

## **Japan's Historical Memory as a Tool for Resolving its Territorial Dispute with the Republic of Korea.**

The historical memory is an important strategic instrument of international relations. It is actively used by political elites in local and international conflicts. In the XXI century, many states need to use the historical memory to consolidate the nation, preserve its identity and rethink the “dark past”. Moreover, political elites have to support certain interpretations of historical past to legitimize their power. [Malinova, 2018] Moreover, countries work out their own strategy of politics of memory not only to strengthen national identities, but also to resolve international issues.

Japan uses the historical memory both in domestic and in foreign policy. The Japanese historical memory is reflected in the case of the territorial dispute with the Republic of Korea. It is very illustrative because of the period of the occupation of Korea by Japan (1910-1945). Issues of “the comfort women” and forced labour still influence relations between Japan and Korea. South Korea is dissatisfied with the Japanese position towards issues of the past. Furthermore, the Republic of Korea ties Japanese attempts to defend their sovereignty over the Liancourt islands (territories disputed between Japan and Korea) with the past Japanese militarism and colonial expansion.

The most vivid feature of the Japanese politics of memory is forgetting. Japan in its official narrative about Liancourt islands has to avoid its “dark past” as far as it possible in conditions of the pressure of countries, which demand the repentance for war crimes. [Dixon, 2018] The phenomena of forgetting in case of territorial dispute with Korea is reflected in such official Japanese documents as the Annual White Paper of the Ministry of Defence, in the official interpretation of international agreements (San-Francisco Peace Treaty [1951]) and in speeches of Japanese officials.

**References:**

- 1) Dixon J.M. Dark Pasts. Changing the State's Story in Turkey and Japan. - Cornell University Press, 2018.
- 2) Malinova, O. The Politics of Memory as a Field of Symbolic Politics // Methodological issues in memory studies, 2018.
- 3) Treaty of Peace with Japan Signed at San Francisco on 8 September 1951. URL <https://treaties.un.org/doc/Publication/UNTS/Volume%20136/volume-136-I-1832-English.pdf>