerable funds on international development aid, UN and IMF budgets. One of the options to promote Japanese foreign policy goals is G7 membership.

The active role of Japan in promotion of peace and stability, whether in the form of participation in peacekeeping missions, humanitarian or financial assistance or other assistance instruments, is often highlighted. Other important areas include the rule of law, human rights and women's rights. Japan is the key G7 partner in development of democracy globally (MOFA 2016a, p.153-213).

Japan is a strong supporter of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which was endorsed at the UN Summit in New York in n 2015. Part of the document is 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for a period of 15 years, i.e. by 2030. These very ambitious goals include the end of poverty, the end of hunger, global health and quality of life, lesser inequality, etc. (Informační centrum OSN v Praze 2018). Japan pro-actively contributed to the discussion on this agenda. The implementation of this is based on the concept of human security, which can be considered as one of the pillars of Japanese diplomacy. This idea supports the creation of a community in which individuals are protected and have opportunities for active participation. Japanese

diplomacy seeks to promote this idea externally, for instance, through international development aid (MOFA 2016a, p. 234).

Health is considered to be an indispensable element in promoting the concept of human security in Japan. By pro-active performance, Japan justifies by the highest average life expectancy representing the role of a 'world healthcare medic'. Furthermore, Japan pays attention to environmental issues and climate change in Asia-Pacific, Arctica and the Antarctica (MOFA 2016a, p. 237). Science and technology related topics are supported with four strategic lines: i) bilateral and multilateral cooperation to support science, technology and innovation, ii) using science and technology to solve global problems, iii) promoting bilateral relations through scientific and technical cooperation, iv) support for "soft power" as a science-oriented country.

*Economic Diplomacy.* Economic diplomacy<sup>4</sup> is one of the most important areas of foreign policy in general as well as one of the media for geo-economic strategy implementation. One characteristic feature of Japan's economic diplomacy has been the international Official Development Aid (ODA) which foundations were laid in 1954, when Japan launched its postwar programs based on the ODA. In 1991, Japan issued over 15 billion USD of international development aid divided among 110 countries and became the largest provider of bilateral development aid in the world (Potter 2008, p. 14). Japan considers the ODA program to be "*a part of a pro-active contribution to peace based on the principle of international cooperation.*"

In 2011 the following four pillars of Japan's economic diplomacy were introduced: i) free trade system, ii) ensuring long-term and stable supplies of energy and food, iii) the international support of infrastructure systems, iv) promoting Japan as a tourist destination (MOFA 2011).

In 2015, Japan's economic diplomacy consisted of three aspects: contributing to economic growth, building an attractive country where people can live in peace and tranquility, and state participation in the creation of international rule. One goal of Japanese economic diplomacy was to increase the ratio of Free Trade Agreement (FTA) to 70% in 2018 (Nikkei 2017). To this end, Japan supports the liberalization of international trade and the introduction of free trade zones (MOFA 2016a, p. 248-249).

*Branding Japan Abroad.* This area of Japan's contemporary foreign policy projects international promotion of Japan. It includes cultural diplomacy and strategic communication aimed at transparent informing of government attitudes to abroad. Via media of press conferences, interviews, contributions in foreign media, speeches of

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<sup>4</sup> E.g. compare definition of economic diplomacy by The Czech Foreign Ministry: "*a set of measures aimed at promoting government policies in the field of production, movement or exchange of goods, services, labor and investment towards and from abroad as well as creating a positive image of the world in the world.*" (mzv.cz, 2008).

ministers, diplomats and government officials at foreign visits, summits of international organizations, or via dissemination of information on websites and in the social networks, the Japanese government maintains extensive communications network with the foreign public to implement foreign policy effectively.

The Diplomatic Bluebook is the blueprint for Japanese foreign policy. The further it comes back in history, the more its structure and formulation are different. In the 1970s and 1980s, cooperation with the UN was explicitly listed among the priority areas of Japanese foreign policy. But that does not mean that the level of Japan's cooperation with the UN has diminished. Japan is still the second highest contributor to the UN budget in 2017. Another change to the defined priorities emerged in connection with the arrival of the concept of human security after the end of the Cold War. Among the greatest advocates of this idea were Canada and Norway, as well as Japan, which implemented it into its foreign policy (Atanassova-Cornelis 2005, p. 58).

Foreign policy pursues power, ideological and economic goals (Drulák – Druláková 2007, p. 23-26). In last two decades, Japan has been pushing for power objectives through the tools of *soft power*, as well as hard economic power present in some ODA schemes and FDI policies. The strength of Japanese soft power is also the promotion of ideological goals through cultural diplomacy. In this front it has appeared in a tight competition from Korea and China. Tourism is another area which more accessed Japan to tourists, and contributed to popularization of Japanese culture worldwide.

## **6 FOREIGN POLICY OBJECTIVES IN JAPAN'S ROLES IN THE G7**

Japan tended to limit its diplomatic influence at previous summits. This changed with the Japanese presidency in 2016, when Japanese diplomacy entered the summit stronger than before. They may have been 3 reasons for this. The first is the domestic political stability for the benefit of experienced Prime Minister Abe, for whom it was already the fifth G7 summit. The second reason is to improve relations with Japan's neighbors on the basis of a political agreement to reduce tensions with China in the Senkaku/Diaoyu dispute (The Telegraph 2014), and the historic agreement with South Korea on compensation for the comfort women issue. Some expect improvement in relations will strengthen Japan's performance in the G7. The third reason is Japan's good prerequisites to address global issues, based on Japan's experience in cooperation and development (Forbes 2016).

*Efforts for Peace.* Japan's efforts to ensure peace and stability are reflected in the G7 agenda. Between 2001 and 2009, Japan logistically assisted coalition ships in the Indian Ocean with fuel and water (iDNES.cz 2010b). Japan regularly highlights the threats of the DPRK nuclear development and risks of deteriorating security situation in the South China and East China Seas in recent years (Japan GOV 2016c). It follows

the security policy in conjunction with the USA, but also seeks wider diplomatic support from the G7 member states in a dispute with China, although the PRC is not explicitly mentioned in the joint statements (Lidovsky 2016). The G7 states agree with Japan on these issues and support Japanese maritime safety initiatives to avoid conflict. A unanimous agreement takes place on issues of common stance towards North Korea (MOFA 2013, MOFA 2017).

In a uniform sanctioning policy towards Russia, Japan acts in moderate voice seeking for a constructive solution (cf. MOFA 2017). Concerning the Middle East, which is at the forefront of Japan's economic diplomacy, Japan remains constructive and maintains good relations with all states in the region, despite local conflicts of interests. Which other G7 state can maintain good relations with Iran, Saudi Arabia, Israel, Palestine and Turkey at the same time? Japanese interest in the stability of the Middle East is reflected in the G7 joint statements.

The clear consensus of the G7 members remains on issues of terrorism, cyber attacks, and forms of extremism. G7 leaders regularly condemn terrorism and sign joint action plans. At the last summit in 2017, the leaders committed themselves to cooperate against internet abuse (Chinadaily.com 2017). In relation to EU refugee crisis, Japan is beginning to oppose the concept of open borders, promoted by the EU, especially Germany and France. It reminds the attitude of the Visegrad Group to this topic towards the EU. Japan refuses to accept refugees from war-torn countries, but it argues for economic aid in the Middle East to ease the regional refugee crisis. Japan committed itself to a 6 billion USD contribution at the 2016 summit (MOFA, 2016d).

Abe took advantage of the summit in 2016 to familiarize G7 leaders with the deteriorating security environment in East Asia in contexts of the DPRK nuclear program and the South China Sea territorial disputes. G7 leaders adopted the Abe's three principles of the rule of law at sea (clarify claims under international law, ban on use of force in claims, resolve disputes by peaceful means) (Japan GOV 2016c). Although the statements lack specific mention of China and its infrastructural expansion in disputed territories and waters in South China Sea, China expressed concerns claiming that this issue has nothing to do with the G7 (Lidovsky 2016).

In security matters, Japan has been performing the role of the "security correspondent" of the Far East. Japan gives alerts the G7 partners to the political security issues of the region (Japan GOV, 2016c). As the only country with a history of nuclear bombing, Japan acts as the leader in nuclear disarmament and as a global supporter of nuclear safety, though some may see it recently somewhat controversial given the continuing problems at the Fukushima nuclear power plant and a large amount of nuclear fuel supplies along with a large number of nuclear reactors in the country and the tenders of Japanese companies to build nuclear reactors in abroad (NTI 2017). Japan also performs the role of a potential mediator towards states whose

relations with NATO member states can be described as conflicting, e.g. interests of Russia and Iran. It gives Japan a competitive advantage in G7 and puts Japan into the role of a diplomatic balancer.

*International Cooperation.* Japan's emphasis on strategic communication, which aims at transparently informing the public about Japan's government attitudes, is highlighted, not only in the context of foreign policy. Efforts to promote understanding and trust in Japan are part of it. Japan also uses the G7 channels to promote own state interests. Since 1975, there have been 44 summits of the G7, of which six were hosted in Japan. With regard to issues in global economy, foreign politics, migration and refugee crises (European Council 2016), one difference can be observed in comparison of the Japanese agenda of 2016 and the German agenda in 2015 (The Federal Government, G7 Germany 2015b), where Japan's greater emphasis on global health and women's rights is visible. The importance of international development aid for Japan is evident, because, as opposed to Germany, the Japanese agenda gives it more space and defines the development as a separate topic (Italian G7 Presidency 2017).

Japan is the leading provider of international development assistance. Its role of a responsible state in tackling some global problems is proved. International development cooperation was supported at the level of the G7. The same is true in response to global challenges that are generally compatible with the G7 agenda. Even the subjects of nuclear safety and nuclear non-proliferation are the subjects of the G7 negotiations. After the triple disaster in 2011, nuclear safety has become one of the main topics at the G7 summits in 2011 and 2012 (The Federal Government, G7 Germany 2011, p. 11-12). During the Foreign Ministers' Meeting in 2016, the Hiroshima Declaration on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation was adopted, which also urges the adoption of a global prohibiting nuclear testing and preventing further production of nuclear weapons (Italian G7 Presidency 2017).

Global economy and trade, foreign policy, climate change and energy, development, investment in quality infrastructure, health, women. These topics are in line with the Japanese domestic and foreign policies. Japan continues to play a leading role in addressing the various challenges associated with the Global South. Japan will provide USD 3 billion over the next three years in the reduction of infectious diseases (The Federal Government, G7 Germany 2011, p. 11-12). G7 members expressed support for the UN Sustainable Development Agenda by 2030, complemented by Japan's efforts to ensure G7 cooperation with the Tokyo International Conference on Africa's Development in Nairobi (TICAD VI), with the participation of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), and the World Bank and the African Union Commission (AUC).

*Economic Diplomacy.* To keep up with Chinese initiatives such as Asian Infrastructure and Investment Bank, Japan pledged 110 billion USD in cooperation

with the Asian Development Bank to develop quality infrastructures in Asia, in line with the Japanese ODA policy. This fact was not omitted in the Japanese agenda and discussion on the needs for good infrastructure and possible alignment of infrastructure projects within the G7 (Japan GOV 2016b).

The G7 also expressed support for Deauville Partnership focusing on the need for stability in the Middle East, among other topics there were topics on women's improvement, structural and economic reforms. Despite the signs of warming relations between Moscow and Tokyo, the summit has agreed to extend the sanctions against Russia, the former G8 member state. From Japan's point of view, there was a conflict of interest. Japan's interest in improving relations with Russia were aimed at a peace agreement as co-effort in resolving a dispute over the southern Kurils. But Tokyo has clashed with the interest of the G7 partners to pursue sanctioning policies towards Russia. Finally Japan supported sanctions as a disagreement with the annexation of the Crimea, while it kept a stance for developing economic ties with Russia (První zprávy 2016).

Japan confirmed her commitment to combat economic protectionism. Trade liberalization was supported through regional institutions such as the TTP, the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) and the CETA agreement between Japan and Canada. There was also a debate about the global surplus of industrial raw materials, in particular overproduction of Chinese steel, although China was not explicitly mentioned. Economic issues along with political dominated. Nothing concrete was negotiated, commitments such as increased efforts to resolve the current economic situation, and potential economic and non-economic risks of "Brexit" were also discussed (MOFA 2016c). This can change with signs of trade war between USA and China triggered by imposing new tariffs on steel in the USA.

In the economic sphere, Japan can be seen as a global economic leader, along with the USA, and at the same time as an economic and political balancer, actively striving for global economic and political stability. The traditionally strong Japanese side is the economic diplomacy, which is outside of areas of common interest, and can be a subject of rivalry with its G7 partners. That is why Japan can be assigned the role of a geo-economic actor in the G7, especially as competitor for the USA, Germany, France and the UK in the global economy. In military matters, Japan has been a logistics assistant in foreign missions supporting the allies.

*Efforts for Trust for Japan.* Japan's basic role in the G7 is the role of responsible member since its official founding in the G6 (1975). Another role of Japan as an important member of the general international community. The role of the he only representative of Asia in the 'western' leading economies (Tanaka 2016), and that of Japan's role of sole representative of Asian interests in the G7. Significant but not always highlighted is Japan's active role in peace-building and stability creation which

belongs among Japan's most important foreign policy priorities. Japan plays the role of a large investor in infrastructure projects, such as a massive investment in infrastructure in Asia in cooperation with the Asian Development Bank. Highlighted often is Japan's leading role in sustainable development (UNESCO, 2016). This all strengthens trust in Japan among G7 members and via the forum also in the eyes of world community.

To sum it up, this paper presented tangible Japan's roles that were morphed based on current Japan's foreign policy objectives. Visible is Japan's leading role in issues of sustainable development, global health, nuclear disarmament and in resolving mentioned global affairs. This reputation is also reflected in the general role of Japan as a reliable partner in the G7.

## **7 CONCLUSIONS**

The aim of the article was to analyse Japan's foreign policy objectives projected in G7 agenda. Based on an analysis of Japan's current foreign policy we tracked contemporary Japan's engagement in the G7 and extracted a set of roles which Japan performs. The default role is associated with the identification of Japan within the G7, that is, the role of an active and reliable member. In relation to a generally positive reputation and the significant role of Japan in the international community, Japan can be seen as a reliable partner within the G7 membership.

More specific roles are listed in the Figure 2 (cf. Kloza 2017). They result from the compilation of Japan's foreign policies with factors such as geographical location, sources of power, and the position of Japan in individual areas (economy, life expectancy, etc.). The list of the main identified roles include Japan's role of economic leader, a political role, a role of diplomatic balancer and mediator, a geo-economic actor, a direct foreign investor, an investor in foreign infrastructures, a donor of international development aid, a role in sustainable development and heritage, a role of the nuclear disarmament leader, a role of global supporter of nuclear safety, a promoter of the human security concept, a role of mediator in matters of emission control, a logistics assistant in international missions, the sole representative of Asia's interests in the G7 and a security correspondent of the Far East in the G7.

Table 2: Four priority areas of Japanese foreign policy and roles projected in the G7.

<b>1. Efforts for peace, stability</b>	<b>2. International Cooperation</b>	<b>3. Economic Diplomacy</b>	<b>4. Efforts for Trust for Japan</b>
Political balancer	Generous donor of ODA	Economic leader	Defender of cultural heritage
Diplomatic balancer	Sustainable developer	Economic balancer	Responsible member
Diplomatic mediator	Supporter of health care	Geo-economic actor	Asian interlocutor
Supporter for peace and stability	Leader in global disarmament	Foreign direct investor	Supporter of democracy
Logistic assistant in missions	Infrastructure builder	Investor in infrastructures	Human rights supporter
“defender“ of Asian interests	Supporter of nuclear security	Only Asian delegate	Women includer
Security correspondent	Promoter of “human security”	Supporter of free trade	World medic

Source: Own updated observations (cf. Kloza 2017).

Differentiation of identified G7 roles of Japan into the four specific objectives of Japanese foreign policy is however unambiguous. Some roles overlap with other roles, so their placement into clear categories is debatable. For instance, a role of an investor in foreign infrastructure can be part of Japan's International Cooperation (Development Cooperation and Response to Global Issues), as well as part of an economic diplomacy actor, and could overlap in the area of support for understanding and trust in Japan, as all these investments help to improve Japan's image abroad, as well as Japan's efforts to ensure peace and stability. Another finding was that the area of support for understanding and trust in Japan can be merged with the role of defender of the world cultural heritage. It follows that these predominantly ideological goals of Japanese foreign policy, represented in the four areas of Japan's current foreign policy interests, are not sufficiently visible in relation to Japan's roles in the G7.

The role is related to identity. The role of Japan as a global medical practitioner, can be seen as self-identification of Japan as an islands-nation in relation to the external environment. It is based on medium-term and long-term goals of Japanese foreign policy and individual measures leading to their fulfillment. A particular meaning and order in Japan's relationship with the G7 group gives the role of ‘medic’ in area of global health issues. Whether we look at the Japanese agenda of global health from the standpoint of explicit goals defined by Japanese foreign policy



or policy statements, or we look at the implicit goals of Japan's actions on global health issues, we will come to a similar or a very similar conclusion.

Theoretical part of article briefly reflected on the international organizations linked to Japan's G7 influence in the international community. In this view, the G7 reminds the prestigious discussion group with blurry impression about maintaining the current model of polarized development, mostly advantageous for G7 members, rather than a real decision-making structure defending the interests of global citizens, given its informal exclusive nature.

The initial part of the paper dealt with current Japan's foreign policy. The first part looked at it from a general view, the second part outlined the current goals of Japanese foreign policy, and the rest of analysis attempted to apply selected models from the theoretical part to the current foreign policy model of Japan. The result is finding of an increasingly Japan's pro-active foreign policy promoting power, economic and ideological goals, primarily through the means of soft power.

The major part of the paper analyzed Japan in relation to the G7 and reviewed the current challenges and topics addressed by Japan in relation to G7 activities. In the first part, Japan was compared with the G7 member states in selected indices and sources of power. Certain assumptions on Japan's behavior in the G7 confirmed the link between Japan's G7 position, derived from a comparison of sources of power with Japan's policy in the G7. One partial founding is a consensus between the general policy of the G7 and the objectives of Japan's foreign policy, as confirmed in the Ise-shima Summit in 2016. It clearly shows that Japan remains ally to the West.

By individual sectors, Japan is rather average member state in the G7. Unlike other G7 members, Japan does not share a direct land border with any state, so its dependence on shipping routes is much higher than for other members of the group. The combination of highly developed economy with security risks in the region, such as North Korean missile program or increasing regional maritime assertiveness of China, gives Japan a strong prerequisite for maritime safety and law support. Due to security and economic factors it can be expected that Japan will take a more pragmatic approach in the G7 format to support own strategic objectives. At the same time, the position of the only representative of Asia in the G7 is an exclusive opportunity for Japan to keep building bridges between the West and the East at the turn of the 2020.

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