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# Accomplishments and Setbacks : The Lobbying Activities of the Japan Uyghur Association to the Japanese Government\*

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## Refereed Article

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### Abstract

This research analyzes Uyghur-related lobbying activities in Japan, through interviews of the Japan Uyghur Association (JUA) conducted in 2022. The JUA has clearly achieved some success regarding the scale of its activities. For instance, the Uyghur leader met with Japanese prime ministers many times and promoted some legislators to set up a coalition on the Uyghur issue. However, this study focuses more on its setbacks. While some researchers have analyzed this issue from an external perspective, including the Japanese government's concern about economic independence from China or the lack of related laws about human rights, this research turns to the Uyghur group's internal problems. I argue that the JUA has many problems in its lobbying activities, making it hard to influence the Japanese government. The issues raised by the JUA do not generate much public concern. It can also be argued that its proposition is too radical for the political, academic, and business circles to accept. The sudden death of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe also meant the loss of JUA's political backer. Furthermore, the JUA's turn to far-right wing groups damaged its influence and raised concerns about the group's respect for human rights.

**Keywords:** Japan Uyghur Association, lobbying, sanction, the Japanese government, Uyghurs

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## 1. Introduction

The Uyghur is an ethnic minority mainly living in the northwest of China. It is one of the ethnic minorities with the fastest population growth in China. In 2021, its population surpassed Hui and Miao, ranked China's third-largest ethnic group.<sup>1</sup> Many Uyghurs have immigrated to other countries since the beginning of the 20th century. Although there is a lack of enough statistics, it is estimated that millions of oversea Uyghurs live in Central Asia and Turkey. After the 1990s, due to concerns about the Chinese government's pressure and the host country's ethnic policies, some Uyghurs were further dispersed to other countries and regions, such as Europe (Germany) and North America (the U.S.) by funding themselves or with the help of local governments and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

As the third largest economic power in the world and China's neighboring country, Japan has received more and more Uyghur immigrants and diaspora in recent years. Japan is often seen as a monocultural country (despite the existence of minorities such as the Ainu) and a place hard for foreigners to join the mainstream. Nonetheless, because of China's strengthened assimilation policies and the relaxation of Japan's appeal to international laborers and students, the Uyghur population in Japan has risen rapidly. Although the proportion is still low, the number increased from around 1 thousand in 2010 to almost 3 thousand in 2022.<sup>2</sup>

During Chen Quanguo's five-year term in Xinjiang from 2016 to 2021, China turned to hard-line ethnic policies. As a result, overseas Uyghur groups strongly condemn the Chinese government's actions and lobby the host countries to sanction China. Still, the sanctions are not decisive factors that led China to shift its policy. Currently, research about Uyghur diasporas is usually on Turkey or Central Asian countries with large Uyghur populations. In recent decades, several Uyghurs fled to various countries (usually developed countries) to continue their demonstrations and struggle for their "East Turkestan." Thus, it is necessary to find out what they have done and how they lobbied the host country, which does not have a similar culture and religious background, to pressure China.

Many factors can affect the success of lobbying, but the frequency and effect of lobbying vary from region to region. Lobbying usually occurs in democratic countries because voters elect representatives who represent their will. These representatives need to be accountable to them. Japan is a democratic country. Various parties try to maximize their interests through lobbying activities.

Although Japan expressed concern about Xinjiang's human rights situation, it has not imposed strong sanctions on China as Uyghurs expected. Some analysts and scholars maintain Japan's cautious stance due to its economic connection with China or a lack of legislation.<sup>3</sup> Although these explanations are reasonable, they mainly look at external reasons. This research targets Japan's most influential Uyghur group, the Japan Uyghur Association (JUA). It analyzes the JUA's accomplishments and setbacks and focuses on the JUA's internal problems during the lobbying. I argue that the issues raised by the JUA do not generate much public concern. It can also be argued that its proposition is too radical for the political and business circles to accept. The JUA

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<sup>1</sup> "Bulletin of the Seventh National Census," The State Council, The People's Republic of China, accessed October 29, 2023, [https://www.gov.cn/guoqing/2021-05/13/content\\_5606149.htm](https://www.gov.cn/guoqing/2021-05/13/content_5606149.htm).

<sup>2</sup> "SōKū, No. 26," Japan Uyghur Association Report, accessed October 29, 2023, [https://uyghur-j.org/japan/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/JUA\\_Newsletter\\_No26\\_20220510.pdf](https://uyghur-j.org/japan/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/JUA_Newsletter_No26_20220510.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> Scott W. Harold, "Upcoming Summit an Opportunity for Japan to Reconsider Whether to Join Rest of G-7 in Sanctioning China Over Genocide," *RAND Corporation*, April 15, 2021, <https://www.rand.org/blog/2021/04/upcoming-summit-an-opportunity-for-japan-to-reconsider.html>.

cooperates loosely with other organizations, and its turn to far-right wing groups damaged its influence. Furthermore, the sudden death of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe meant the loss of JUA's political backer. These problems made it hard for Uyghurs to influence the Japanese government and raised concerns about their respect for human rights.

Compared with the U.S. and Germany, which have a larger Uyghur population, there are fewer studies on Uyghurs in Japan. Besides, most studies related to the Japanese government's attitude towards China's human rights issues were about the Tiananmen incident in 1989 instead of the latest Xinjiang issue. By analyzing the successes and failures of the JUA, this research will help other lobbying groups learn from its experience. In addition, it deepens the understanding of how the Japanese government deals with lobbying activities about sensitive human rights issues while trying to keep a balance with other interest groups and scholars.

This research was conducted through interviews. The interviewee was a director of the JUA. I went to Tokyo in July 2022 and received three pamphlets <*Things Happened on My Body — A Female Uyghur Woman's Testimony* published by the JUA. Besides, I participated in an assembly about Uyghur survivors from China's re-education centers, held in Osaka in October 2022. Besides looking through the official website of the JUA, I checked the related official websites, such as the World Uyghur Congress (WUC) and the Uyghur American Association (UAA), which support the Uyghur to achieve national self-determination through peaceful means. I also checked the JUA's partners in Japan, such as the Southern Mongolia Congress, which devotes itself to the establishment of a Mongolian-led independent country in China's Inner Mongolia.<sup>4</sup> Since much existing research did not observe the JUA's organizational structure, propaganda, and interaction with other groups, they failed to understand the consistency of the JUA's objectives and actions, how it allocates the budget, and how it affects public opinion and indirectly influences the government.

## 2. Background

With more information about Xinjiang's human rights violations, many developed countries imposed sanctions on Chinese officials and related companies. As the second largest economy in the capitalist camp and a member of the G7, Japan has shown its restraint in imposing sanctions while expressing deep concern about China's human rights issues including violations of religious freedom and forced imprisonment.<sup>5</sup> Although Tokyo emphasized it would not send a government delegation to the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics, the Chairman of Tokyo Olympics, Hashimoto Seiko, and two others still went to Beijing. The JUA knows it does not have enough power to confront China, and its appeals did not lead the Japanese government to adopt value-oriented diplomacy. Since few legislators were willing to listen to their pleas, the JUA stated, "Even if Japan lets us die, we will not give up."<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup> "Declaration," Southern Mongolia Congress, accessed October 29, 2023.

<http://southmongolia.org/sengen/>.

<sup>5</sup> "Resolution regarding the serious human rights situation in Xinjiang Uyghur and other areas," The House of Representatives, Japan, accessed October 29, 2023,

[https://www.shugiin.go.jp/internet/itdb\\_english.nsf/html/statics/english/ketugi\\_e220201-1.html](https://www.shugiin.go.jp/internet/itdb_english.nsf/html/statics/english/ketugi_e220201-1.html).

<sup>6</sup> "'Uiguru undō no kako to mirai' kōenkai hōkoku (Lecture Report on 'the Past and Future of the Uyghur Movement')," Japan Uyghur Association, accessed October 29, 2023,

<https://uyghur-j.org/japan/2011/06/%e3%80%8c%e3%82%a6%e3%82%a4%e3%82%b0%e3%83%ab%e9%81%8b%e5%8b%95%e3%81%ae%e9%81%8e%e5%8e%bb%e3%81%a8%e6%9c%aa%e6%9d%a5%e3%80%8d%e3%80%80%e8%ac%9b%e6%bc%94%e4%bc%9a%e3%80%80%e5%a0%b1%e5%91%8a/>.

Japan's tepid attitude is ascribed to a few factors. One explanation is that Japan's economic interdependence with China makes it worry that provoking China on human rights issues would lead to China's retaliation and worsen its economy.<sup>7</sup> Another explanation is that Japan seldom uses sanctions because parties and lawmakers cannot make a consensus on Japan's Diet.<sup>8</sup> The former Chief Cabinet Secretary, Katsunobu Kato, explained that there was no provision for imposing sanctions.<sup>9</sup> A senior Japanese official regarded the current evidence as still not entirely persuasive. He pointed out that Japan did not have intelligence agencies like the CIA to collect information.<sup>10</sup> Secretary-General Toshimitsu Motegi considered Japan needed to unite with related countries to demand improvements in China's human rights issue.<sup>11</sup> Although the president of the JUA, Uda, continues pushing the Japanese government to show intolerance to China's "genocide," his call did not change Tokyo's stance.

The previous studies show that scholars tend to focus on Japan's internal reasons, such as economic issues (Japan's economic connections with China) and legal issues (lack of decisive evidence and legal framework for sanctions). However, government decisions are often influenced by both internal and external factors that sometimes contradict or are consistent. Therefore, Japan's attitude is, to some extent, affected by the struggle for influence between the Chinese government and Uyghurs. Without an analysis of the JUA, it is difficult to understand the Japanese government's attitude.

## 2.1 A Short Review of the JUA

Uyghurs mainly live in Asia, Europe, and North America. Guang and Debata regarded Uyghurs as cultural diasporas, but the Chinese government's human rights violations in Xinjiang also make it fit the scope of victim diasporas.<sup>12</sup> In 2008, Uyghur diasporas established the JUA. Compared with the other Uyghur groups, such as the UAA and the WUC, the JUA was established as the latest. It may be due to the religious and cultural differences between Japanese and Uyghurs and the low acceptance of immigrants in Japanese culture. Until August 2021, the association had 950 members, which takes up nearly one-third of the Uyghur population in Japan.

Researchers found that Uyghurs in Turkey and the U.S. work in a variety of industries. However, the JUA is alert to these data. It is reluctant to reveal how its members came to Japan and their jobs, which makes it hard to know its members' situations. Nonetheless, it can be inferred that most members are not active. According to the pictures posted by the JUA, only about 20 people protested in Nagoya, and around 16 people celebrated the establishment of "East Turkestan" in 2021.<sup>13</sup> Based on the JUA's reports, the association's annual activities are

<sup>7</sup> Scott W. Harold, "Upcoming Summit an Opportunity for Japan to Reconsider Whether to Join Rest of G-7 in Sanctioning China Over Genocide," *RAND Corporation*, April 15, 2021, <https://www.rand.org/blog/2021/04/upcoming-summit-an-opportunity-for-japan-to-reconsider.html>.

<sup>8</sup> Takashi Narazaki, "Takaichi shi teian no taichū hinan ketsugi, jimintonai de mitomerarezu, 'taihen kuyashii' (Takaichi's proposed resolution condemning China was not approved by the Liberal Democratic Party. She said "Very frustrating")," *The Asahi Shimbun*, December 17, 2021, <https://www.asahi.com/articles/ASPDK6K7ZPDKUTFK01J.html>.

<sup>9</sup> The SanKei News, "Uiguru, myanma, naze nihon ha seisai shinai noka (Why does not Japan impose sanctions on Uyghur and Myanmar issues)?" *The SanKei News*, March 28, 2021, <https://www.sankei.com/article/20210328-OMGM4DPASZMUHEWHEFG65YKG24>.

<sup>10</sup> Jun Aoki, "Why is Japan cautious about taking stance on alleged Uyghur human rights abuse by China?" *The Mainichi*, March 17, 2021, <https://mainichi.jp/english/articles/20210316/p2a/00m/0op/019000c>.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Guang, Tian, and Mahesh Ranjan Debata, "Identity and Mobilization in Transnational Societies: A Case Study of Uyghur Diasporic Nationalism," *China & Eurasia Forum Quarterly* 8, 4 (2010): 63.

<sup>13</sup> "SōKū, No. 26," Japan Uyghur Association Report, accessed on October 29, 2023, [https://uyghur-j.org/japan/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/JUA\\_Newsletter\\_No26\\_20220510.pdf](https://uyghur-j.org/japan/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/JUA_Newsletter_No26_20220510.pdf).

uneven, but the overall trend is increasing. Its balance sheet was not shown to the public until the late 2010s. In 2012, it did not publish any activity report. After a six-year “dormant period” from 2014 to 2019, with the U.S. and Europe’s intensified criticism of Xinjiang’s human rights issues, the JUA’s activities ushered in explosive growth. 2022 has the highest number (45 times) of event reports ever. However, the number of JUA activities reduced again. The JUA only released nine activity reports in the first half of 2023.

The JUA aims to change people’s perceptions of Xinjiang and Uyghurs. For instance, although Xinjiang is regarded as a part of China’s territory, the JUA hopes that people can see Xinjiang as an independent country. East Turkestan, Uyghurs’ homeland, was annexed by the CCP in 1949 and is now colonized by the Chinese government.<sup>14</sup> Besides, the JUA is trying to persuade governments to define China’s acts in Xinjiang as forced labor, forced sterilization, and genocide to hold the top CCP leaders accountable. Although it does not specify how to punish their “crimes,” based on the jurisprudence of international courts or the laws of various countries, most responsible persons are sentenced to fixed-term, life imprisonment, or even the death penalty.

The JUA exerts influence on Japanese politicians through lobbying activities. Beyers classified lobbying into three categories: access, voice, and litigation.<sup>15</sup> The first two are primary ways. Access is a form of inside lobbying. Lobbyists engage with policymakers directly in informal situations, and two sides cooperate voluntarily.<sup>16</sup> Voice is an interaction on the table. On the one hand, lobbyists organize public activities or publish articles in the media to spread the word. On the other hand, they may stage demonstrations to attract public attention to pressure politicians. The JUA’s lobby activities can also be classified based on these two categories.

Regarding the form of “access,” the JUA lobbies Japanese politicians and scholars, invites WUC officials or other Uyghurs to give speeches and reports the condemnation and sanctions against China from countries around the world. Besides, It mourns July 5 as “the day of massacres” and holds events with Hong Kong, Inner Mongolia, and Tibetan groups in Japan. They work together on requesting the Japanese government to condemn China.

The JUA’s “voice” is more frequent. In terms of attracting public attention, the JUA introduces Uyghurs’ traditions and emphasizes that Xinjiang is not Han Chinese territory but the homeland of Uyghurs, which was invaded by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). It celebrates November 12 as the founding day of the “East Turkestan.” They also show the Japanese audiences how Uyghurs suffered from the Chinese government’s unjust policies and persecutions. Besides, the JUA tries to make connections between Uyghur and Japanese issues. For example, the U.S. dropped two atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki at the end of World War Two to speed up the war, causing mass casualties. The anti-war and anti-nuclear sentiments of these two cities’ citizens are stronger than those of other cities in Japan. By comparing the nuclear attacks suffered by Japan, the JUA stated that China’s nuclear experiments were evil to win the Japanese people’s sympathy. It distributes leaflets in front of the Yasukuni Shrine on August 15, a sensitive day when discussing whether to call this day “Victory over Japan Day” (V-J Day) or “the anniversary of the end of World War Two (*shusenbi*).” Involving in these controversial activities brings the JUA a greater focus.

<sup>14</sup> “About the association,” Japan Uyghur Association, accessed October 29, 2023, <https://uyghur-j.org/japan/about/>.

<sup>15</sup> Voltolini, Benedetta, “*Lobbying in EU foreign policy-making towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: Exploring the potential of a constructivist perspective*” (PhD diss., London School of Economics and Political Science, 2013), 45.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

## 2.2 China's Reactions to the JUA

Compared with the JUA's frequent activities in Japan, China's reactions seem issueless. According to the director of the JUA, staff at the Chinese embassy or consulates in Japan have never interfered with the propaganda and protests conducted by the JUA (until my interview conducted in July 2022). An exception was that during a commemoration of the victims of the 100th of the CCP's founding held by Hong Kong, Uyghurs, and Inner Mongols in Japan in 2021, a man in black shouted that "without the CCP, there would be no new China."<sup>17</sup> However, the probability of Chinese officials' involvement was low since only one person protested, and it neither had much impact on the venue nor caused the suspension of the meeting.

The director of the JUA told me that China rarely fights back because Japan is a free and democratic country. If Uyghurs demonstrated in China, the government would not allow it or even send those protestors to jail. Besides, he thought Japan was a powerful country, so China was unable to interfere with Japan's domestic issues. However, there are other reasons China is concerned. The Uyghur population in Japan is small, and the JUA's influence is not as noteworthy as the WUC's. Disrupting those activities organized by the JUA or other anti-China groups would not solve the problem and leave a pretext for those groups if exposed. As long as Tokyo does not touch on Beijing's core interests, such as supporting the Uyghur independence movement, Beijing may see no need to worsen the Sino-Japan relations because of the Uyghur issue.

## 3. The JUA's Accomplishments and Setbacks

Although the JUA has not been established for a long time, it has achieved some goals. For instance, the JUA aims to disseminate information on the history and culture of "East Turkestan" and works to spread understanding of the Uyghur issue.<sup>18</sup> It donated materials about Uyghur culture to many libraries and individuals. As a result, donations from Japanese society have increased significantly in recent years, far exceeding the amount of membership fees. The JUA has also promoted more than one hundred legislators to join the alliance investigating human rights violations in China and introduced the situation in Xinjiang to Prime Ministers Abe and Kishida. In this regard, it is a huge improvement considering the relatively small number of Uyghur diaspora and the Japanese government's low-key attitude towards international issues. In comparison, the U.S. government has been the strongest critic of Xinjiang's human rights violations. However, the leaders of Uyghur groups in America, such as the UAA, have not met directly with the U.S. leaders. Only some Uyghur survivors met President Trump in 2019 with other representatives who claimed being oppressed by the Chinese government.

Besides, although the Japanese government often chooses to not fight back when the issue is related to its economic interests, Japan's economic interdependence with China does not keep Tokyo silent. 2022 is the 50th anniversary of the normalization of Sino-Japan relations. Still, together with other 46 countries, Japan expressed severe concern about Xinjiang's human rights issue in June.<sup>19</sup> In October, it called for a meeting to discuss the

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<sup>17</sup> Tadasu Nishitani, "Chūgoku kyōsantō 100 nen, tonai deha 'tsuitō shūkai' ga okonaware keisatsu sata ni (A 'memorial rally' of the Chinese Communist Party's 100th Anniversary was held in Tokyo, causing the involvement of the police)," *Sakisuru*, July 2, 2021, <https://sakisuru.jp/5345>.

<sup>18</sup> "About the Association," Japan Uyghur Association, accessed October 29, 2023, <https://uyghur-j.org/japan/about/>.

<sup>19</sup> "Joint Statement on behalf of 47 countries in the UN Human Rights Council on the human rights situation in China," Government of the Netherlands, accessed October 29, 2023, <https://www.government.nl/documents/diplomatic-statements/2022/06/14/joint-statement-47-countries-un-human-rights-council-situation-china>.



report conducted by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in August.<sup>20</sup> Although the resolution was narrowly missed by two votes, the Japanese Diet still passed resolutions on this issue. Despite not directly mentioning China, Japan's House of Councillors and the House of Representatives passed resolutions about gathering information and working with the international community to focus on human rights issues, including Xinjiang, Tibet, Hong Kong, and Inner Mongolia.<sup>21</sup>

However, on the other hand, the JUA has some setbacks in its lobbying campaign. Uyghurs are disappointed for not impelling Japan to condemn China. Beginning in 2020, the JUA has gradually strengthened its lobbying efforts. It requests the Japanese government to condemn China's acts in Xinjiang strongly, labeling China's acts as genocide and Uyghurs in Japan as refugees, changing the nationality column of Uyghurs' residence card to Xinjiang. The JUA also requires Japan to do legislation on sanctions. The Japanese government's reaction is not as positive as the JUA expected. It only showed concern for China's human rights situation. This research will examine why Uyghurs' lobbying activities are ineffective.

#### 4. Factors Needed for Successful Lobbying

Since lobbying is one of the JUA's vital missions in Japan, it is necessary to view crucial factors that can affect the success of lobbying. However, policy issues differ considerably in various features. They create an environment that can be favorable or unfavorable for interest groups.<sup>22</sup> Lobbying groups adopting the same tactics may succeed on one issue but fail on another. Still, by studying the cases of different lobbying groups in various countries, researchers concluded some prerequisites.

The success of lobbying depends on whether lobbyists can cooperate smoothly with decision-makers. Sometimes, lobbyists fail because of the policymaker's personal beliefs, even though they have tried hard.<sup>23</sup> Some lobbyists fail because their targets are not reliable and accountable.<sup>24</sup> Although there is not always a common interest between lobbyists and policymakers, lobbyists need to find common ground on both sides that would benefit the latter by following their advice. The benefit may reflect political achievements at the individual level, gain more votes from the party's stand, and maintain national interests at the national level.

Heike studied lobbying groups in the EU and the commonalities of successful lobbying groups. She found that interest groups with more like-minded companions are more likely to succeed than those with fewer companions or lobbying alone.<sup>25</sup> Also, interest groups affiliated with larger lobbying coalitions are more likely to succeed than members belonging to smaller lobbying coalitions.<sup>26</sup> It demonstrates that collective influence is often greater than the individual. Coalitions of lobbyists with a common interest are well-funded to target mass decision-makers and can mobilize more voters to pressure them.

<sup>20</sup> Teppei Kasai, "Japan Highlights Chinese Government Rights Abuses," *Human Rights Watch*, December 7, 2022, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/12/08/japan-highlights-chinese-government-rights-abuses>.

<sup>21</sup> "Shinkyō uiguru nado ni okeru shinkokuna jinken jyokyō ni taisuru ketsugian (Resolution on Serious Human Rights Situation in Xinjiang and Other Areas)," House of Councillors, The National Diet of Japan and The House of Representatives, Japan, accessed October 29, 2023, <https://www.sangiin.go.jp/japanese/gianjoho/ketsugi/210/221205.html>.

<sup>22</sup> Klüver, Heike, "The contextual nature of lobbying: Explaining lobbying success in the European Union," *European Union Politics* 12, 4(2011): 483-484.

<sup>23</sup> Erdélyi, Gábor, et al., "The Complexity of Probabilistic Lobbying," *International Conference on Algorithmic Decision Theory*, Berlin, Heidelberg: Springer Berlin Heidelberg, (2009): 87.

<sup>24</sup> Mahoney, Christine, "Lobbying success in the United States and the European Union," *Journal of Public Policy* 27, 1(2007): 39.

<sup>25</sup> Klüver, Heike, "The contextual nature of lobbying: Explaining lobbying success in the European Union," *European Union Politics* 12, 4(2011): 500.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid*: 502.



Liu and Ishizawa focused on Japan's cases. They studied how public opinions influence decision-making, especially the relationship between core policies and the timing of elections. They demonstrated that the Japanese government generally does not pass core policies that the public opposes during elections but is more likely to do it during non-election periods.<sup>27</sup> Besides, the government gives up passing non-core policies if the public opposes no matter if it is in the election period.<sup>28</sup> The significance of policy and whether it is during the election period are important considerations when the government implements policies. Since guaranteeing victory in elections by raising issues that voters care about or shelving some meaningless issues is crucial for parties, lobbying groups should be sensitive to election seasons. Wang took the example of Japan Agricultural Cooperatives and found that it concentrated political resources, such as votes, funds, interpersonal relations, and demonstrations to pressure decision-makers.<sup>29</sup> Among them, interpersonal relations require years of continuous nurturing before they prove useful at critical moments.

Christine summarized five elements required for successful lobbying.<sup>30</sup> First, the lobbying goals should not be too large. If the reach is too broad, the interests of different industries and the public will be expanded, which is more likely to cause resistance and dissatisfaction. Second, the issue should be a public concern and galvanize support in their favor.<sup>31</sup> If the lobbying issue is not relevant to the public, the possibility of success is low. Third, lobbyists need to have a strong influence. It includes financial resources, membership size, and advocate type.<sup>32</sup> Lobbying groups have more chances when they make a voice and represent the interests of mass voters. They can pay influential social media to advertise their opinions or hire people to support or protest. Fourth, policymaker positions and the tactics of the lobbyists. Due to institutional stickiness, advocates who are fighting for the status quo are more likely to attain their goals than those pushing for a policy change.<sup>33</sup> Lastly, specialized lobbying techniques. Lobbyists can hire consultants or cooperate with other groups to strengthen themselves.<sup>34</sup> It is easier for a lobby group to achieve its goals when it cooperates with other organizations that share a common goal than if it goes it alone.

As explained above, many factors may affect the success of lobbying. Lobbying is generally affected by decision-makers, the number of lobbying groups, cultures, and other factors. There is no consensus among scholars on the key factors. This research combines similar major factors and concentrates on five to analyze the JUA's lobbying. Four internal points include the lobbying issue that the JUA proposes, the goals and scope of lobbying, tactics, and the JUA's influence. One external point is the accountability of decision-makers.

#### 4.1 The Lobbying Issue that the JUA Proposes

The first factor that affects lobbying success is that the content should be of public concern. In the post-Cold War period, collective action and negotiations have become more difficult.<sup>35</sup> As a result, the government's

<sup>27</sup> Ishizawa, Liu, "Gonggong yulun dui zhengfu juece de yingxiang -- yi lengzhan hou riben zhuyao zhengce weizhu (The Influence of Public Opinion on Government Decision-Making — Based on Japan's Major Policies after the Cold War)," *Quarterly Journal of International Politics* 2, 3(2017): 144.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Wang Xincheng, "Ribei zhengzhi de weilai fazhan qushi (The Future Trend of Japanese Politics)," *International Politics Quarterly* 3, 3(2011): 2.

<sup>30</sup> Mahoney, Christine, "Lobbying success in the United States and the European Union," *Journal of Public Policy* 27, 1(2007): 40.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid: 41.

<sup>33</sup> Dekker, Michelle M, "Ethnic Lobbying and Diaspora Politics in the US The Case of the Pro-Palestinian Movement" (MS thesis., Universiteit Utrecht, 2010), 7.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Katada Saori N, "Why did Japan suspend foreign aid to China? Japan's foreign aid decision-making and sources of aid sanction," *Social Science Japan Journal* 4, 1(April 2001): 55.

behavior towards other countries is more dependent on domestic support than allies. If the voice of the people is not strong enough, lawmakers do not have the incentive to propose. The government's resources and energy are limited. The free flow of capital caused by globalization has also made some governments remain silent on some human rights or environmental issues in exchange for economic development. If people and groups do not put pressure on the government, politicians will not have enough motivation.

In Taiwan, a mother called Ke lobbied the Guomindang (GMD) for her son killed in a car accident. It eventually gave birth to the Automobile Mandatory Liability Insurance Act.<sup>36</sup> In the 1980s, the Awakening Foundation spent 11 years lobbying for gender equality laws.<sup>37</sup> These two cases, daily transportation and the protection of women's rights, are what the public is concerned about. Even so, the two lobbying campaigns took around a decade since Taiwan was still in transition to democracy at the time. Cases that have little connection with the public interest were harder to succeed.

In Japan, many people do not know about the Uyghur issue because they seldom watch TV or read newspapers.<sup>38</sup> According to NHK's investigation of the 2022 Senate Elections, 59% cared most about economic policies and social security.<sup>39</sup> While diplomacy and international security ranked third, they referred more to China, North Korea, and Russia's military power instead of human rights issues. Therefore, the Uyghur issue is not on the priority list of the Japanese people. Zhang argued that Japanese politicians would not get more votes for taking a tough approach in human rights diplomacy, nor would they lose elections for not taking a hard-line approach.<sup>40</sup> It is not because the Japanese do not care about human rights issues but because the stop of human rights violations cannot bring people perceptible material benefits, which increases the difficulty of lobbying.

## 4.2 The Goals and Scope of Lobbying

The goals and scope of lobbying should not be broad. Otherwise, it may affect the interests of other groups and cause resistance. The JUA is not an influential group, and only in recent years has it begun to lobby. Hence, the JUA needs to be careful whether its goals conflict with other interest groups while lobbying. In Japan, interest groups, lawmakers, and bureaucrats make up a triangle. They decide on policies together.<sup>41</sup> Nonetheless, the JUA asks the Japanese government to define China's actions in Xinjiang as genocide and requires Japanese companies to examine whether their products are related to forced labor and surveillance systems.<sup>42</sup> Although the JUA united with other groups to put pressure on the Japanese government, its lobbying activities were

<sup>36</sup> Chiang, Nien-Tsu, "Lobbying Strategy Models for Taiwan Interest Groups" (PhD diss., National Chengchi University, 2006), 47.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid, 50.

<sup>38</sup> "Yoron chōsa de tadoru 'terebi' shichō no chōki suii, 1960 nen kara 2020 nen made (Long-term trends in television viewing traced by public opinion polls from 1960 to 2020)," Broadcasting Culture Research Institute, accessed October 29, 2023, [https://www.nhk.or.jp/bunken/book/media/pdf/2022\\_3\\_11.pdf](https://www.nhk.or.jp/bunken/book/media/pdf/2022_3_11.pdf).

<sup>39</sup> NHK, "Sangiin senkyo 'kanarazu iku' 55%, jūshi suru seisaku ha? NHK yoron chōsa (55% interviewees said they would vote for the election of House of Councilors. What policies do they focus on? NHK poll)," *NHK*, June 27, 2022, <https://www.nhk.or.jp/politics/articles/lastweek/85217.html>.

<sup>40</sup> Zhang Yun, "Ribei de renquan waijiao nenggou zou duoyuan (How far can Japan's human rights diplomacy go)," *Lianhe Zaobao*, November 16, 2021, <https://www.kzaobao.com/mon/keji/20211116/104468.html>.

<sup>41</sup> Huang Ziting, "The Lobbying Factor and Role Played by Interest Groups in Free Trade Policy in Japan, as Exemplified by Nippon Keidanren and the Japan Agriculture Cooperative," *Taiwan Economic Forum* 6, 1(2008): 73.

<sup>42</sup> "Uiguru jin ra ni taisuru daikibō kanshi oyobi shinkokuna jinken shingai wo jochō suru nikkei kikyō no gijyutsu to sekinin (The Responsibility of Japanese Companies to Share Technology to Facilitate Mass Surveillance and Serious Human Rights Violations against Uyghurs)," Japan Uyghur Association, accessed October 29, 2023, <https://uyghur-j.org/japan/2023/01/%e8%a8%98%e8%80%85%e4%bc%9a%e8%a6%8b%e3%81%ae%e3%81%8a%e7%9f%a5%e3%82%89%e3%81%9b%e3%80%80%e3%80%8c%e3%82%a6%e3%82%a4%e3%82%b0%e3%83%ab%e4%ba%ba%e3%82%89%e3%81%ab%e5%af%be%e3%81%99%e3%82%8b%e5%a4%a7/>.

difficult to effect when facing groups with strong lobbying capabilities and political parties advocating the development of Sino-Japanese relations.

In the Japanese Diet, whether genocide exists in Xinjiang sparked debate. Although the JUA has won the sympathy of some Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) members, it encountered obstacles from the Komeito. Despite the LDP has been in power for a long time after the war, it had to collaborate with the Komeito to get more votes in recent years. The 1994 electoral reform has made Japan's elections more party-centered. In this unpredictable post-reform electoral context, the LDP's support base is far shakier than its recent electoral success measured in Diet seat totals would suggest.<sup>43</sup> Based on Adam and Maeda's analysis of Diet seat totals, cooperation with the Komeito is necessary for the single-party majority because the Komeito has loyal supporters in cities.<sup>44</sup> Without the Komeito supporters, the LDP would not get more than half of the seats.<sup>45</sup> As a result, the interdependence and cooperation between the two parties forced the LDP to seek compromise with Komeito on some issues.

On the other hand, the Komeito is backed by a Buddhist group called Soka Gakkai, which advocates pacifist ideology. Since its inception in 1964, the Komeito's diplomatic role in Asian geopolitics has been to promote good relations with China.<sup>46</sup> Sino-Japanese relations deteriorated in early 2000 due to Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's visit to the Yasukuni Shrine. It was the Komeito representative Takenori Kanzaki who went to China and delivered a personal letter from Koizumi, which expressed hope for a national summit.<sup>47</sup> The current representative of the Komeito, Yamaguchi Natsuo, believes its mission is to find "a new middle way."<sup>48</sup> It means that the Komeito needs to "rectify" the policy of the LDP it deems inappropriate. Mainichi Shinbun reported that Komeito tried to prevent the LDP from excessively confronting China and keeping balance.<sup>49</sup> The Sankei News also reported that Komeito requested to delete the words "human rights violation" and "condemnation," and avoid specifying "China" in the resolution about Xinjiang.<sup>50</sup> The Komeito's intervention reflects its consistent pacifist ideology.

The JUA is not satisfied with Japan's "deep concern" but asks for substantive acts, such as sanctions or replacing China with Xinjiang on their residence cards. Nevertheless, Uyghurs have never posted any interactions with legislators from Komeito. It seems that Uyghurs ignored Komeito's role when lobbying since the Japanese prime ministers basically came from the LDP except for a few years after the war. Replacing the names of politically sensitive regions is equivalent to asking the Japanese government to acquiesce that Xinjiang is not part of China. The consequences may even lead to the severance of diplomatic relations. Neither the LDP nor the Komeito can bear such consequences. The JUA's radical advocacy and neglect of the Komeito are hindrances to its goals.

<sup>43</sup> Liff, Adam P., and Ko Maeda, "Electoral incentives, policy compromise, and coalition durability: Japan's LDP-Komeito Government in a mixed electoral system," *Japanese Journal of Political Science* 20, 1(2019): 61.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid: 63.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Stewart, Devin, "China's Influence in Japan," *Center for Strategic & International Studies* (July 2020): 28.

<sup>47</sup> Przystup, James J, "Dialogue of the almost deaf," *Comparative Connections* 6, 1(2004): 108.

<sup>48</sup> Iwao Miyajima, "Jikō renritsu seiken ni suishinryoku, kazu ni ogoranu 'chūdō seiji' (LDP-Komeito coalition government gains momentum by pursuing "middle-way politics" without boasting of numbers)," *FACTA Online*, February 2015, <https://facta.co.jp/article/201502006.html>.

<sup>49</sup> Mainichi Shinbun, "Jimin de taichū kyōkōron ga aitsugu haikai 'kōmei ga ashi wo hipparu' to fuman mo (The background of LDP's hard-line attitude against China: Some complain that 'Komei is holding back')," *Mainichi Shinbun*, April 7, 2021, <https://mainichi.jp/articles/20210407/k00/00m/010/324000c>.

<sup>50</sup> The Sakei News, "Shūin de 'taichū jinken hinan' ketsugi 'jinken shingai' bungen ya nazashi ha kaihi (The House of Representatives passed the resolution, condemning human rights violations in China, without mentioning China)," *The Sankei News*, February 1, 2022, <https://www.sankei.com/article/20220201-PJ55CPI5RNNPZJKLKEXCSYB7AQ/>.

In the industry, many companies worried that they had to take stances because of the political pressure. The JUA asked Japanese companies to check if their products involve forced labor or support China's massive surveillance system. It asked 14 Japanese companies, including Toshiba and Mitsubishi, to check their supply chain. However, this near-compulsive behavior has no legal support and may cause companies resentment. China's human rights record has been criticized for decades, and the Japanese know it well. Small lobby groups are less likely to succeed in achieving their goals when confronted by bigger groups. In the U.S., companies investing in countries with terrible human rights records are more likely to lobby Congress to reduce their risks.<sup>51</sup> Uyghurs may need to avoid overestimating the significance of human rights to companies when they have to choose one with the best interests. Many companies belong to lobby groups with more money and stronger influence than the JUA. Forcing companies to take sides without providing conclusive evidence may worsen the JUA's image. Yanai Tadashi, the CEO of Uniqlo, emphasized that "simply choosing a political stance means the death of business" when commenting on the Xinjiang issue.<sup>52</sup> Muji answered that it would not change its policy unless evidence was shown.<sup>53</sup>

### 4.3 The JUA's Influence

The success of lobbying groups crucially depends on how much influence they can wield. As the attitude of the Japanese government towards the Uyghur issue is considerably settled by that of the Japanese people, the JUA can change the attitude of the government by influencing the Japanese people. The first point that determines influence is population. Generally, bigger groups have stronger power to collect money or propagandize their claims. Irish Americans constituted about 12% of the U.S. population.<sup>54</sup>

Nonetheless, Uyghurs have only 3,000 people in Japan, about 0.0024% of Japan's population. Most are not Japanese citizens. They do not have the right to vote or the quality to be chosen. Without voting rights, it is hard to substantially influence Japanese politics because candidates and parties prioritize the concerns of the Japanese people who can determine the election.

Sometimes, however, if the population distribution is concentrated, the minority can still have regional influence even if the total population is small. According to Paul's calculation, Jews took up 3% population of the U.S. They mainly lived in twelve key states and held 15% votes of the Democratic Party in New York.<sup>55</sup> Another community, the Armenian American, concentrated in some populated states, such as California, New York, and Massachusetts.<sup>56</sup> The Uyghur population is too small to be considered influential even in small and medium cities. Even if it is calculated based on the 3% Jewish population, the Uyghur population needs to reach millions to be feasible in Japan. Judging from the current Uyghur population, this is unrealistic because the total foreign population in Japan is less than 3%.

Without the right to vote, Uyghurs can seek out politicians who can represent their interests. Jews participate in political activities actively. Their voting rate reached nearly 90% compared with the U.S. national average of

<sup>51</sup> Hafner-Burton, Emilie M., and Heidi M. McNamara, "United States human rights policy: The corporate lobby," *Human Rights Quarterly* 41, 1(2019): 120.

<sup>52</sup> The Sankei News, "Fasutori no yanai shi 'jinken shingai yōnin sezu' uiguru mem nentō (Yanai of Fast Retailing 'No tolerance for human rights violations' concerning Uyghur cotton)," *The Sankei News*, October 14, 2021, <https://www.sankei.com/article/20211014-FPRS4DBTTBPHJDKDWRNTKVNJY/>.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Dekker, Michelle M, "Ethnic Lobbying and Diaspora Politics in the US The Case of the Pro-Palestinian Movement" (MS thesis., Universiteit Utrecht, 2010), 20.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid, 21.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid, 16.

40% to 55%.<sup>57</sup> They took up 7% of seats in the U.S. Congress and 9% in the Senate in 2016.<sup>58</sup> The proportion of representatives has reached two to three times their population. In comparison, only one Uyghur Japanese, Eri Arfiya, has become a Japanese senator so far (2023). While she maintains human rights-oriented diplomacy, there is no content about her interaction with JUA. The JUA congratulated her victory but did not express to have further contact with her. The extent to which she can convey the Uyghur claims in Japan remains a question. Besides, although a league of legislators supports the Uyghur in Japan, it has been suspended from 2012 to the end of 2020. In early 2021, about 30 people attended the first meeting after the chairman reorganized the league.<sup>59</sup> However, Japan's House of Representatives and Senate have more than 700 members. It also proves that the proportion of legislators willing to speak out for Uyghur is still low.

The second point that affects a lobbying group's influence is funding. The JUA is self-funded through membership dues and donations. The Japanese government does not provide financial support to it. In comparison, the U.S. has funded groups, including Uyghurs under the consideration of human rights and reality. The UAA receives \$249,000 annually from the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), a semi-official organization that gets money from the U.S. Congress.<sup>60</sup> While relative independence from the government makes its message more persuasive and objective, it may cause financial insufficiency and affect the JUA's advocacy and lobbying efforts.

The amount of funds raised by the JUA is insufficient and uneven. Pro-Israel lobbyists and donors spent more than \$22 million during the 2018 election cycle in the U.S.<sup>61</sup> Jews have money because many successful Jewish merchants back them. In Japan, lobbying groups or companies, such as Canon, contributed 40 million to the LDP in 2021.<sup>62</sup> Although it is unfair to compare a small group with big companies, underfunding of the JUA weakens its influence on political parties. The JUA's report, which started its public expenditure table in 2016, shows that its earnings have surged from 795,000 yen (around \$7,000) in 2016 to 28 million yen (around \$252,000) in 2021. Its expenditure on publicity in 2021 was 12.3 million yen (around \$110,700).<sup>63</sup>

Nevertheless, most of the publicity expenses were spent on donating books related to Uyghur history and culture to schools and holding lectures. There is no data on political contributions to policymakers or parties. While books about Uyghur history and culture can deepen people's understanding of the Uyghur culture, their impact on decision-makers is limited.

In addition to policy-makers' consideration of national interests, the influence of the organization itself may be a vital factor in determining the success of lobbying. However, some activities may harm a group's influence.

<sup>57</sup> Teruya Hiroyuki, "Amerika atsuryoku dantai no kokusaika -- isuraeru robi to nihon robi wo chūshin ni (Internationalization of American Pressure Groups: Focusing on the Israel Lobby and the Japanese Lobby)," *Okidai Hogaku* 11, 12(1991): 51.

<sup>58</sup> Mohammed Al-Minshawi, "Youtai xuanpiao ruhe yingxiang meiguo daxuan (How did the Jewish vote affect the U.S. election)," *Aljazeera*, October 20, 2020,

<https://chinese.aljazeera.net/opinions/2020/10/20/%E7%8A%B9%E5%A4AA%E9%80%89%E7%A5%A8%E5%A6%82%E4%BD%95%E5%BD%B1%E5%93%8D%E7%BE%8E%E5%9B%BD%E5%A4%A7%E9%80%89%E7%BC%9F>.

<sup>59</sup> The Sankei News, "Jimin no uiguru giren, ritsumin ya ishin fukume chōtōha ni jinken kaizen yōkyū ketsugi he hazumi (Liberal Democratic Party's Uyghur Parliamentary League with Ritsumin and Ishin, gain impetus for a resolution demanding improvement of human rights)," *The Sankei News*, February 10, 2021,

<https://www.sankei.com/article/20210210-FCZJOWHJDJN7LFFN7QDNNJFAU/>.

<sup>60</sup> Lai, David, *The United States and China in power transition* (Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College, 2011), 171.

<sup>61</sup> Tom Perkins, "Pro-Israel donors spent over \$22m on lobbying and contributions in 2018," *The Guardian*, February 15, 2019,

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2019/feb/15/pro-israel-donors-spent-over-22m-on-lobbying-and-contributions-in-2018>.

<sup>62</sup> The newsroom, "Jimintō he no kenkingaku ga ōkii jōjō kigyō rankingu TOP 20 (Top 20 companies with the largest donations to the Liberal Democratic Party)," *Japan Company Handbook*, February 9, 2022,

<https://shikiho.toyokeizai.net/news/0/509298>.

<sup>63</sup> "Tokutei hieiri katsudō hōjin uiguru bunka senta teikan (The Final Payment of the Specified Nonprofit Corporation, Uyghur Cultural Center)," Bureau of Citizens, Culture and Sports, accessed October 29, 2023,

[https://www.seikatubunka.metro.tokyo.lg.jp/houjin/npo\\_houjin/list/ledger/0014235/14235-SNS-I1670199228556.pdf](https://www.seikatubunka.metro.tokyo.lg.jp/houjin/npo_houjin/list/ledger/0014235/14235-SNS-I1670199228556.pdf).



Japan's caution on Xinjiang has made the JUA turn to far right-wing scholars and politicians for help. Shinzo Abe is a conservative right-wing politician. He actively promoted the revision of the constitution to strengthen the Japanese military power and the national identity of the Japanese people. On the other hand, he admitted Japan's aggression and colonial behavior in World War Two and expressed the need to reflect. However, the far-right partners of the JUA are more radical. Their claims usually include racism, radical nationalism, historical revisionism, and xenophobia. Cooperation with them may not strengthen the JUA's influence and even have a negative effect.

In August 2022, Fujii Genki, a commentator who claims that it was the U.S rather than Japan that was the real invader during World War Two and that sex slaves in Korea and the Nanjing massacre were fabricated, was invited by the JUA to talk about the independence issue.<sup>64</sup> Another far right-wing political activist, Sakurai Yoshiko, who believes the current description of Japan during the war is wrong and asserted that neighboring China is a disaster given to Japan by god, was also invited to give speeches.<sup>65</sup> Moreover, some of the audience attending the JUA's activities have shown conservative colors. In October 2022, the Japan Uyghur Parliamentary Alliance and the JUA jointly organized the Uyghur Testimony Meeting in Higashi-Osaka City. Based on my observation, two-thirds to three-quarters of the audience were middle-aged and elderly. A male audience was wearing a *kyokujitsuki*, which featured a red sun radiating outward. This symbol has been controversial among Asian victims of Japan's wartime aggression because it reminds people of militarism during the war.

The JUA's collaboration with far-right-wing personnel and groups looks like a win-win since they have the same objective. It enables the JUA to use the power of the local far right-wing groups to increase its criticism of China and propagandize itself. China's repression of Uyghurs also gives Japan's far right wing an outlet for promoting their opinion and containing China. Nonetheless, the middle-aged and the elderly are the main body of right-wingers, while the proportion of the young is low. According to The Mainichi's investigation of 3,600 people in 2014, around 45% of readers who read news and books about "anti-China or anti-Korea" are more than 60 years old, compared with only 3% readers between 10 to 20 years old, and 8% readers between 20-30 years old.<sup>66</sup> Far-right-wing groups are not popular among young Japanese people. If the JUA's propaganda is only effective for the elderly, its influence may become limited because these people have a higher negative attitude towards China. They may be more willing to look for adverse news related to China.

#### 4.4 Tactics

Lobbying to maintain existing policies is more successful than changing them. Whereas the JUA proposes to change the current Sino-Japan relations politically, and the supply chain of some Chinese and Japanese products economically. Thus, it makes lobbying difficult as it leads to higher costs. In addition, tactics mainly refer to collaboration with other groups with similar objectives and hiring consultants. Scholars pointed out that the success of lobbying requires the participation and collaboration of mass interest groups. For instance, the 21st

<sup>64</sup> "Inform," Japan Uyghur Association, accessed October 29, 2023, <https://uyghur-j.org/japan/2022/08/%e8%97%a4%e4%ba%95%e5%8e%b3%e5%96%9e%e6%b0%8f%e3%81%ab%e3%82%88%e3%82%8b%e7%89%b9%e5%88%a5%e8%ac%9b%e6%bc%94%e3%80%80%e3%83%bc%e3%80%80%e3%82%a6%e3%82%a4%e3%82%b0%e3%83%ab%e7%8b%ac%e7%ab%8b%e5%95%8f/>.

<sup>65</sup> Sakurai Yoshiko, *Ikei no daikoku chūgoku -- karera ni kokoro wo yurushite ha naranai* (A Strange Superpower, China — We must not relax our vigilance on them) (Shinchosha, 2010), 1.

<sup>66</sup> Tsunehito Furuya, "Shinkō suru 'netto uyoku' no kōreika mondai (The problem of aging 'internet right wing')," *Yahoo Japan News*, October 26, 2014, <https://news.yahoo.co.jp/expert/articles/eeae03e0078e78cf8fd0a056cdadb69a5091e4bd>.



Century Cures Act passed under the Obama administration brought more than 400 interest groups together, reflecting the bill's broad scope and impact.<sup>67</sup> Also, a coalition of more than 450 environmental groups, manufacturing associations, and individuals lobbied the lawmakers to pass the Toxic Substances Control Act and successfully impelled the Environmental Protection Agency to ban toxic chemicals.<sup>68</sup> These cases have shown how significant the lobbying groups' scope is.

However, it is hard to find the JUA to have deep collaboration with other groups. The JUA's alliance with other anti-China groups ends in joint demonstrations and meetings expressing condemnation of China's human rights situations. Similar to the JUA, these groups are small, and their members are not Japanese citizens, which makes them have little strength even though they are untied. Also, their demands are all on human rights issues that may lead to confrontation with other interest groups.

Besides, as Chief Cabinet Secretary Katsunobu Kato explained, "There is no provision for imposing sanctions based on human rights issues alone in our legal system."<sup>69</sup> Japan is not a member of the <*Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide*>. It also does not have <*The Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act*>, which authorizes the U.S. government to sanction persons who violate human rights abroad. The absence of these two laws limits its role in dealing with genocide and makes it hard to obtain personal jurisdiction over an out-of-state defendant based on certain acts committed by an out-of-state defendant.<sup>70</sup> The JUA did not realize this problem until recently, and it has begun to push for the adoption of human rights-related laws by the parliament.

Nevertheless, the Japanese government has been hesitating on this issue for a long time. Koshida argued that three points must be considered when formulating sanction-related laws. The government has to choose targets carefully to avoid damaging diplomatic relations.<sup>71</sup> Besides, sanctions are usually semi-permanent and thus difficult to revoke.<sup>72</sup> Lastly, basic individual rights should be protected when the government imposes sanctions.<sup>73</sup> On the other hand, there is still little progress on the relevant law in Japan's Diet. Sakurai, a legislator from the Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan, said that although the Diet had passed a human rights resolution on Myanmar. However, legislators became more cautious toward China within the party.<sup>74</sup> For one, there needs to be a clear definition of the extent of human rights violations that apply to sanctions. For another, Japan worries that China's anti-sanction measure may cause greater damage to itself. Another legislator, Otokita of Nippon Ishin, stated that some legislators hoped not to use the name of Magnitsky.<sup>75</sup> Judging from the diverse opinions within the Diet, the JUA is less likely to push relevant legislation successfully in the short term.

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<sup>67</sup> Megan Wilson, "Top 10 lobbying victories of 2016," *The Hill*, December 14, 2016, <https://thehill.com/business-a-lobbying/310282-top-10-lobbying-victories-of-2016/>.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>69</sup> The SanKei News, "Uiguru, myanma, naze nihon ha seisai shinai noka (Why does bot Japan impose sanctions on Uyghur and Myanmar issues)?" *The SanKei News*, March 28, 2021, <https://www.sankei.com/article/20210328-OMGM4DPASZMUHEWHEFG65YKG24>.

<sup>70</sup> "Long-arm statute," Legal Information Institute, Cornell Law School, accessed October 29, 2023, [https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/long-arm\\_statute](https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/long-arm_statute).

<sup>71</sup> Takao Koshida, "Human Rights Sanction Law in Foreign Countries," *Research and Legislative Reference Bureau National Diet Library* 858, 6(2022): 54.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*: 54-55.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>74</sup> The Tokyo Post Editors, "Nihon ni okeru jinken shingai seisaihō no seisai ha susumu no ka? seitei tsuru wo motsu risuku toha (Can the legislation of sanctions on human rights violations go forward? What are the risks of having enactment tools)?" *The Tokyo Post*, March 8, 2022, <https://thetokyoport.jp/special/1123/>.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*

#### 4.5 The Decision-Maker's Accountability

The decision-makers' accountability can determine lobbying groups' success. Some lobbying groups may find that their lobbying target does not have a dominant position on the issue after spending immense manpower and material resources. There are also times that lobbying targets lose power due to unexpected circumstances, such as being questioned and impeached for crimes and scandals or being unable to continue exercising control for physical reasons. The problem that the JUA faces falls into the second category.

Shinzo Abe is the most supportive political figure of the JUA among recent prime ministers. He is a politician committed to rebuilding Japan's national self-confidence and strengthening its presence in the international community. Besides, due to the emphasis on freedom and human rights -- shared values with other G7 countries, Abe met with the JUA's leaders many times. The JUA also praised Abe for being active in pressuring China and helping Uyghurs. For instance, Abe met Rabiye, whom Uyghurs call the spiritual mother, in 2007. He also invited her to meet the chairman of the association of Japanese legislators supporting Uyghurs in 2016.<sup>76</sup> Since Uyghur's demands were rarely responded to by other countries outside Europe and the U.S., the JUA cherished Japan's effort in asking for an investigation by the UN. Due to Abe's concern about the Uyghur issue, the chairman of the JUA gave a certificate of gratitude to him.

While Abe emphasized opening up a new era of Sino-Japan relations, he also remained tough on some sensitive issues, such as stressing that if anything happened in Taiwan, Japan would be in trouble. Abe's worries about China's rise have led the JUA to find top politicians in Japan who could help them. The JUA appreciated Abe for condemning China. They imitated Abe, claiming that Japan would be the next victim.<sup>77</sup> Nonetheless, Abe's attitude toward China depended not only on himself but also on the influence of relevant economic groups and moderate forces in Congress. His Abenomics devalued the yen and the promotion of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), all aimed at strengthening Japan's competitiveness. The Chinese market was indispensable to achieving this goal. On the other hand, Abe hoped to improve Sino-Japan relations, which were in a slump before he came to power again. The Uyghur issue worsened the image of China in Japan. Still, the two countries are accustomed to long-term "cold politics." Japan understands that China is not a liberal and democratic regime. The Uyghur issue could not affect Japan's China policy dramatically.

After Abe had stepped down as prime minister, his attitude towards China became tougher. It is partly because his identity was less sensitive than it used to be. Despite this, Abe was still the chairman of the largest faction -- Seiwakai, in the LDP, which gave him a root to influence Japan's policy. In addition, it was difficult to find a politician who cared about the Uyghur issue with a huge influence within the party. As a result, the JUA had to rely on Abe to realize its political goals.

The Kishida Cabinet's attitude towards the JUA is mainly affected by the political struggle within the party. Kishida's policy focuses on four parts: countering COVID-19; the new capitalism; diplomacy and security; and disaster countermeasures.<sup>78</sup> Only part three refers to international human rights issues. The success of lobbying

<sup>76</sup> "Abe shinzō moto sōri ga kyōdan ni taoreta kanashimi, uiguru mondai he no jinryoku he no kansya (Grief for the assassination of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, and gratitude for his efforts on the Uyghur issue)," The Association of Japanese Local Assembly Members supporting Uyghurs, accessed October 29, 2023, <https://for-uyghur.jp/2022/07/shinzo-abe/>.

<sup>77</sup> The SanKei News, "Chiba, Shiroi de uiguru mondai no kōenkai 'tsugi ha nihon' to kikikan uttae (Lecture on Uyghur issue in Shirai, Chiba, calls for a sense of crisis: 'Japan is the next')," *The SanKei News*, March 14, 2022, <https://www.sankei.com/article/20220314-6YXNOU5LERLTNL7QH62YG4SYME/>.

<sup>78</sup> "Dai ni ji Kishida kaizō naikaku (Second Kishida Cabinet 2021-2022)," Minister of Japan and His Cabinet, accessed March 20, 2023, <https://warp.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/12315715/www.kantei.go.jp/>.

depends in part on a leader's personal beliefs. The JUA hoped Kishida, who has years of diplomatic experience, would pressure China to stop human rights violations by using diplomatic means.<sup>79</sup> Abe's emphasis on freedom made the JUA hope Kishida to inherit his will. When I asked the JUA leader why he firmly trusted Japan, he answered that Japan is a free and democratic country. The expectation of Japan's role makes Uyghurs believe their lobbying activities would have an effect someday.

However, Kishida's emphasis on ideology and human rights is not strong. He claimed that his policy attaches great importance to the protection of universal values and will promote Japanese-style human rights diplomacy.<sup>80</sup> Nonetheless, the meaning of "a Japanese style" is ambiguous. It means Japan's human rights diplomacy is unique and different from other countries. Due to its particularity, the Japanese government can define whether the issue is related to human rights and how to handle it. Based on the U.S. Freedom House's <*Freedom in the World in 2022*>, about 38% of the world population lives in non-free countries, and only about 20% live in free countries.<sup>81</sup> If the Japanese government relies too much on the human rights situation to develop diplomatic relations, its diplomatic circle would be affected. Therefore, human rights issues are not as crucial as economic development in Kishida's mind.

In addition, the weakening of the Uyghur supporters is due to the accident of Abe's assassination. The representative of those supporters is Takaichi Sanae, an influential conservative politician in the LDP. She supports not only the Uyghur diaspora but also the Inner Mongolia diaspora.<sup>82</sup> However, even within the LDP, Takaichi is seen as too aggressive and not so popular within the party. She participated in the presidential election of the LDP in 2021 but ended with the third rank among four candidates with Abe's help.<sup>83</sup> Unlike Takaichi who met the JUA leaders frequently, Kishida only appeared once in the JUA — four days before the election. It reflects the influence of elections. Decision-makers utilize some issues to appeal to certain groups. Since then, Kishida has not re-meeting with Uyghurs for more than one year and a half after being elected. It also reflects that the Uyghur issue is not a core topic for the LDP.

After the assassination of Abe, the JUA lost its most influential supporter, and the LDP lost an influential conservative politician. The death of Abe changed the power balance. The former Abe faction has not launched a political figure with Abe's influence. Thus, Kishida became less restrained by his influence and could focus on things that benefit his approval rating. Furthermore, because of the "The Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity" problem, Kishida disenfranchised some hawkish members. Takaichi was transferred from Policy Research Council chairman to the newly established Minister of State for Economic Security -- a temporary position that can be changed according to the needs of prime ministers. By contrast, Takaichi's former position is one of the crucial positions in the LDP. Economic security is a significant topic

<sup>79</sup> The SanKei News, "Uiguru kyōkai ga kishida ni shai, tantō hosakan no shinsetsu hyōmei ni (The Uyghur Association expresses its gratitude to Kishida for the establishment of a new assistant in charge)," *The SanKei News*, September 26, 2021, <https://www.sankei.com/article/20210925-L3NFHZUGRNLE3HQD3Q5KODMDBA/>.

<sup>80</sup> "Diplomatic Bluebook 2022, (No. 65), chapter three, measures of Japan's human rights diplomacy," Minister of Foreign Affairs, accessed October 29, 2023, [https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/bluebook/2022/html/chapter3\\_01\\_07.html](https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/bluebook/2022/html/chapter3_01_07.html).

<sup>81</sup> Huang Chunmei, "Ziyoushijia 2022 nian quanqiu ziyouda baogao: zhongguo zaidu bei lieru buzhiyou guojia (Freedom House 2022 Global Freedom Report: China Once Again Listed as Not Free)," *Radio Free Asia*, February 25, 2022, <https://www.rfa.org/mandarin/yataibaodao/renquanfazhi/hcm2-02252022082644.html>.

<sup>82</sup> "Chūgoku ni yoru jinken shingai wo kyūmei shi kōdō suru giin renmei ni shusseki itashimashita (The list of lawmakers that attended the meeting of the Parliamentary Assembly about investigating and taking action against human rights violations by China)," Wada Yūichirō, accessed October 29, 2023, <https://wada-yuuichiro.com/news.php?id=143>.

<sup>83</sup> "Dai 27 dai jimintō sōsai ni Kishida Fumio shūgiin giin ga kettei (Fumio Kishida, a member of the House of Representatives, has been selected as the 27th president of the Liberal Democratic Party)," Liberal Democratic Party, accessed October 29, 2023, <https://www.jimin.jp/news/information/202062.html>.

since the economy has become a weapon in the rivalry between countries. However, this position focuses more on domestic issues in Japan. It has less to do with human rights issues in Xinjiang. In the press conference held when she took office, Takaichi said the topics she addressed covered energy issues, the delineation of special strategic materials, and recruiting.<sup>84</sup> As a result, the JUA cannot take the initiative as it did in the Abe era. As the Japanese government turned to a cautious approach, the JUA lost a pipe to influence Japanese leaders. Its activities decreased dramatically in 2023. If the power balance within the LDP is still tilted toward Kishida, it would be difficult to expect Japan to have substantive attitude changes toward Uyghurs.

## 5. Conclusion

This research analyzed the JUA's accomplishments and setbacks, but it mainly focused on the problems the JUA faced during the lobbying. The JUA declares its goal is to spread the "correct" culture and history of Xinjiang and Uyghurs. To achieve this goal, it distributes materials to Japanese schools and people and conducts speeches and demonstrations in various cities. The JUA leaders even met the Japanese prime ministers and dozens of legislators, asking them to put pressure on China. For a group with few members and limited resources, this achievement is noteworthy.

However, when the JUA wants to further pressure the Japanese government and companies to take tougher measures against China, such as taking practical actions to sanction China or boycott Xinjiang products, the response becomes lukewarm. This research argues that the JUA's internal problems are crucial for this limitation. First, many Japanese are worried but not seriously concerned about the Uyghur issue. The Japanese people prioritize their economy and employment over the human rights issues in other countries. Unlike the Sino-U.S. fierce competition, Japan and China do not compete for world leadership but adapt to the "cold politics and hot economics" relationship.

Besides, the JUA's lobbying targets are too broad and ambitious for its capacity. It requires the Japanese government to sanction China and take aggressive measures on issues related to China's sovereign territory. Even if the influence of the JUA grows in the future, the Japanese government will not run a risk of supporting its claims, which may lead to fierce conflicts between China and Japan. The JUA also requests Japanese companies to stop purchasing Xinjiang products. These requirements aroused opposition from the Komeito, which has a religious background in pacifism and has maintained a good relationship with China for decades. They also damage the interests of companies investing in China that are more influential to Japanese policy-makers than the JUA since the JUA has only formed a loose alliance with other anti-China groups in Japan. As a result, the JUA's lobbying unwittingly gathered opponents for political and economic reasons.

Moreover, the JUA happens to collect undesirable support in Japan. Most people who support the JUA are far right-wingers, to whom many Japanese are skeptical. These groups and individuals preach fascism, racialism, and history denialism. Their claims are contrary to the respect for the universality of human rights. Hence, it makes people confused about whether the Uyghur diasporas hope to promote or negate human rights. Their cooperation with far right-wingers may damage the Uyghur's image.

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<sup>84</sup> "Takaichi naikakufu tokumei tantō daijin, keizai anzen hoshō tantō (Takauchi, Minister of State for Special Missions, Economic Security)," Cabinet Office, accessed October 29, 2023, [https://www.cao.go.jp/minister/2208\\_s\\_takaichi/kaiken/20220810kaiken.html](https://www.cao.go.jp/minister/2208_s_takaichi/kaiken/20220810kaiken.html).

In addition, the JUA found Abe was most eager to address the Uyghur issue among high-level Japanese politicians and regarded him as the politician who maintained his influence even after his resignation. However, the sudden assassination of Abe disrupted the JUA's plan. Other allies the JUA has in the LDP, such as Sanae Takaichi, are not as popular and influential as Abe. She was transferred to a position with less power after Kishida became the prime minister. Kishida's attitude towards Uyghur representatives varied widely before and after the election, which reflects his attempt to utilize the Uyghur issue to win over conservatives. The changes in political leadership make Uyghur lobbying less effective, and the JUA's activities in 2023 have shown a downward trend.

Although many factors may affect the success of lobbying, this research regards what is most crucial for JUA as capacity. If the JUA had a large population and adequate funding, it could better publicize its claims to collect more supporters beyond far right-wingers and be less affected by the assassination of Abe. The issues it lobbied for would become more eye-catching for decision-makers since they need to respond to voters' voices. Besides, if the JUA were big enough, it would not have to depend on other interest groups, such as companies investing in China. It would compel the JUA to be less demanding. Therefore, the JUA's capacity is more critical than other lobbying factors.

Tokyo hopes to keep a balance between the pressure from allies and Japan's economy and security. Therefore, it tries to keep the critics at a manageable level. As Kuşçu and Işık stated, diaspora politics is very much shaped by the international context as it is shaped by the diasporic community's cohesion and organizational capacity.<sup>85</sup> On September 29, 2022, China's President Xi Jinping and Japan's Prime Minister Kishida Fumio exchanged congratulatory messages on the 50th anniversary of the normalization of Sino-Japan diplomatic relations. Kishida did not mention sensitive human rights issues but maintained Japan would promote the building of constructive and stable relations and promote peace and prosperity between the two countries. For the Uyghur diaspora, it is time to review the problems they face during the lobbying and find a better way to achieve their goals.

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<sup>85</sup> Kuşçu, Işık, "The origins of Uyghur long-distance nationalism: The first generation Uyghur diaspora in Turkey." *Orta Asya ve Kafkasya Araştırmaları* 16, (2013): 19.

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